

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MASS COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

To: ALL MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

NOTES FROM THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, TAMPERE, FINLAND, MONDAY, 28 MAY 1984

1. The President opened the meeting in the presence of Nelly de Camargo, Cees Hamelink, Tomo Martelanc, Kaarle Nordenstreng, Valery Pisarek, G G Robinson, Yassen Zassoursky and Peggy Gray.

2. PRAGUE CONFERENCE

Peggy Gray and the President reported very favourably on the preparations for the Prague conference. They would be visiting Prague again within the next week to confirm the final arrangements. Registrations were very encouraging (more than ever before at this stage) and there was a wide-ranging and challenging programme. All seemed set for a most successful conference. Further details would be sent to all members in the next Presidential letter.

It was confirmed that it was the responsibility of the Organising Committee in the host country to ensure that visas should be granted to ALL those bona fide members of the Association who applied for them.

3. NOMINATIONS FOR ELECTION TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AND INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

The President reported on the meeting of the Nomination Committee in Rome in December 1983 (an account of the main issues discussed had previously been circulated to all members) and on the many representations he had received from members - not just nominations, but also with regard to possible structural, organizational and procedural changes. He also presented a list of ALL those members who had been nominated for membership of the Executive Board/International Council. The Board decided to deal with the President's Report under the following headings:

- (a) Organizational and Procedural Changes, etc.
- (b) Specific Nominations.

- (a) Organizational and Procedural Changes, etc.

The Board decided that, in the interests of increased efficiency and in order to effectively meet the changed situation following rapid developments, the following matters should be discussed by the International Council and General Assembly in Prague, and constitutional changes considered, where appropriate.

- (i) Limitations of tenure for those elected to Board and Council

The general feeling was that, for all elected positions with the possible exception of the President and Secretary General, re-election should be possible for a second four year term but not for a consecutive third term. Members may be proposed for a third term after a four year break, but eight consecutive years should be the maximum allowed.

(ii) Periodic and proportional phasing of election and retirement

As things stood, elections for ALL positions on the Board and Council took place at the same time every four years. It was agreed that consideration should be given to procedures, particularly in the case of the International Council, where only a proportion of the membership (say one half) would have to be elected/re-elected at any given Assembly. This would obviously need to be considered in relation to (i) above.

(iii) Holding more than one office

At present it was possible for a Head of Section (by dint of office a member of the International Council) to be an elected member of the International Council or of the Executive Board (e.g. Vice President). This was recognized as an anomaly which, amongst other things, stood in the way of wider representation. However, it could easily be rectified.

(iv) The "representativeness" of elected members

For many years it had been generally accepted (in fact it was a constitutional requirement) that, broadly speaking, the membership of the International Council should reflect the geopolitical, disciplinary composition of an Association which was truly international and multi-disciplinary. Within the obvious circumscriptions of the Association's operations (e.g. not every one of the sixty-eight countries could be represented on the governing bodies) the system seemed to have worked reasonably well at a relatively informal and individual level. In general terms, it would appear that in the past members had been elected to the Council essentially as individuals, known quite widely for their scholarship and/or service to the Association, but also with a view to their country of origin, place of work, disciplinary affiliations, and so on. On the whole they had not been seen as formal representatives of their country, region or discipline; nor had their electoral nomination or support been given in these terms. Clearly, such formal representation would not be appropriate, or even possible, in the case of many of the countries, regions or disciplines represented in the Association.

Over the last year or so, however, it has been suggested that, at least in some cases, we should give consideration to a more formal type of representation where, for example, a nominee or candidate from a given region should certainly be nominated (and perhaps even elected) solely or primarily by members from that region. The Board felt that this question clearly deserved consideration by the Council and Assembly, but it also recognized the problems should such a procedure be adopted, particularly when there might be different factions within any given region, and where "representatives" may come to be elected primarily, if not solely, in terms of their affiliation to, or office holding in such groups or factions. This would involve a departure from the conventional procedures (no bad thing in itself), and it was suggested that, despite their obvious imperfections, criteria linked to a more universal appreciation of individual qualities of scholarship were more appropriate to an International Association such as ours. The Board asks Council and the General Assembly to discuss this matter, bearing in mind the complex nature of the Association, and having due regard to the wider implications of any proposed departures from conventional procedures.

(v) Vice-Presidents and the Executive Board

The Board considered the several changes that had been proposed under this general heading, and accepted that the "representative criteria" relevant in the case of the International Council (see above) did not necessarily apply to, and was not always seen as a main characteristic of the Board, as at present constituted. It was noted that, in the case of the Board, the Statutes did not call for such "representativeness". Whilst it was recognized that the criteria for election to the Board were not immediately self-evident, particularly to newer members of the Association, it was felt that the main problem was not so much in terms of the numbers of Vice-Presidents, who they were or where they came from (most of them, according to the President, had served the Association well), but was more in terms of the implications of a clause in the Statutes which meant that all Vice-Presidents were automatically members of the Executive Board. It was felt that it was this automatic "association" that might usefully be changed so that perhaps only one or two of the Vice-Presidents should be members of the Executive Board. Such a change would make it possible for the Association, should it so decide, to continue to elect Vice-Presidents preferably according to agreed and overt criteria - say, for outstanding service to the Association, for some distinguished achievement, or in relation to some specific role or function - without creating an unwieldy and virtually functionless body. It would also pave the way for the creation of a genuine Executive Board (say, President, Vice-President, Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General and Treasurer), with appropriate functions. Other Vice-Presidents could be co-opted from time to time for specific tasks related to their special interests or experience.

It was recognized that, even if the Association accepted the above changes, they could not be formally brought about through the forthcoming elections, or at the Prague Assembly. Nevertheless, it was thought that, as a possible prelude to de jure changes, the President, after the Prague Assembly, might make appropriate de facto arrangements for a trial period by asking one of the Vice-Presidents to join the other elected officers to form a "cabinet" that might assist him in the administration of the Association and the organization of its programmes.

(b) Specific Nominations

In discussing this matter, members of the Board had before them two lists submitted by the President. The first consisted of the names of all those members (73) who had been nominated for membership of the Executive Board or International Council (see above). The second was a selection from this list compiled in accordance with current statutory requirements (including "representativeness"), and with the benefit of the advice of the Nomination Committee and many other members. After a lengthy discussion, during which additional names were introduced, the Board unanimously agreed on a list for consideration by the International Council and then, following approval/amendment, for final submission to the General Assembly at the Prague meeting.

Of the 51 names on this nomination list 18 (35%) were from the Third World (approximately 15% of the total membership of the Association are from the Third World), and 23 were "new", not having previously served on the Board or Council. It was felt that these points should be emphasized and, in particular, brought to the notice of those who had suggested that the Association did not welcome "new blood", and was inadequately represented on its governing bodies by members from the Third World.

In the light of past experience, it was decided that the President should write to all those on the provisional nomination list asking them to confirm their acceptance of the nomination. It would be assumed that those not confirming before a given date did not wish to be considered for membership of the Executive Board or International Council. It was also agreed that those on the list unable to attend the Prague conference should let the President have their reasons for this, in writing, before the meeting.

After the Balaton meeting the President had written to all members of the Board and Council, as well as to Heads of Sections, asking them to complete and return a summary curriculum vitae form by the end of April 1984. The main idea behind this was to provide information to the members of the Association that might help them in the nomination and election processes. Completed forms had been returned by less than half of those who had been asked. Reminders should be sent, and the same information sought from those "new members" on the provisional nomination list. All the information provided would be made available to members at the Prague conference.

N.B. It is still not too late to submit nominations.  
Comments and suggestions are welcome.

4. RECRUITMENT - PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION, PUBLICITY AND RELATED MATTERS

The following decisions were made:

- (a) To produce a promotion brochure, including an application form, in time for the Prague conference, the President and Cees Hamelink to be responsible for this. It was also agreed that associate membership should be encouraged. It was accepted that, in recruitment, it would be advantageous to broaden our approach and, in keeping with our aims and objectives, give more attention to the "users" of research information. Developments in Media Education, Professional Education and Policy and Planning provided ample opportunities for this.
- (b) To re-open the question of publishing a Journal for the Association - Nelly de Camargo, G G Robinson and Tamas Szecsko to look into this.
- (c) To explore (Walery Pisarek and Cees Hamelink) the possibility of obtaining funds from external sources with a view to setting up a computerized documentation service for members.
- (d) That Kaarle Nordenstreng and Yassen Zassoursky should consider the possibility of setting up an exchange network to facilitate the comparison and exchange of teaching material. Funds might be available from IPDC.

5. The next meeting of the Board would be in Prague, at 11.30 a.m. on Monday, 27th August 1984.