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NEWS ITEMS - DECEMBER 1989

THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AND THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

The Board and Council were able to meet in Budapest in August, thanks to the hospitality of the Secretary General, Tamas Szecsko, his colleagues and institution.

These were the first meetings of the newly constituted Board and Council, following the Barcelona elections. Twenty-nine Council members attended what turned out to be a wide ranging, lively and constructive meeting. This augurs well for the future of the Association, for the emphasis was on involvement, activity rather than passivity, contribution rather than mere membership. The Association can look forward to the outcome of this increased participation.

THE BLEED CONFERENCE

As will be seen from other material in this package, arrangements are proceeding according to plan for the Association's next Conference and General Assembly, which will be held in Bled, Yugoslavia, from 26 - 31 August 1990. There would appear to be a tremendous amount of interest in this Conference, and as accommodation is limited those wishing to attend would be well advised to register at the earliest possible opportunity.

It is hoped that some financial assistance will be received from UNESCO, and perhaps even from other international organizations, to meet the costs of simultaneous interpretation and to help with the travel costs of some of our members from the Third World. It would be most helpful if all members of the Association could join the Board and Council in their attempts to obtain financial support for these members. If you know of any useful contacts, please let the President know.

OPENING PLENARY SESSION AT THE BLEED CONFERENCE

In recent years, the first plenary session of the conferences has taken the form of an opening address on the agreed conference theme by one or more invited speakers, immediately followed by relatively formal, albeit brief, contributions from the floor from four or five invited discussants. These discussants had been invited by the Programme Committee, on behalf of the International Council, with "representativeness" in mind, and had been asked to prepare brief papers on their presentations after having studied the previously distributed paper from the main speaker.

For the Bled Conference, however, it has been agreed that these arrangements should undergo some changes. There will still be a main speaker, who will make a presentation based on a previously distributed paper on the conference theme, **DEVELOPMENTS IN COMMUNICATIONS AND DEMOCRACY**, and there will still be four or five discussants or commentators. The approved change has to do with the process of selection and invitation of the discussants, one of the main aims being to provide an opportunity for the Sections to play a more important role in the selection procedure.

From the Office of the President:
Professor James D. Halloran

The idea is, that from the papers that are submitted to them in the normal way for presentation at Section meetings at the Bled Conference, Section Heads would select one or two which they felt might be suitable as a base for a plenary contribution. Section Heads should receive these papers before 31 March 1990, and the recommendations from the Section Heads, accompanied by the selected papers, should reach the President in Leicester not later than 21 April 1990. The final selection, for inclusion at the Bled plenary, will then be made by the Programme Committee from all the recommended papers received.

Obviously, the papers which are recommended must address the Conference theme in some way or other. Apart from that, and the normal scholarly criteria, Section Heads have a free hand, although in making the final selections the Programme Committee has been asked to take other criteria into account, such as gender, age and geopolitical representativeness. If all concerned cooperate, this new approach should make for wider involvement and participation.

SECTIONS

There are those who hold that the Sections are at the very heart of the Association's work, and that the health of the Association largely depends on how active and efficient the Sections are.

It was with this in mind that, some time ago, criteria were established which could be applied both to existing Sections and to working groups that might possibly become Sections. Hamelink, Mowlana and Szecszo reviewed the current situation in the light of these criteria and reported to the International Council at its meeting in Budapest.

The working paper they presented to the Council was discussed in considerable detail and led to a series of recommendations which are set out in the attached paper - REPORT ON REVIEW OF SECTIONS.

PUBLICATIONS

At its Budapest meeting the International Council, following the receipt of two reports (one on Occasional Papers, and the other on a Newsletter), addressed this ever-present question of publications thoroughly and comprehensively. One of the outcomes was the establishment of a "Commission" (Dervin - coordinator, Hutin, Carlsson, Jakubwicz, Paris I Maicas, White and Mowlana) which would not only review the whole field - exploring possibilities with regard to journals, occasional papers, newsletters, links with publishers, etc - but would actually produce a Newsletter in 1990 before the Bled Conference. The Commission would also report to the Council and Assembly at Bled. The members of the Commission would be delighted to hear from any member of the Association on any aspect of this frequently debated publications issue.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH UNESCO

The first stage of the IPDC project, previously approved by the International Council and General Assembly at Barcelona, has been funded by UNESCO, and appropriate arrangements are being made for its administration via the University of Tampere, and its monitoring according to the guidelines laid down by the President Elect, Cees Hamelink.

From reports received from various quarters it seems that it might soon be opportune to approach UNESCO with a view to IAMCR having its NGO status with UNESCO changed from Status B to Status A. Amongst other things, such upgrading might result in the provision of an office in UNESCO headquarters in Paris. The officers are pursuing this possibility, and all members are asked to lend their support by approaching the National Commission for UNESCO in their respective countries. It should not be too difficult to establish that IAMCR is the only genuine internationally representative body with legitimate intellectual, educational and professional aims in the field of communication research. The Association has members - active researchers - in virtually all of those countries where the appropriate infrastructure is present.

FUTURE POLICY

The President Elect, Cees Hamelink, in presenting a paper on **Future Policy** at the Budapest meeting, in addition to stressing the need to reinforce the Association's relationship with UNESCO, also drew attention to the need to strengthen the relationships with other international associations and organizations working in related fields, particularly with those that might be regarded as members of the wider United Nations family.

It was felt that the Association should stress the importance of inter-regional coordination and regional presence. IAMCR could develop into the umbrella organization in the field of communication research by establishing strong links with regional organizations, and by facilitating coordination and exchange between these organizations. IAMCR is well placed to create a forum for inter-regional debates and research projects, such as the IPDC project conducted by the Professional Education Section.

Moreover, through its affiliation with regional organizations, IAMCR could make itself more attractive to members in its various regions. Currently, the costs of the bi-annual conferences (in combination with increased transportation costs, reduced subsidies, decreases in salaries and unfavourable fiscal changes) make it very difficult for members from the Third World, and possibly even younger members from the North, to attend all the conferences - consequently, interest can wane. Regional institutional linkages might make it possible for regional conferences to be organized in the years between the bi-annual international conferences, thus providing more realistic opportunities for wider participation.

The International Council thought it was necessary to explore to the full all the possibilities with regard to regional development, affiliation and organization along the lines outlined above. A commission (De Camargo, Kandil, Kleinwachter, Linne, Nordenstreng and White) would address these (inter-regional coordination) and related issues and prepare a working paper for distribution prior to the Bled meetings.

At a more specific level with regard to the existing fruitful, cooperative relationship with the ICA, discussions have recently taken place between the current presidents and the presidents-elect of both organizations. These discussions focussed on the possibility of organizing, at the ICA Dublin Conference in June 1990, a joint session (chaired by the two presidents-elect) on the contribution from communication research to a major international policy process. This session would be in addition to a further joint International Communication meeting along the lines so successfully organized by Hamid Mowlana and his collaborators at previous ICA meetings in San Francisco and Montreal.

MEMBERSHIP - SUBSCRIPTIONS, ETC.

The general position remains more or less the same as it has been for some time - plenty of new members, countered (perhaps even more than countered these days) by a steady number of lapsations. At one level this does not really represent satisfactory progress.

Fifty-one new individual members and nine new institutional members were ratified in Budapest, where the need to reconsider the implications of institutional membership was also stressed. The existing arrangements regarding the scaling of fees for institutions according to the number of members in the institution, which hitherto had worked up to a point, were now being questioned. For the scales did not operate in the interests of the Association when an institution had 383 members, or even 78 (both actual cases), for these institutions only paid the same subscription as an institution with 20-30 members. Perhaps the whole fee structure should be reviewed, and this might be carried out most usefully in relation to some of the regional considerations mentioned earlier, and the possibility of introducing a special scale for members from Third World countries, or from countries with special currency problems.

NB AN INVOICE IS ENCLOSED FOR YOUR CURRENT 1990 SUBSCRIPTION, BUT IT IS RECOGNIZED THAT THIS WILL BE GOING TO MANY MEMBERS WHO HAVE NOT YET PAID FOR 1989/88/87??? PLEASE FORGIVE US IF WE TRY TO PRICK YOUR CONSCIENCE, AND PICK YOUR POCKET, ALBEIT BELATEDLY, BUT DO RECTIFY THE SITUATION.

ELECTION PROCEDURES

From the many letters that members send to headquarters at Leicester (and these are much appreciated), and from other contacts with members, particularly with those that were at Barcelona, it would appear that the membership is almost equally divided on the question of the suitability of our election procedures. There are those who think that the long, drawn-out procedures operated for the first time at Barcelona, were a complete waste of time, and that they got in the way of other, important business, manifesting an antedeluvian approach totally inappropriate to an association allegedly interested in effective communication. On the other hand, there are those who consider that the conference floor involvement, and the democratic participation which marked the Barcelona proceedings, were long overdue, and were well worth paying for by way of such organizational inconvenience as occurred.

Of course, it need not be a matter of one or the other, but the whole question of electional procedures needs to be looked at again before the next major elections in 1992. Vice-President Hamid Mowlana has agreed to prepare a working paper on this matter, initially for discussion at the Bled meeting, and he would be pleased to hear from any member who has anything to contribute.

FUTURE CONFERENCES

As things stand at present, the 1992 Conference and General Assembly will be held in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and an offer to hold the conference in 1994 has been received from Turkey. Korea, Japan, The Netherlands, Kenya, Hungary and Canada have all been mentioned as other possibilities for future conferences.

The President of IAMCR visited Brazil as a guest of INTERCOM in September and, amongst other things, he was given the opportunity to assess the potential of Sao Paulo as a conference centre. What problems there are there would not appear to be insuperable - it is primarily a matter of deciding what to choose from the many excellent facilities, and combination of facilities, that are available. The Association may look forward with confidence to being hosted by our Brazilian colleagues in 1992.

Mass Communication Research is alive and thriving in Latin America, as was clear when ALAIC (The Latin America Association for Communication Research) held its General Assembly in Florianopolis (Santa Catarina State, Brazil) during the INTERCOM '89 Conference in September 1989.

The Assembly decided unanimously to transfer ALAIC's headquarters to Brazil and elected Professor Dr Jose Marques de Melo, Dean of the Communications and Arts Faculty of the University of Sao Paulo (a member of the International Council of IAMCR) to be the president of ALAIC. For the next three years ALAIC's headquarters will be at the Communications and Arts Faculty in Sao Paulo.

The Chairman of the ALAIC Assembly was Professor Rafael Roncagliolo from Peru. Patricia Anzola, the last president of ALAIC, reported on the activities of the association during her presidency. Representatives from twelve countries took part in the General Assembly - Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Porto Rico, Venezuela and Uruguay.

Representatives of other associations also took part in the meeting - James Halloran (International Association for Mass Communication Research, England), Francois Hutin (member of the French Communication and Information Science Association, France), Ernesto Vera (Vice-President of the International Journalists Association, Cuba), Joelle Hullebroeck (Latin Union, Belgium), Armando Rollemberg (Latin American Journalists Federation, Brazil), and Luiz Suarez (General Secretary of the Latin American Journalists Federation, Mexico). It was decided that a Latin American Communication Research Conference would be held in Sao Paulo, Brazil, to fit in with the 1992 Conference of IAMCR.

JAPAN AND SOUTH KOREA

In the course of the past year, the President has had the opportunity to visit both Japan and South Korea. During his work in these countries he had the pleasure of meeting many members of IAMCR, and he can assure the Association that the interests of IAMCR are very well represented in both of these countries. The President was most impressed by the eagerness of scholars, young and old, to become acquainted with IAMCR and its programme. The Association may look forward to interesting developments in this part of the world. The Institute of Journalism and Communication Studies at the University of Tokyo (a long-standing member of the Association) is to be congratulated on its 40th anniversary.

MEDIA AND CRISIS

An international conference will be held at Laval University, Quebec City, Canada, from 4 - 7 October 1990 to mark the 20th anniversary of Canada's "October Crisis" of 1970. This will be organized by the Departement d'Information et de Communication of Laval University.

In the twenty years since the political crisis set off by two kidnappings and the assassination of a minister by the Front de Liberation du Quebec in October 1970, other crises of various sorts have shaken different parts of the world: The British-Argentine War in the Falklands, the U.S. invasion of Grenada, the IRA's campaign in Ireland, the drought in the Sahel, the energy crisis, the drama surrounding AIDS, and the stock market crash of 1987 are some that come to mind. Each of these crises can be considered as events that upset the social and political equilibrium of the societies concerned, and raise the question of the role of media.

All enquiries should be made to:

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