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IOJ news letter

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THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF JOURNALISTS

PERSONAL

IOJ Delegation in Asia

An IOJ delegation consisting of IOJ Secretary General Dušan Ulčák and Secretary Vladimir Artyomov and Director of International Journalism Institute (IJI), Prague, Miloš Vejvoda visited three countries of Asia – India, Bangladesh and Singapore.

India: They met with the representatives of journalist organizations in Delhi and Calcutta, who submitted them applications for full membership in the IOJ (the Indian Federation of Working Journalists, the Indian Federation of Working Journalists – Democratic, the All–Indian Newspaper Employees Federations, News Cameramen's Association). Agreements were signed on the cooperation between the IOJ and the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, the Indian Institute for Non–Aligned Studies, and the All–Indian Peace and Solidarity Committee.

Bangladesh: In Dhaka the IOJ delegation had talks with the IOJ Group in Bangladesh and students of the Press Institute of Bangladesh on the IOJ activities and possibilities of broadening the IOJ work in the region. The delegation was also received by the Bangladesh Prime Minister and Bangladesh Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Singapore: The IOJ representatives participated with professional interest in the work of the 8th General Assembly and Press Convention of the Confederation of ASEAN Journalists, which had started on the theme "Towards the Years 2000: Challenges and Opportunities for the Press and Communication Media in the Asian–Pacific Region". After the conference friendly talks were held with a number of delegations participating in the event on the prospect of the future cooperation in the interest of development of journalist profession.

EUROPE: Our Common Destiny

A seminar under the above title organized by the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) and the National United Nations Association of Spain was held in Barcelona from November 30 to December 2. The seminar was attended by representatives of 17 European countries and a number of international organizations, including the U.N. Economic Commission for Europe. A two-member delegation comprising secretaries Leena Paukku and Marek Jurkowicz represented the IOJ.

The seminar was devoted to discussion on selected problems that arise in the process of Europe's integration, including overcoming psychological, ideological and cultural differences. Debate went on about problems which, as a result of integration development, will be easier to solve than was the case until now. There also was consideration of better use of new technologies and better protection of Europe's environment.

A very important influence on the course of discussion was the changes now taking place in Central and Eastern Europe, arousing great interest among seminar participants. This interest stemmed from the very fact that some of the reports were prepared and presented by authors from these countries.

Resulting from discussion was a joint declaration which, inter alia, calls attention to the hope that the process of Europe's integration will proceed on the basis of the United Nations Charter, will permit the free flow of material values as well as ideas, and that it also will establish the same approach in protecting the environment. The safeguarding of all human rights – civic, political, social, economic and cultural – must be a key point for all European states.

The IOJ delegation contributed to enhancing discussion through its remarks on elements affecting the participant of the mass media in the process of unifying Europe and also in upholding and understanding many aspects of Europe's legacy. The IOJ delegation likewise met representatives of the local Catalan press.

JOURNALISTS KILLED

PERU

The body of North American journalist Todd Carper Smith was found on November 21, 1989, on the main square of Uchiza, a town in north-western Peru. Carper, a reporter for the Florida daily "Tampa Tribune", was abducted on November 17 by armed men from the aiport in Uchiza, where he wanted to hire a small plane and continue his journey to write news stories on drug smuggling and terrorism in Peru. His body showed traces of torture. The reporter, who was 28, was writing a reportage about drugs and the cultivation of coca leaves in Alto Huallaga. This, according to the authorities, was the reason for his murder.

SRI LANKA

Brutal kilings of Sri Lanka journalists have occurred, causing great alarm. The first took place in 1987, after the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord. Sri Lanka's national television system Rupavahini sent a TV team to Jaffna to report on events in the northern peninsula. These four TV men were abducted by what is thought to be the militant group LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) and they have never been heard of since. The authorities presume that they were killed.

Terror recently struck TV journalists in the South of the country. One of the

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USSR: Alternative Press

The so-called independent or alternative press has long appeared in the Soviet Union as society's reaction to the suppression of human rights. In the conditions of perestroika of the 1980s the independent press (samizdat) emerged from underground and began developing extensively.

Independent newspapers and periodicals are published by numerous "informal" organizations or by representatives of certain social groups. They are distributed at rallies, town squares and even by subscription. Prior to 1987 there were 10 to 20 such publications, whereas now a total of up to 800 titles of independent publications is put out in most diverse languages throughout the country. The monthly circulation of all of the independent papers and periodicals is up to 80,000 copies.

Most of them aim at promoting democratization and glasnost, upholding civic rights, combatting abuses of power and the corruption of local authorities and at creating trust between East and West. The spectrum of opinions of the country's development reflected in samizdat is indeed vast — from calls for a multiparty system to the repudiation of all parties, from demands for the immediate introduction of a proletarian dictatorship to appeals along anarcho-syndicalist and even autocratic lines.

Until the law of the press is passed in the country the alternative press has Article 50 of the USSR Constitution, which guarantees the freedom of expression and of the press, and the Vienna Meeting Final Document as the legal foundation for its activity.

RASCOM Project

The Regional African Satellite Communications System (RASCOM) is a project of African governments being carried out under the auspices of an Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee (IACC).

The principal objective of the RASCOM feasibility project is to undertake a comprehensive study on the provision of optimum telecommunication and appropriate technologies, including satellite-based systems. The project is an integrated study of terrestrial and space-borne systems meeting the requirements at the inter-urban and intra-African level with emphasis on the provision of basic services to rural areas where the majority of the African population lives.

The work is being carried out at the level of each country by teams of multi-sectorial national experts whose role is to identify their long-term telecommunication requirements. There is also a team of directly recruited experts who are responsible for the compilation, coordination and processing of the data collected on plant and equipment for the creation or expansion of networks using both terrestrial and space technologies.

PERHAPS IN MAY

According to the latest announcement by press magnate Robert Maxwell, his all-European paper "The European" will begin appearing from May 1, 1990. The latest is the news that it will be printed also in Hungary in the initial phase. At first it is to be sold at newsstands as a weekly, later as a daily. As an independent paper it intends to suppport all who are working for a united Europe and, on the contrary, to oppose all who are against this idea. The chief editor of the newspaper is to be the present chief editor of the London "Sunday Telegraph" I. Watson.

SOUTH AFRICA: Censorship Continues

The South African government has launched a new attack on the democratic press. It intends to close down one of the country's most popular newspapers "New Nation", for three months for "conducting subversive propaganda of the outlawed African National Congress of South Africa". In October the weekly gave broad coverage to release of seven ANC leaders from long years of imprisonment. Earlier, the authorities declared the "New Nations's" editor-in-chief Zwelakhe Sisulu an "outlaw" forbidden to engage in journalism or to speak at any meeting.

"It's a veritable war. Repression against the press undermines efforts to create a favourable climate for negotiations on the peaceful settlement of the conflict in the country," said one of the freed political prisoners at a press conference in early November.

In the autumn of 1989 the authorities launched the legal persecution of two more publications — "Star", the largest newspaper for Africans, and "Argus" of Capetown — accusing them of publishing articles about political prisoners and black majority protest against racial segregation.

EVENTS

Radio is the most effective mass medium in Africa, according to a survey conducted by the Union of National Radio and Television of Africa. About 90 per cent of the population receive radio broadcasts in Africa. At least 85 radio stations are in operation with over 400,000 hours of broadcasts a year. 80 per cent is produced locally.

While it is being debated whether the Soviet mass media should popularize religion, a religious TV program has began operation in Lithuania, USSR. A 20-minute program is broadcasted every Sunday, covering key religious events, services and enlightening viewers.

The First Ibero-American Congress on Informatics took place in November 1989 in Quito, Ecuador, attended by 171 specialists from 18 countries of Latin America and Spain. This congress marked an important step on the path to the integration of Latin American countries of this area and also an occasion to assess its development.

The National Trade Union of TV Journalists (NTUTVJ) was set up in Algeria in mid-November. The communiqué issued on the occasion declares that the new association aims to develop Algerian mass media so as to guarantee objective information to citizens.

The West German firm Rhode & Schwarz presented the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) with a gift of a 10 kw high-frequency transmitter, a system for field intensity measuring, a short-wave receiver and active antennas. This communication equipment is to be given to two ITU training centres in Africa. The firm also promised to send instructors to lead training seminars.

All CMEA member states are planning a big modernization and expansion of their telecommunication services. The rate of growth for the 1990-1995 period differs: Czechoslovakia and Hungary are planning a 100 per cent rate of growth, the USSR 52.5 per cent, and Bulgaria 3.5 per cent. One of the realistic possibilities of attaining these aims is the establishment of joint ventures with companies of advanced industrial states. A number of them have already been set up. According to estimates, the CMEA countries should be spending on telecommunications 23.7 thousand million in 1995.

A television program on threats to the forests of the Northwestern Coast of the United States, called "Rage Over Trees" lost all its advertisers after the industrial group, Oregon Project, representing the timber industry, threatened a boycott. It was made in co-production with the Auodobon Society and Turner Broadcasting System (TBS) cable television. The network will pay the expenses connected with transmission of this program.

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