The Right to Inform and be Informed

Everyone has the right ... to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media.
Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Over the last decade, there has been, among the media, the ministries of information and in the United Nations conferences, especially those of UNESCO, an increasingly heated and often acrimonious debate on what is now called the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO).

The debate is of interest to all of us because what is at stake critically affects and shapes our daily lives and our futures. Participation in the debate should, therefore, be much wider than it is today, indeed open to all concerned, that is to all citizens. This issue of *DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE* has been conceived as a contribution to this task.

The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, alone or with a number of sister institutions, has been active in the field of communications for almost ten years. The time has now come to take stock, to map out what needs to be done and to state or restate a number of principles and values which are necessary to give content to the right 'to seek, receive and impart information' as it is laid down in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Maldevelopment pervades societies, North and South, East and West alike. Another Development is required everywhere and by all. It is people-centred, geared to the satisfaction of human needs—both material and, in the broadest sense, political; it is self-reliant, endogenous, ecologically sound, and based on democratic, political, social and economic structural transformations which alone will make possible the attainment of the other goals.

Another Development also encompasses the search for societies overcoming discrimination of any kind—be they social, sexual, ethnic or economic. It is a participatory and pluralistic process.

To communicate is a uniquely human quality and a fundamental human need. It is a crucially important part of the approach to Another Development—that is to a genuine democracy—both as a goal and as a means. It helps to define socially the other needs and to devise strategies to meet them. It is rooted in the culture of each society.

The struggle for a fuller exercise of the right to inform and to be informed—the right to communicate—requires that the values and principles which guide it be made explicit. They may be articulated in the following points:

Pluralism. The principle of the 'free flow of information' is meaningless, in a social and democratic sense, if it is not based on the concrete exercise of the right of everyone to receive and impart information. This implies that the means to communicate—be they editorial, technical or financial in nature—should be available to all sectors of society, and that no particular group, whatever its values or constituency, should be in a position to control a predominant share of the flow. Pluralism in the flow of information should result in the full respect for and interplay of human differences.

Direct flows. Societies and their constituent elements—the governmental sector, the business sector and the popular sector with its many and diverse associations—should be able to communicate directly with each other without external control. This applies first of all to the Third World, in which direct South-South flows should be developed as a matter of urgency. But it is also valid for the South-North flows, since it enables the South to communicate directly with the North.

Social function. Information is an element of the autonomous power of the people. It is neither a commodity nor propaganda. Communications should not be controlled by the power structure, be it that of the market or of the state. This does not mean that it is illegitimate for the governmental and business sectors to impart information, but that the interests of society at large must always prevail. There should be no unheard voices. The associations and individuals constituting the Third System* should be the prime beneficiaries of the realization of the principles of pluralism and direct flows. Those who have the power to inform must be held *accountable* for its use to society and, in particular, to those affected by such information.

Another information. Factual reporting of events is important. Reporting and analysing their context and the underlying struc-

tures and processes which give rise to the events reported is equally important and should be further developed. Moreover, information is also education in its broadest sense, that is consciousness raising. It should contribute to reducing ignorance and preconceptions. The image of 'the Other' should reach each of us, stripped of ethnocentric biases. It should serve a genuine cooperation between societies in their cultural diversity. Another information should enhance the capacity of societies and individuals to control their own destinies and contribute to peace.

Communication versus information. The right to inform and to be informed implies that the vertical dispensation of knowledge to passive receivers by those who have access to it should give way to a mutually beneficial exchange through horizontal interactions, each party being at the same time a provider and a receiver of information. This is communication in the proper sense of the term. Communication should therefore be deprofessionalized to the largest extent possible. All those who feel the need to express themselves should be able to do so without unnecessary intermediation. Those who will continue to discharge specialized functions should become aware of this social requirement and their own learning process should reflect this need.

Appropriate use of the new technologies. New communication technologies are both a risk and an opportunity. Those requiring heavy investment should be brought under social con-

* The Third System has been defined as those organizations and agents of change which endeavour to listen to people and reflect their views. These were said to constitute the Third System, not just by analogy with the Third World. The state (first system) and the market (second system) are the two main sources of the power exercised over people. But people have an autonomous power, legitimately theirs. The Third System is that part of the people which is reaching a critical consciousness of their role. It is not a party nor an organization; it constitutes a movement of those—free associations, citizens and militants—who perceive that the essence of history is the endless struggle by which people try to master their destiny (see *Building Blocks for Alternative Development Strategies, IFDA Dossier* 17, May 1980; reprinted in *Development Dialogue* 1981:1, pp. 68–101).

trol so that they do not strengthen further the centres of power. Those which are financially accessible to associations and individuals should be used in an appropriate manner. Both should promote richer and more diverse communication.

As already noted, the debate about the New World Information and Communication Order has been a lively and often bitter one. In the course of this debate, there has been a change in the perspective from which these issues are viewed and in the emphasis given to the different components in the new order. These changes may be summarized in the following way.

From initially focussing on the problems posed by the dominance of the news flows from a few transnational news agencies, the debate has developed to consider the role of the communications structures in their entirety and their social implications. Among the new subjects that have come to be the principal objects of analysis are the following: the societal impact of the revolutionary changes under way in communication technology, the increasing role and influence of advertising, the social functions and responsibilities of professional communicators, the interaction between culture and communication, and the increasing concentration of the control over the media exercised by private or public organizations.

The issues raised above and the need for change implied by them cannot be analysed or dealt with exclusively at the international level since they all have a national dimension. The analysis and questioning of national policies and institutions is an inseparable component of the efforts to achieve real structural changes in the global communications system. The approach described here goes beyond the problems posed by the North-South relationship and extends into the national and regional problems not only of the South but also of the North. This is exemplified by the current debate in many countries concerning, *inter alia,* direct satellite transmission, 'free radios', the implications for social life of home computer terminals, the access of different social groups to publicly controlled media, the protection of the privacy of the individual and other issues related to the transborder data flows.

The demand for change at the national and international levels can be summarized in a few words as a demand for 'the democratization of communication structures'. There is a growing frustration being voiced by people all over the world: 'We have no access to media'; 'They do not represent us'; 'They are only defending their own interests'. Although the level of popular consciousness and the intensity of the criticisms vary from country to country, the demand for the democratization of communications is a truly world-wide social phenomenon. As already emphasized, there is a legitimate and essential space in the new information and communication order enabling the people to express themselves autonomously as individuals and through their associations. Furthermore, the debate, thus widened, should result in immediate and concrete actions which would give practical content to the demand for the democratization of communications and to the establishment of the new information and communication order.

Since communication is part and parcel of their activities, Third System organizations have been active in the current debate about the New World Information and Communication Order both at the conceptual and at the practical level.

At this stage, what is required is the drawing up of a kind of inventory of the many initiatives taken in all regions of the world. This would enable the associations which are engaged in the struggle for a new order to know each other, to exchange ideas, experiences and information, and thus mutually strengthen each other. As a very modest contribution to this task, it appears useful briefly to recall some of the initiatives taken, over the last ten years, by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, the Latin American Institute for Transnational Studies (ILET) and some institutions close to them.

The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation organized, in 1972, a seminar on applied communication in the Third World. This was followed by two further seminars as well as a number of publications by the seminar director, Andreas Fuglesang. In 1975, at the completion of the Dag Hammarskjöld Project on Development and International Cooperation, the Foundation

convened in New York, during the Seventh Special Session of the UN General Assembly, a seminar for Third World journalists. Not only did they cover, from a Third World point of view and for Third World media, a session which would have otherwise been reported essentially by Western media, but they also addressed themselves to the need for establishing a new communication order (both the text of recommendation 6 of the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report and the conclusions of the journalists' seminar are reproduced below, pp. 115–118). In 1976, the newly created Latin American Institute for Transnational Studies organized in Mexico, in cooperation with the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and under the auspices of the Third World Forum (TWF), a seminar on 'The Role of Information in the New International Order'. It resulted, *inter alia,* in the publication of a number of relevant papers in *Development Dialogue* 1976:2.

During the following years, ILET carried out a multifaceted programme of work and has already made, through its publications and meetings, a seminal contribution to a better understanding of the communication *problématique.* Its Executive Director, Juan Somavia, was a member of the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems (the MacBride Commission).

As far as operational activities are concerned, Inter Press Service Third World News Agency (IPS), a cooperative of essentially Third World communicators, has extended its service to more than 50 countries, implementing in a very concrete manner the principles of the NWICO. The Director-General of IPS, Roberto Savio, was a participant in the 1976 Mexico seminar. IPS is described in some detail on pp. 98–102 below.

The International Foundation for Development Alternatives (IFDA), which has been associated with most of the activities mentioned above, contributed to the process not only through the publication of its Dossier but also, in cooperation with IPS, through the production of a bulletin covering UN development activities, which is distributed daily to missions of the Group of 77 in Geneva, New York and Rome. The Geneva-based IPS

correspondent, who acts as the editor of the bulletin, Chakravarthi Raghavan of India, was a participant in the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld seminar of Third World journalists.

ILET, with the cooperation of IPS, is currently finalizing plans to launch ALTERCOM, a service of exchange of development information material between alternative magazines and journals of Latin America.

IFDA and IPS are trying to help a group of African communicators to set up an alternative, people-oriented system of communication for development in Africa. Initiatives have also been taken in the intergovernmental space, both outside and within the United Nations system. The non-aligned movement, for instance, has continued to develop the pool of non-aligned news agencies which provide for a direct South-South flow of information among national news agencies. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the Acciones de Sistemas Informativos Nacionales (ASIN), which comprise 13 countries, also provide for a mutual exchange. It is worth noting that both systems use IPS as the carrier of their material.

It should also be mentioned that SELA (the Latin American Economic System) has approved the establishment of ALASEI (Agencia Latinoamericana de Servicios de Informacion), a project promoted by UNESCO for the production of features. ALASEI provides for the presence of both non-governmental and governmental representations in its decision-making bodies.

Some initiatives in the United Nations sphere also deserve to be mentioned here. UNESCO has established the International Programme for the Development of Communications (IPDC). UNDP has now decided to launch, as a contribution to Third World collective self-reliance, a major South-South network of specific, action-oriented development information (DIN), which was endorsed by the Group of 77 at its high level meeting in Caracas, last May. The UN proper has encouraged the publication, by fourteen major world newspapers, of a development-oriented quarterly supplement which has provoked, on the side of the tenants of the *status quo*, an unusual degree of verbal violence.

A sign of the relevance of, and public interest in, the opinions and activities of Third System organizations is the continuing steady demand for the 1976:2 issue of *Development Dialogue*, containing a major section on 'Information and the New International Order'. Since this issue has been out of print for some time, the section on information is reprinted here with the exception of one article.

Third System contributions of this kind continue to be made in the analytical field. In particular, the concept of the democratization of communications and its manifold implications has been closely examined. It is significant to note that the 25th anniversary conference of the International Association of Mass Communication Researchers, to be held in 1982, has chosen this as its theme. The democratization of communications is also the principal subject matter of this issue of *Development Dialogue* .

In contrast to the reprinted section, the new material deals mainly with national rather than international issues. This is so because, in many countries, the obstacles to the democratization of communications are internal rather than external. This is particularly so in the Latin American context, where the media are largely controlled by big financial interests and, together with the authoritarian regimes in many cases, exercise an overt and covert censorship as a matter of course. It is this situation that Juan Somavia deals with in his article 'From Minority Social Monopoly to Majority Social Representation'.

Democracy in communications is not only dependent on the socio-political situation, but also on a number of economic factors. Two such issues are dealt with in different time perspectives. Noreene Janus and Rafael Roncagliolo show how media have become captives of advertising interests through their financial dependence on them. Juan Rada alerts us to the long-range implications of the microelectronics revolution for Third World countries. Tarja Cronberg and Inga-Lisa Sangregorio illustrate the dangers of the new technologies by telling us about two pilot projects carried out in Japan to computerize domestic life. They analyse in particular the implications for women.

But this issue is not conceived simply to decry existing problems. It is also action-oriented, looking for spaces that will permit change, seeking for alternatives. No doubt, much can be done to promote alternative communication structures. Fernando Reyes Matta proposes for discussion an alternative model for democratic communication that integrates at the policy and operational levels social actors who have up to now played a marginal role. He also develops methods and criteria for evaluating and assessing accountability.

The opportunities offered by alternative media and the possibilities of using such media to transmit alternative communications are also brought to attention. Thus, this issue presents the work of Inter Press Service Third World News Agency (IPS), the only Third World cooperative of journalists.

In line with the values and principles outlined above, a new institution was established in Malta in July 1981: the Communication for Development Foundation (CODEV), an international, non-governmental, non profit-making organization (see also pp. 103–104 below for more information on its constitution, sponsors and members of its Executive Committee).

The initiators of CODEV believe that there is a space for Third System activities as complementary to, but distinct from, commercial and governmental ones; specific instruments are needed as servicing facilities for the emerging network of alternative communication. In this context, it should be noted that the Swedish government has recently instructed its aid agency, SIDA, to support mass media projects 'in cooperation primarily with non-governmental organizations and institutions'.

CODEV is sponsored by six institutions—IFDA, ILET, IPS, AAWORD*, DHF and TWF—but it is open to all those who share its approach and feel the necessity to act. It is designed to help like-minded groups in the North as well as in the South to share experiences for their mutual benefit and to have access to the required resources. Just as IFDA, through its Third System

* Association of African Women for Research and Development.

Project, served as a pool of resources and a forum for exchange for some 60 Third System organizations, CODEV could use its fund-raising capacity to facilitate the work of like-minded organizations. Activities which CODEV will promote and support include projects and consultative services in production and transmission of information, action-oriented research, and conscientization of communicators.

CODEV will essentially be an operational—as distinct from policy-making—institution. However, it will not normally execute projects itself, but rather act through its constituent members and other like-minded institutions. CODEV will seek to cooperate with all those, either in the governmental or commercial sector, who recognize the need for effectively correcting present imbalances and lack of pluralism in information flows, the content of information provided and its sources. It could in particular contribute, from the specific vantage point of the Third System, to the pursuit of the goals set by the international community through the United Nations system, for instance the UNESCO-sponsored International Programme for the Development of Communications.

CODEV is a tool. It will become what its users want it to become. As a nascent organization, it represents the commitment of a few individuals and institutions to build on what has been done so far—of which this issue of *DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE* provides a modest snapshot—in order to widen the space of the Third System in communications. It does not claim to be perfect from the beginning. It is part of a process and intended to further this process.

This issue of *DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE* is inspired by the belief that there are spaces providing opportunities for action both in the analytical and the operational field and that, within the area of Third System activities, there is ample scope for mutually beneficial cooperation between like-minded people, organizations and governments of the South and the North, who wish to promote change.

about understanding

—ideas and observations on cross-cultural communication

For Workers in Adult Education,
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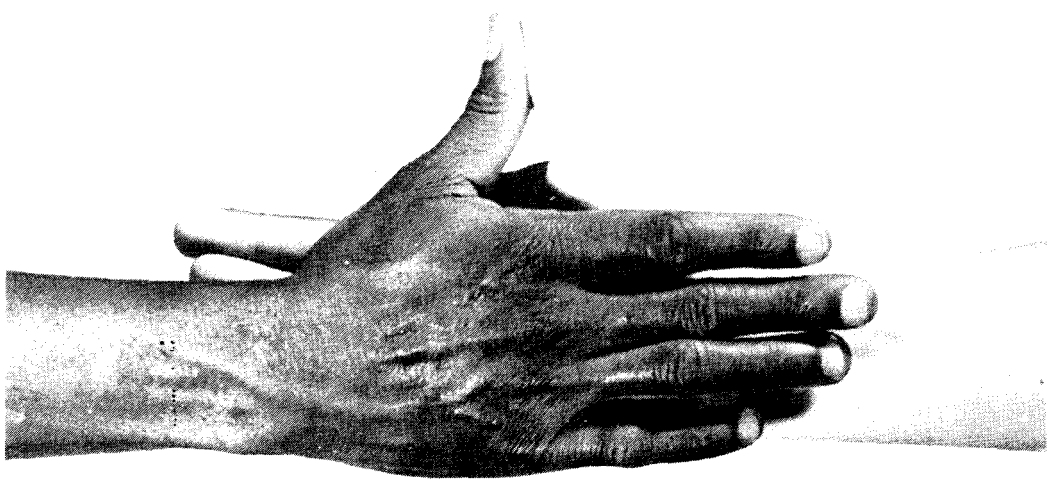
by andreas fuglesang

Over the last ten years there has been an ever growing importance attached to the communications *problématique*. Most efforts to transform the present international information structures have been made in a rather abstract manner and at a fairly high political level. *About Understanding* represents a major contribution to the problem of communication at the grass roots level.

In this updated and thought-provoking expansion of his earlier book *Applied Communication in Developing Countries: Ideas and Observations*, Andreas Fuglesang introduces new and bold perspectives in his analysis of the role of communications in social and economic development.

Yet the book is no abstract discourse. As a practical guide to the issue of development communication it offers workers in adult education, primary health care and nutrition in the Third World many valuable observations and ideas which they can apply to their own situations.

Andreas Fuglesang is an internationally recognized authority on information, cross-cultural communication and adult education in the Third World.



The Democratization of Communications

From Minority Social Monopoly to Majority Social Representation

By Juan Somavía

'There is today a minority social monopoly over the means of communication in Latin America. The property and control of the principal industrial instruments of information are basically in the hands of one social sector: the powerful private economic and financial interests which exert major influence in national affairs. Through direct ownership and a variety of other methods, they can orient the content and general direction of mass media and have the power to influence significantly the total information agenda of the societies in the region', writes Juan Somavía, the Executive Director of the Latin American Institute for Transnational Studies (ILET) in this sharply critical analysis of the communications situation in Latin America.

The author goes on to map out how it is possible to change the present situation and move towards a democratization of the communications systems by taking a series of concrete steps, based on the recognition of information as a basic human need and on the need for establishing socially legitimate communication structures. He ends by emphasizing that it is necessary in this context to question the economic, cultural and political role played by advertising in contemporary society and suggests that public funding of communication means, for instance along the lines practised in Sweden, should become a central component in the democratization of communications.

The exercise of effective democracy and its fundamental expressions: lack of exploitation, equalization, generalized popular participation, the dignity of employment, adequate income and individual and social creativity—is a universal aspiration. All political systems claim to express its values—yet reality shows otherwise. The world is still seeking the parameters of a fully workable combination of political, social, economic and cultural democracy. The sense and meaning of the democratic process have been interpreted in many different ways and its objectives have been applied through widely varying political and social structures. Under the guise of democracy, different forms of private and public authoritarian power structures roam the world. For instance, both Fortune's largest industrial enterprises, whose relative concentration and power in the economy of the United States have grown significantly,* and the authori-

*Fortune's 500 largest industrial enterprises increased their nominal sales ninefold from 1955 to 1979, while United States GNP grew six times, increasing the relation of their total sales to GNP from 40 per cent to 61 per cent in that period. (1955-77: US Department of Commerce, Statistical Abstract; 1978-79: IMF, International Financial Statistics [GNP]; and Fortune.)

tarian regimes of the South Cone of Latin America claim to be working for democracy. People, though, see things differently. Something is clearly wrong.

However, this is not a paper on the present and future destiny of democracy, although this background has to be considered. It is a paper on the democratization of a fundamental aspect of society, its communication structures, seen from the perspective of a particular region: Latin America. This approach means that three fundamental aspects must be kept in mind:

1. In Latin America, the democratization of communications is an inseparable component of the different national struggles to liberate and democratize both society at large, and the present political systems so largely dominated by authoritarian structures.
2. Unlike any other Third World region, Latin America has copied the United States model of communications in terms of its commercial outlook, its predominantly private ownership pattern (including broadcasting), the overpowering presence of advertising, the use of 'impact' criteria for selection of content and information, and the links between communication power and national and transnational economic and financial groups.
3. The penetration of transnational communication styles in the region is significant and widespread and is a determining factor which reinforces present minority socio-economic structures and affects cultural identity.

Democracy and communications—in search of each other

To pose the questions involved in the democratization of communications, it is useful to identify the historical context in which both these issues have evolved.

The legitimacy of democracy is no longer based exclusively on the existence of a representative political system originated in the regular support of the citizens. The long and dramatic history of the evolution of the capitalist system—within which the model of contemporary Western democracy developed—shows that the self-proclaimed 'industrial democracies' of today were, in a historical perspective, extremely undemocratic until rather recently. Citizens could vote (obviously excluding women!), but they were also exploited and were continually hampered in their efforts to organize themselves against the power of the state and that of private monopolies and trusts. Also, governments which were the outcome of 'free' elections—thus formally legitimate—colonized other nations through different imperial systems in the name of 'civilization'.

Such situations were not changed easily. Much blood, repression and violence has gone into the recognition of the social aspects of a democratic system, the expansion of civil and political rights, and the acceptance of the right to independence of formally colonized countries.

Thus emerged the progressive consolidation of the social and civil rights of citizens as a necessary corollary of their political rights. This led to the incorporation into the constitutional and legal framework of the right to work, social security, unemployment benefits, subsidized education and health services, and the right to organize trade unions and to strike. All of this has taken place in a lengthy process of social struggle which is far from being fully achieved.*

A seemingly uncontrollable process of mergers, concentration and conglomeration has effectively limited the space of economic democracy. The *principle* that social rights are

inseparable components of a true democracy is generally accepted in theory, but the conservative wave of thinking which has surfaced in the wake of the present crisis criticizes it for being an obstacle to efficiency and economic rationality.

More recently, the problem of the responsible exercise of power within a society has generated a new wave of demands to perfect the actual functioning of a democracy. Here the issue is not the question of the legitimacy of a social activity, be it a governmental function, the production of goods and services, the provision of information, or other socially relevant operations, but rather the question of the potentially excessive concentration of power derived from the way these activities are organized and carried out. This has raised the question of accountability for the actions of bureaucratic structures, large transnational conglomerates and powerful communication means. All societies face these problems and are dealing with them in the context of their own social systems and evolution. Nonetheless, the central issue is posed everywhere in that there can be no rights without corresponding social responsibilities.

*Even today, Orwell's famous characterization that 'all men are created equal but some are more equal than others' is fully applicable in many respects to different aspects of most prevailing social systems. For example, some consider the provision of free health services and complete secondary education as fundamental human rights which a democratic society has a duty to satisfy; others consider that health and educational costs should be basically regulated by market forces, making them a function of income and not of human rights. In the same manner, for some social systems the concentration of extreme wealth in few hands can live alongside the existence of extreme poverty without affecting the democratic tissue. For others, true democracy implies the elimination of extreme poverty and the disappearance of extreme wealth.

As a recent report of the Third System Project of the International Foundation for Development Alternatives (IFDA) states:

> The only legitimacy is that of people ... Those who hold power must be held accountable for its exercise. Mechanisms to enforce accountability must be established ... Accountability is part of the effort of people to regain their autonomous power.[1]

In more political terms, contemporary democracies need to respond adequately not only to the question of the *legitimate origin* of power, but also to the fundamental issue of the *democratic exercise* of power. It is no longer sufficient for a political system to be legally democratic; it must also be so in practice.

This synoptic overview of the way that the concept of democracy has evolved, from the recognition of political and social rights to the need to regulate the concentration of power in private or public hands, is closely linked to a corresponding evolution in the appreciation of the functions that communications should play in a democratic society.

In this context, the recognition of freedom of speech and its operational consequence, freedom of the press, became hard-fought democratic banners for those who had the means to exercise them. In their origins, they were élitist, because they could only be practised by the few, and individualistic, because they emerged from a liberal view of society. They were considered basically as individual rights of all citizens, to be affirmed mainly in opposition to the prevailing public powers. Nonetheless, this function of 'watching over' public activities as an independent power implicitly posed the social nature of the function and raised questions of representation—in whose name did the press speak?— and responsibility—to whom was the press accountable for its conduct?

This implicit 'social dimension' became particularly relevant from the perspective of Third World countries and their historical struggle for political independence. In Latin America, the fight against Spanish domination was waged as much on the battlefields of the continent as on the 'information front'. Bolivar himself highlighted this when he said: 'Journalism is the artillery of the mind.' On different occasions, he referred to the fact that both printing presses and canons were needed to achieve independence.

This was indeed the case: a number of newspapers and pamphlets which appeared throughout the Spanish colonies played a crucial role in promoting independence. The history of independent journalism in the region has its roots in these publications, which were committed to the ideals of nationalism and autonomy. They raised the level of peoples' consciousness with respect to the oppressive conditions under which they were living and promoted the revolutionary struggle. They made up an 'opinion' press which found its justification in being part of an overall political process embracing the life of all patriots in the colonies. It was a press that clearly knew which side it was on. Similar situations arose in other Third World as well as industrialized countries at this time. The political context determined the social role of the press. The similarities between its role in this case and in the contemporary struggle of many Third World peoples to achieve full internal and external political, economic and cultural decolonization are evident and striking.

Later on a basic evolution occurred in communications. In the centre countries, the dominant model of information moved steadily towards commercialism. In short, what emerged as the exercise of a political right became—in the process of its implementation—a business-oriented matter. Increasingly, market considerations began to influence decisions with respect to what information was all about. This process was accelerated when technological breakthroughs made mass production possible and mass consumption indispensable.* Advertising became an industrial requirement and the media appeared as a 'natural' information link between producers and consumers.

At that stage, a central change took place. Media no longer had to depend exclusively on income from selling papers, as advertising revenues began to play a major role in their financing. However, to be of interest to advertisers, media had to become properly *mass* media—they had to reach the widest possible public. This had a profound impact on the professional criteria applied to news selection. News had to catch the reader's eye. It had to have impact—to be exceptional, tragic or morbid. With relatively few changes—except those resulting from technological innovation and greater sophistication—this same model has continued, extended now to broadcasting and other non-print media.

Thus, while the concept of democracy moved *towards* incorporating its social dimensions, the practice of communication moved *away* from those aspects which were of a socio-political nature.

This was felt particularly in the Latin American press, where a number of factors com-

*It is in the United States that this outlook has developed in its extreme form. In Europe and most Third World countries broadcasting came into being as a public service financed by a combination of public funds, service charges and regulated advertising. In Sweden, a subsidy is given to the second newspaper in each community in an effort to counter the logic of concentration of market forces and thus promote pluralism. Latin America followed the US model.

bined to change the nature of its initial liberating role: political instability led to the recurrence of dictatorships; border disputes and wars inherited from colonial demarcations changed regional nationalism into national chauvinism; the commercial and economic classes which emerged after independence dominated the press in their own interests; and the position of the region in the areas of influence, first of the British Empire and later of US hegemony, created strong links of dependence on the communication models of these countries. With the growing overall dependence of Latin America on the United States, the commercial form of communication became prevalent in the region.

The reactions to this situation have been widespread. They can be summed up in the idea that *information is a social good and not a merchandise*. It is felt that the establishment of communication structures cannot be considered a business like any other, to be governed exclusively by profit criteria. They are set up to implement an individual and collective right of peoples and societies: the right to communicate. As with democracy, the 'social' aspects of communications have become increasingly recognized as a fundamental dimension of their contemporary functions, but they are yet to be fully defined and put into practice. In many societies, such recognition continues to be conceptual, rather than a practical aspect of everyday life.

Finally, the use and control of communication means afford power. Power should be accountable. Accountability is a basic component of democracy. Having become so important to individual and collective life at the local, national and international level, the modelling of communication structures can no longer be left exclusively in the hands of private or public bureaucrats. Instruments and institutions based on widespread social participation are being recognized as necessary in order to evaluate, assess and supervise the manner in which communication structures are established and perform their social functions. This has led to the idea that communications should be seen as a public service, whether in private or in public hands, and should be organized accordingly.

Thus, we find that the historical itinerary of democracy and communications naturally leads to the issues involved in the democratization of communications. Both have their origin in a liberal affirmation of the individual; both have evolved in different cycles towards a recognition of their social dimensions; and today both are objects of concern from the perspective of the accountability of power. In a wide framework, these tendencies point to the fact that democratic communications are a part of a democratic society, but also that communications are a means for the democratization of society. Communications, being a part of democracy, are also an instrument of its achievement.

Social monopoly of communications

There is today a minority social monopoly over communication means in Latin America. The property and control of the principal industrial instruments of information are basically in the hands of one social sector: the powerful private economic and financial interests which exert major influence in national affairs. Through direct ownership and a variety of other methods, they can orient the content and general direction of mass media and have the power to influence significantly the total information agenda of the societies in the region.

Furthermore, under present conditions of widely spread authoritarian conservative re-

gimes there is a sort of 'natural marriage' of interest between the repressive political power of military government and the social power of prevailing information structures.

Some figures in broadcasting might be useful as an empirical background to the analysis that follows. Dr. Peter Schenkel, of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation has made one of the most important contributions in describing property structures of media in Latin America.[2] The examples given below have been gathered by him:

1. In Mexico City, Televisa controls four of the six television channels and five cable vision outlets (Televisa is a 1972 merger of 'Telesistema' of the Azcarraga/O'Farrill Group with 'Television Independiente' of the Garza Sada Group of Monterrey). Of the 707 commercial radio stations, 565 (80 per cent) are administered by only 13 chains.
2. In Colombia, television is considered a public service but its programming is left to private companies through leasing arrangements. Three enterprises (RTI, Punch and Caracol) control around 60 per cent of prime time transmission through the two existing channels. In 1978, of the 386 commercial radio stations, 231 (60 per cent) were owned by only four chains (Caracol, Todelar, RCN and Super).
3. In Chile, all television channels are under the control of the military government. The largest one and the only one of national dimension is Canal Nacional, which is state owned. The other three belong to the universities, which are presently under the control of government-appointed rectors. There are strong pressures for the creation of private channels or the acquisition of existing ones by business interests. In 1979, of the 208 radio stations, five private chains plus the state and university radio system (under government control) represented 83 per cent of installed capacity. With the almost total elimination of dissidence in broadcasting, private and governmental channels transmit basically the same message with a few self-censored exceptions.
4. In Peru and Argentina, which developed different efforts of public presence and social participation in broadcasting under the governments of Velasco Alvarado and Peron (second presidency), there are now different pressures to privatize this sector.

In the examples quoted, and according to the different national situations, the minority social monopoly operates independently and/or through the management of state-controlled media. It is important to understand the nature and functioning of this minority social monopoly because it sets the framework within which the democratization of communications can become a reality or will remain a Utopia. The following are the main characteristics of the monopoly:

1. Its origin lies in an alliance of interests ranging from family inheritance of influential media to the emergence of new centres of industrial and finanical power. The 'Gran Prensa' (Great Press) of the Latin American capitals are almost invariably in the hands of this alliance. The 'Deans' and oldest newspapers of the region belong to traditional oligarchic families. Among them, *La Nacion* and *La Prensa* of Buenos Aires are owned by the Mitre and Gainza Paz families, *El Comercio* of Lima by the Miró Quesada, and the *Diario de Hoy* of San Salvador by the Viera Altamirano. Alongside these newspapers, relatively new and more modern media have appeared reflecting the emergence of new dominant economic groups often linked to transnational influence. In Peru, for example, two dailies were founded in the sixties: *Correo* reflecting the nascent fishing bourgeoisie and *Expreso* linked to the

Rockefeller group through its owner Manuel Ulloa (presently Minister of Finance in the government of President Belaunde). In Chile, *El Mercurio* is a good illustration of the 'recycling' capacity of old families. It belongs to the Edwards family whose head has also been a Vice President of Pepsi Cola International. In this way, oligarchic traditions and the thrust of new economic bourgeoisies linked to transnational interests are combined in the defence of group or class interests.

2. The situation has the characteristics of a *social* monopoly because although there is a plurality of sources they produce uniform messages, particularly in political matters. The problems, expectations, points of view and interests of large social sectors—such as trade unions, peasant organisations, women and youth movements, progressive and revolutionary political movements and grassroot and popular opinion in general—are marginalized from dominant information flows or are downright distorted in their presentation. Formal pluralism does not ensure diversity. It reflects a vision of the world as seen by an affluent and powerful minority of society. Ideologically, these communication means transmit—both overtly and covertly—a political philosophy which globally defends the social *status quo*; they are open to only marginal adjustments and confront the forces fighting for structural change. The values and political perspectives promoted are coherent with the maintenance and furtherance of their relative power situation in the economic, communication and political fields. There are many outlets, but a single general approach.

3. The monopolistic dimension is properly social and political, rather than economic. There is acceptance of partial economic competition from within, that is from those sharing the same social views, while fighting *political* competition from without. Through time, this means that some do better than others financially and that different processes of merger, concentration and conglomeration take place, which change the relative importance of individual enterprises or groups. What is not permitted is the development of large-scale ideological competition, although smaller operations without an industrial dimension are accepted, or sometimes even promoted, as a show of democratic spirit. The guiding criterion for the protection of the monopoly situation is the evaluation of the potential extent and impact that new operations with different political perspectives can have on their own ideological pre-eminence. A good example is the experience suffered by different media in Uruguay, such as *Marcha, YA, Extra, De Frente* and *Democracia,* which were treated with ill-will and threatened by a suspension of the official import subsidies on paper to which all publications were entitled. They were finally closed down by governmental decrees which accused their editorial line in defence of democratic rights, of being an 'instigation to subversion'. Further, it is quite significant to note that the adoption of such measures was insistently demanded by such self-proclaimed 'democratic' newspapers as *El Pais, Accion, El Diario* and *La Mañana,* all of them linked to the military government.

4. The monopoly covers all sorts of activities, from the more traditional ones—such as press, broadcasting, entertainment, advertising and public relations—to more recent ones—such as informatics, data banks and information processing. Practically no field of contemporary communications is left untouched, thus disposing of complementary instruments and techniques to promote group or class interests.

5. The predominantly private structure of ownership and the prevailing commercial pat-

tern of communication, highly dependent on advertising, ensure the survival of the monopoly while limiting the possibilities for the consolidation of alternative communication means. In Latin America all the funding of commercial broadcasting comes from advertising. In the Great Press, around 50 per cent originates in advertising. Through the control of advertising the monopoly can virtually determine the survival or failure of those means which might endanger its subsistence or take away part of its 'political market'.

6. In practical terms, the communication means of the social monopoly are the real 'hosts' of transnational penetration. There is national property but transnational content. The products offered are highly dependent on material promoted by the transnational communication structures and even those developed locally show this predominant influence in style and approach. Both in quantitative and qualitative terms, the many nationally controlled outlets properly become conveyor belts of foreign interests and alien cultural values. There is a true integration of the social monopoly into the overall global perspectives of the transnational power structure. Communications is a field in which national property does not ensure national autonomy or self-reliance. Direct investment is not necessary for transnational penetration to take place. It is present in three complementary ways: (a) through the control in the *production* of messages (news agencies, advertising material, films, records, books, radio and TV programmes)—an important part of the content transmitted is a mere *distribution* of transnational messages; (b) through the control of transnational advertising which has a major influence on the financial structures of communication means; and (c) through the promotion of a model of information and social values which is responsive to transnational interests. It is in this perspective that the social monopoly can be considered both a privileged host and an integral part of the transnational power structure.*

7. In general there is no central 'management' of the different communication means of the social monopoly. Its functioning does not respond to any formulation of a conspiracy theory. It is a decentralized monopoly which operates coherently in its individual decisions because the overall 'logic' of operations is shared by its components. They have the same view of the world and they act accordingly. Nonetheless, it is important to mention that there are organizations where consultations and exchange of views take place which lead to joint actions in particular instances, but not on a day-to-day management basis. Among them are press and advertising councils, owners' and professional associations.** Exceptions occur mainly under two different sets of circumstances: conditions of political change which endanger their common power situation in a particular society and the emergence or strengthening of alternative communication instruments which may weaken their influence over communications. In these cases, experience shows that different forms of concertedness and collective action are agreed upon, including understandings with foreign intelligence agencies and the placement of advertising according to clearly political criteria.

* Women's magazines are perhaps the best example of this situation as pointed out by Adriana Santa Cruz and Viviana Erazo in '*Compropolitan*', Editorial Nueva Imagen-ILET, second edition 1981, Mexico City.

**The most important ones in Latin America are the Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa and the Organizasion Interamericana de Radiodifusion.

It is not difficult to conclude that the characteristics of the minority social monopoly inevitably lead towards authoritarian communication structures. As stated before, these means of communication representing minority interests have the power to influence significantly the total information agenda and practices of a nation. This amounts to *private censorship* carried out under the guise of normal business operations and in implementation of the principles of freedom of expression, freedom of the press and freedom of enterprise. Social and popular organizations have no place in this structure. They are to hear, not to say; they are to accept, not to propose; they are objects, not subjects of the communication process.

An in-depth understanding of the instruments and mechanisms through which the social monopoly implements a truly authoritarian communications model and imposes private censorship is essential. This outlook is required to pose in real terms the problems involved in promoting the democratization of communications. In this context, it is important to remember that repression is not only torturing or killing people; it is also silencing them. The monopoly effectively silences the majority of Latin American people, whose voices are heard only exceptionally. In other words, a society need not fall under a dictatorship to live under oppression. The system itself can be so organized that it is in fact authoritarian, although there may be different forms of formal democratic expression.

This leads to another basic issue. The social monopoly over communications cannot subsist on the basis of its power alone. It requires the continued support of the structures which it represents, from which it emerges, and which make it viable in operational terms. Three interlocking circles of authoritarian power structures sustain the monopoly: the growing concentration and power of national economic groups in different forms of alliance with transnational interests; the overt and covert ways in which existing political regimes exercise control over communications and use the instruments of social monopoly for that purpose; and the deformation in culture and values which results from the open-door public policies vis-à-vis transnational penetration in communications. The interaction of these three aspects ensures the sustainability and influence of the structures described.

The impact of the minority social monopoly over communications is compounded by the fact that in many Latin American countries people are living under openly authoritarian political regimes. Basic human rights are not recognized and fundamental democratic freedoms cannot be exercised. In this context, the views and perspectives of large social sectors of the population are simply not represented in present communication flows. Workers, peasants, women, students, political parties and dissidents in general cannot question the order of things because they are forbidden to do so through their own information channels and are excluded in a systematic manner from existing ones (Chile and Argentina are extreme examples of this). Under these conditions, the strength of the social monopoly becomes even greater in practical terms. Worse still, mass media become backers and allies of the repressive regimes and constitute *de facto* instruments of political oppression. Their voices become weak and wavering in the defence of communication freedoms and of democracy in general. Since their economic interests are well served by the system, their once high-pitched defence of freedom of the press and of speech haunts them in a fundamental contradiction which cannot be hidden. Their professional attitude under these conditions shows

the real nature of the way in which they understand their social and political function. The least that can be said is that they have lost credibility for the future. You cannot side with the devil under dictatorships and with god under democracies.*

The road to democratization: from private social monopoly to majority social representation

To think of the democratization of communications in real terms, it is necessary to separate ideals from possibilities, to distinguish what is necessary from what is possible. Two main areas require attention if any progress is to be made towards democratization: the development of social principles which should guide the organization of communication processes and the changes in structures which will permit democratization in practice.

The manner in which these topics will be dealt with is based on certain assumptions which give coherence to the treatment of the subject:

1. A full process of democratization of communications cannot take place *within* authoritarian structures. We understand authoritarian structures to be those which have not been legitimized by an ample social consensus which has expressed itself freely within a participatory political system. Communication processes cannot become truly democratic unless social relations become fully democratized.
2. Actions in the field of communications fall in the realm of political decisions and, much more so, the efforts for their democratization. In this perspective, this is not a technical subject to be left exclusively in the hands of those 'specialized' in it (owners, managers, communicators, researchers, and others). It is an issue which requires participatory political debate as a basis for decision-making with respect to the way in which communications should be organized in different societies and social systems.
3. In the Latin American context, democratization has to confront the *de facto* social monopoly which exists in this field, coupled with the pervading presence of authoritarian regimes.

For these reasons, any action in the communications field has to take account of the intimate relationship between the global process of democratization of society, which must increasingly reach the instruments of communication, and the contribution of communications to the democratization of society. When authoritarian regimes do not even recognize the most elementary social and political rights, it is inescapable that the modification in the organization of communications cannot be approached as an isolated element of a more ample social process. In societies which already have diverse stages of democratic organization and in which steps for social action are more abundant, concrete initiatives can be developed in the present context, although their ultimate significance will always depend on the attainments of a truly democratically organized society.

*A classical case was the visit of Ranald MacDonald, in his capacity as President of the International Press Institute (IPI), to President Pinochet on July 3rd, 1979. After the meeting he declared—in what to many appeared as deadpan humour—'Chile is moving towards a freer and freer press', followed by 'I found the President's ideas on the role of the press very informed.' At that time the independent magazine *Hoy* had been closed down, a situation which he qualified merely as a 'disillusionment'. Not a single word was said of the fact that progressive and left-wing media were forbidden. In a dramatic contrast, IPI has been the most vocal opponent in UNESCO to the ideas promoting the establishment of a New World Information and Communication Order.

Information is a basic human need

The point of departure, in order to promote the democratization of communications, is to recognize that information constitutes a basic need, of a personal nature for individuals and of a collective nature for societies. Satisfying the need for communication is as important for a nation and its citizens as ensuring health, food, housing, education and employment, together with all the social needs that make it possible for its members to develop fully in justice and autonomy. The social need to inform and to be informed is one of the fundamental human rights, since it is an essential component in the improvement of mankind and in a society's capacity for development. This necessarily leads to a thorough questioning of the profit-oriented model of transnational communications, in which information is treated not as a social good, but rather as merchandise which is bought and sold according to the 'logic' of the dominant market. In this context, the audience are treated as a market to whom messages are 'sold' and not as people who are exercising their right to information. Indeed, in order to be informed the public have to accept, as a natural consequence, becoming the primary targets of advertising. In this manner, the reader himself becomes a merchandise which is 'sold' to the advertisers. Under the prevailing profit-oriented model, the public are a captive audience for commercial campaigns which have nothing to do with the fulfilment of the human need to communicate and be informed. In the process, the social function of informing becomes completely denaturalized.

Information is part of the educational process

The educational process does not end with formal education, whether at the school, technical or university level. It is also carried out, and even more effectively, through the communications media, which influence both the student population and the adult population which has already concluded its formal schooling. This educational function is even more evident with respect to the illiterate segments of the population. In their case, the media are sometimes the only instrument through which they receive certain types of knowledge normally acquired in the schooling system. There is at present a total discrepancy between the social concern for the characteristics and contents of the formal educational process and the relative lack of concern for the way in which the communications media exercise their educational function, devoid of an explicit framework of social responsibility. With the capacity to inform or misinform, to show or hide significant facts, to evaluate positively or negatively certain events, to offer or withhold certain kinds of entertainment, the communications media have slowly become prime moulders of national cultures. Being agents of influence with educational capacity means that we are no longer speaking of problems of information flows *per se*, but of a basic instrument that is essential to the development of all societies: education. This necessarily centres the debate on the democratization of communications at a superior level, which poses serious policy problems if the *de facto* educational role of the minority social monopoly is considered.

The social legitimacy of communication structures

In order to move towards democratization it is necessary to clarify the bases of social legitimacy of the communication functions in society. Such a discussion should consider, among other things, the following elements:

1. In an overall sense, communication struc-

tures are legitimate if they reflect a democratically accepted social system in a country. The social consensus with respect to the role and functions of communication must result from an open debate in the context of a participatory process.

2. A second level of legitimacy stems from the need for communication structures to be socially representative of the major forces, classes and social movements which constitute the reality of a given society. This is because of the nature of the information product. Adequate representativity is not necessary to produce shoes or aeroplanes, but it is necessary to produce information. Information has to do with values, perceptions, visions, understandings. From news dispatches to computer programming, subjective elements intervene. Representative social groups and organizations must be adequately present with their own perspectives, ideas and values. The right to communicate is an individual and collective right. It is a right of the people; a right to hear and be heard. When trade unions, political parties, women's movements, consumer defence institutions, youth organizations, religious movements, and other relevant social organizations and independent media can express themselves appropriately, then there is a pluralistic representation in the communication structures. Adequate representation is the opposite of the prevailing minority social monopoly.

3. A third instance of legitimacy is given by the democratic exercise of the power of information. Communication structures and means can conform to existing legislation and be adequately representative, but still fall into the trap of not recognizing their social responsibilities. Because media perform a social function, which satisfies an individual and collective need and puts into practice the people's right to communication, information and communication structures wield power. That is why they must respond to the people in the execution of their tasks; they must be accountable to society for their actions. There cannot be true democratic communications unless there is an open and publicly known framework of accountability for those responsible in the field of communications. This is a generally valid principle for any democratic society, but it becomes particularly crucial in communication matters. The power wielded in this field is enormous. It is well known that a number of editors and journalists have more influence than many popularly elected officials, although the origin of their legitimacy is quite different: one is elected by the people, the other is appointed by the owners. Nonetheless, both perform a public service and should be equally accountable for their actions. The instruments presently available to confront them with their responsibilities are precise in one case and quite weak in the other. On the one hand, a publicly elected official can be impeached, recalled or not re-elected. On the other hand, you can write a letter to the editors, shut off a TV channel, or not buy a newspaper. One accountability has clearly defined and socially accepted instruments, the other is left to the good-will of the accountable party or to the workings of the market. Ratings and sales have become in practice the criteria to judge the performance of the media. Thus, commercial success has replaced social responsibility as the parameter for the adequate performance of the public service of communication and information. That, for all practical purposes, is no accountability. Within each society it is necessary to evolve those instruments of accountability which are consistent with the prevailing social system. For example, the application to

information of the Swedish institution of an 'ombudsman' could be considered.

Representative property structures

There is a need to put collective imagination to work in order to surpass an antinomy which appears increasingly out of date; that is, the idea that there must be either private commercial property or state property in the field of communications.

Neither private nor state enterprise has affirmed itself *per se* as exclusively giving a democratic material basis to the communication process. It all depends on what state we are talking about, and practice shows that the democratic *exercise* of communication power is not the equivalent of either state or private property. Without denying the usefulness and limitations of one form or another in the context of each social system and of the cultural and historical evolution of each nation, it appears necessary to arrive at three basic conclusions:

1. Where a private commercial structure predominates, state participation in a democratic setting can be a means for the diffusion of communication power and the promotion of pluralism, particularly in the field of broadcasting. Also, where state property is the prevailing system, communication means which stem from different forms of representative social organizations have a legitimate role to play.
2. It is possible to conceive new forms of property, particularly what has been called *social* property, which is neither state nor privately controlled. The model of organization of Chilean television up to 1973 gave its management to the universities, which administered it in a way which was not characteristic of a public entity (because they had full autonomy), or of the commercial outlook of private enterprises (because it had no profit objectives). Similar situations exist in the university television and radio systems of Mexico and other countries. In Peru, between 1968 and 1974, an effort was made, although without final success, to develop forms of social property of newspapers by entrusting their administration to appointed social groups. Each one of these initiatives has had limitations and none can be considered as a formula with universal validity, but it should be emphasized that they constitute valuable attempts to surpass the narrow limits of the debate between state and private spheres in the field of communications.
3. Whatever the actual form of property, which in the end depends on the range permitted by the prevailing social system, experience shows that in practical terms the central issue is the actual democratic management of socially representative communication means.* This leads to the issues of access, participation and representation which we have discussed elsewhere.

These considerations, when located in the Latin American context, give a fundamental importance to the issue of property. The minority social monopoly over communications which we have described is rooted in a market economy concept of society which permits or even promotes, for the sake of efficiency, the concentration of the means of production in few private hands. This is even more pertinent in the communication field where

*The experiences of cooperative media, self-management and voluntary groupings are important contributions in this respect. An interesting description of one such instance is given by Hélan Jaworski in *Development Dialogue* 1979:2, in his article on Rural Participation in the Peruvian Press. There he relates the experience of *El Comercio* of Lima during a period when it was administered as a cooperative by peasant organizations.

there is practically no countervailing presence of the state or organized social groups in the ownership of mass media. In practical terms, and according to the political conditions of each society, this leads towards three complementary lines of action:

1. The struggle for a more ample democratization of society through basic structural changes in the prevailing social systems which will have concomitant effects on the patterns of property in the field of communications.
2. The development of alternative communication means which are linked to representative social groups in each society and which can acquire the necessary industrial dimension to express alternative views on a sufficiently large scale to become politically meaningful.
3. The development of forms of social organization and participation leading to the establishment of a framework of rights and responsibilities incumbent upon owners, managers and professionals working in communication means in order to ensure that in practical terms the minority social monopoly over property can move towards greater pluralism in messages.

The legal challenge of contemporary communications

The role and influence of communications have changed dramatically in the course of this century. The technological capacities presently available indicate that greater changes are already in the making. This significant evolution is in sharp contrast to the relative paralysis of the legal framework to cope with and respond to these changes. While existing communication potential is gearing itself to address the realities of the twenty-first century, legal thinking on this matter is still wedded to nineteenth-century ideas. The challenge is clear and an adequate response is a central component of the real possibility of democratizing communications.

It is necessary in this respect to consider a number of interlinked issues, including the following:

1. Increasingly, the proper realm to deal with communication questions is that of public law (be it international, constitutional or social), rather than private law. Freedom of the press is not synonymous with freedom of enterprise. Information rights are not to be confused with commercial rights. A democratic communication structure is not synonymous—in present social monopoly conditions—with private control over information flows. Under conditions of inequality in financial capacity, access and participation, 'laissez faire' policies simply increase social differentiations in this field. Public law is called upon to play a role in the defence of pluralism and adequate democratic representation.
2. There is a growing divergence between the characteristics needed by information products so that they can be sold on the market, and the diversified social needs of increasingly complex societies. Developing further the concept of a public service implies a redefinition of the normative categories under which such activities are legitimized by the existing social order. A public service is a service for the public—not for those who control or manage it. The individual and the community are the initial depositaries of all information rights. The enterprises which organize the implementation of these rights are acting under *delegation* and are accountable for the way they perform their social function. Such an approach does not find a corresponding legal framework today.
3. The recognition of the social dimensions in the communication and democratic processes need to have a logical corollary in the legal

sphere. There is a whole new area of social rights, a new generation of individual and collective rights which have not yet been fully developed conceptually, but which are an expression of real demands of real peoples and societies throughout the world. This points to the need to define and refine further the analytical underpinning and the practical forms of implementation in different social systems of, among others, the following rights: a) The right of representation in the communication structures; b) the right to participation in the different stages of the communication process; c) the right of privacy; d) the right to demand adequate publicity of the acts of governments; and e) the right to demand information disclosure from large transnational entities.

4. If information satisfies a basic need, constitutes a delegated right and has become an agent of educational change, it seems legitimate for societies to evaluate the concrete way in which its communication means fulfil such important functions. If they are in fact performing a public service, they should do so within a social and legal framework of responsibility which reflects the social consensus of each society. There is no right without responsibility. In this respect, there is growing agreement that freedom without responsibility invites distortion and other abuses. But in the absence of freedom there can be no exercise of responsibility.

Today there are diverse legal instruments to protect the autonomy and independence of the communication means in carrying out their public function of providing information, but there is no equivalent development in the framework of social responsibilities for carrying out this function. For this reason, freedom of information must be enriched with a triple perspective: the need to create mechanisms for representation and participation by the organized public and social groups; the need to develop criteria of social responsibility which are democratically accepted by all concerned in the context of the particular circumstances of each society, clearly stating the rights and responsibilities of the communication means; and the need to ensure the professional and social autonomy of the communication means in the face of pressures from economic power groups or bureaucratic structures.

Financing alternative communications

Any innovations conceived with respect to the social legitimacy and property structure of communications would be sterile if they did not consider vigorously the antidemocratic consequences derived from the present systems of financing. Today, relatively large investments are necessary to acquire a certain industrial dimension. Also, access to important flows of advertising is an inescapable requirement to permit the subsistence of the communication enterprise. At present, both these methods of financing are linked to powerful economic and financial groups, with the exception of public media and advertising in certain fields.

Thus there is a very real and concrete problem in obtaining start-up capacity which is not linked to the economic and financial groups that lie at the basis of the existing social monopoly over communications. The problem is compounded by the manner in which advertising has been managed according to political criteria: multiple experiences in Latin America show that when an alternative means of communication questions with intelligence and ability the profound injustices which characterize most Latin American societies, these publications do not receive advertising from

the establishment. In practice, advertising has become an instrument of political control used to block the emergence of means of communication which are representative of alternative views. It is important to be conscious of the fact that this type of indirect private censorship is at least as serious as bureaucratic censorship.

To guarantee the sustainability of alternative communication means, a fundamental prerequisite is the generation of new forms of financing which can break the hold of the social monopoly on media revenues and provide for initial capital outlays and ongoing expenditures. Two complementary aspects of financing should be developed to ensure and permit its democratization:

1. A deep questioning is necessary with respect to the economic, cultural and political role played by advertising in contemporary society. In so far as its financial dimension is concerned, there is no theoretical reason to consider it absolutely normal for the media to depend on advertising for a major part of its revenue. No doubt information on product differentiation, qualities and uses is necessary in any society. But the fact of the matter is that there has never been a really ample debate, nationally or internationally, on the financial function acquired by advertising. It just evolved this way; it sort of 'happened'. But there are a number of legitimate queries that should be posed. Is this really the most democratic way of funding media? What alternatives are there? Can this situation be changed? Shouldn't this issue be raised by different social groups? What experiences have resulted from attempts to reduce the relative role of advertising? No doubt there are no easy solutions, but these questions must nevertheless be addressed.

The financial influence of advertising will not be eliminated overnight. On that basis, certain lines of action can be considered as of now. Among them are: a) Setting limits to the participation of advertising in overall funding of media; b) establishing mechanisms for better distribution of advertising among different media; and c) developing further the possibilities of public subsidies as in the field of education and health.

2. Public funding of communication means should become a central component of the democratization of financing. In countries like Sweden public contributions have a mechanism to guarantee, in practice, freedom of expression and pluralism in communication structures. Similar mechanisms can be conceived so as to eliminate bureaucratic control and indirect censorship. It is possible to think of a public fund to finance the development of alternative communication channels. The management of such a fund would require the participation of such groups in order to ensure its democratic operation. Income for such a fund would have to be stable and considered as a regular source of financing. Among others, it could have the following origins: a) annual contributions from the national budgets; b) income from special taxes applied to advertising outlays or imports of foreign communication material; c) contributions from international cooperation, such as the International Programme for the Development of Communications set up by UNESCO; and d) private contributions from foundations and other non-governmental sources which are not tied to any particular project.

It is necessary to repeat that the question of financing is crucial for the democratization of communications. In the majority of Latin American countries, if the situation is left as it is and in the absence of public funding, only

the powerful economic and financial groups have the capacity to sustain communication enterprises at an industrial level. This means that most of the people are excluded from a basic instrument for the practical exercise of their right to information. New forms of financing are a prerequisite of democratization.

Notes

1. Building Blocks for Alternative Development Strategies. A Progress Report from the Third System Project, *IFDA Dossier* 17, May-June 1980, p. 61; reprinted in *Development Dialogue* 1981:1, p. 99.
2. *Communicacion y Cambio Social.* This work covers Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Mexico and Peru, has been updated to 1980, and will be published shortly by CIESPAAL.

The New World Information and Communication Order

Resolution adopted by the twenty-first session of the Unesco General Conference, Belgrade 1980

Resolution 4/19 adopted on the report of Programme Commission IV at the thirty-seventh plenary meeting, on 27 October 1980.

The General Conference .....

14. *Considers* that:
   (a) this new world information and communication order could be based, among other considerations, on:
      (i) elimination of the imbalances and inequalities which characterize the present situation;
      (ii) elimination of the negative effects of certain monopolies, public or private, and excessive concentrations;
      (iii) removal of the internal and external obstacles to a free flow and wider and better balanced dissemination of information and ideas;
      (iv) plurality of sources and channels of information;
      (v) the freedom of journalists and all professionals in the communication media, a freedom inseparable from responsibility;
      (vii) the capacity of developing countries to achieve improvement of their own situations, notably by providing their own equipment, by training their personnel, by improving their infrastructures and making their information and communication media suitable to their needs and aspirations;
      (viii) the sincere will of developed countries to help them attain these objectives;
      (ix) respect for each people's cultural identity and for the right of each nation to inform the world public about its interests, its aspirations and its social and cultural values;
      (x) respect for the right of all peoples to participate in international exchanges of information on the basis of equality, justice and mutual benefit;
      (xi) respect for the right of the public, of ethnic and social groups and of individuals to have access to information sources and to participate actively in the communication process;
   (b) this new world information and communication order should be based on the fundamental principles of international law, as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations;
   (c) diverse solutions to information and communication problems are required because social, political, cultural and economic problems differ from one country to another and, within a given country, from one group to another.

Advertising and the Democratization of Communications

By Rafael Roncagliolo and Noreene Janus

To a greater extent than anywhere else in the Third World, advertising serves in Latin America as the principal source of income for financing the media. This dependence on advertising is, in addition, growing in Latin America—as in many other parts of the Third World. Advertisers and advertising agencies have thus acquired such a degree of influence over the media that they virtually control them. There are also in Latin America many examples of how this power has been used to punish 'misbehaviour' on the part of the media. In this context, it should be mentioned that two-thirds of the advertising revenues of the Latin American press come from 30 transnational corporations, most of them of US origin.

'The seriousness of these problems', write Raphael Roncagliolo and Noreene Janus in this article, 'suggest the opposite of the common liberal assumption that there is a direct relationship between private financing of the media and freedom of expression. On the contrary, this form of financing typically converts the media into a social monopoly of the dominant classes and transnational interests.'

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Efforts to democratize communication have emerged within the larger movement towards the democratization of nations and humanity as a whole. These efforts have emphasized the need to limit the monopoly control over the mass media exercised by the media owners, and by the powerful economic interests associated with them, and to break the rigid censorship imposed on the mass media in repressive political regimes. The source of power over the media has traditionally been located in the actual owners and in the government bureaucracies, while the power exercised by those who finance the media is often overlooked. In Latin America, since the principal source of media revenues is advertising, the power that these advertisers enjoy must be considered in the search for more democratic forms of communication.[1]

The role of advertising in democratic societies, and more specifically its relationship to the democratization of communication, is complex and has received very little attention. Even the term 'democracy' itself is fraught with confusion. A few words of clarification on this concept should precede the discussion of advertising.

First, it must be stressed that the concept of democracy should no longer be reduced to the traditional political definition associated with suffrage within liberal contexts. The mass movements and liberation struggles in depen-

dent countries have brought about a redefinition of the term, broadening it and revitalizing it according to their specific historical context. They have demanded a real and effective democracy that goes beyond political rhetoric and legal abstractions to include economic and social issues as well as political rights.

Furthermore, the concept must be extended to include not only national issues but international relationships as well. The proposed New International Economic Order and New International Information Order are efforts to democratize the global community of nations.

Similarly, the democratization of communication is a process which must proceed at two levels: domestically, it calls for at struggle against the authoritarian and non-participatory communication structures which reflect the economic power of those who own and control the media, and which in many Latin American countries are sustained by repressive governments; internationally, it implies an attack on transnational communication structures which perpetuate dependency and undermine the concept of national sovereignty in Third World countries. The international debates on communication, including those held at the General Assembly of UNESCO, those emerging from the non-aligned countries movement and the MacBride Commission Report have all concluded by rejecting the authoritarian model of communication—be it based on economic or political power—in favour of the democratic model.[2] The democratic model allows for free access and participation in communication systems by individuals and groups at both national and international level and serves as the conceptual framework for the discussion of advertising and its relation to the process of democratization of communication.

The analysis of communication systems according to these criteria must probe beyond the formal expressions found in the legal code; it must focus on the actual functioning of communication at a specific historical stage of a given society. This type of analysis indicates that the mass media in today's Latin American societies exhibit the following characteristics:

1. Freedom of expression is limited to those who own or finance the mass media.
2. Information is largely a one-way flow from those with power to the broad mass of citizens, with little or no horizontal communication.
3. Communications systems are not subject to a public review process whereby distortions are corrected so that the information may serve the needs of the majority of the population.
4. The concept of information for commercial and political persuasion often prevails over the concept of objective and unbiased information.

Within this context, the struggle to create democratic forms of communication leads inevitably to the issue of media financing. The 'power of the purse' is as applicable to the mass media as it is in other sectors of society. For the commercial model of media financing, advertising serves as the principal source of revenue. This is especially true in Latin America, where because of political and economic zones of influence the US model of commercial broadcasting has been widely adopted. Of the 31 countries in the world with commercial broadcasting systems, 16 are found in Latin America, making its media the most commercial of any region. Radio and television depend to an even greater extent on advertising than the printed media, since they do not receive a part of their revenues from news-stand sales and subscriptions. Even more important, however, is the fact that this dependence on advertising revenues has been growing. The

mass media are devoting increasing amounts of time and space to advertising, especially in Latin America but also in many other parts of the world.*

The liberal tradition has consistently claimed that this form of media financing ensures that 'freedom of the press' and 'freedom of expression' will be upheld. If the issues of control and participation are used as criteria, however, the conclusion is quite different. Advertisers and advertising agencies have acquired such a degree of influence over the media that they virtually control them. The group of advertisers and advertising agencies that exercises such a tremendous power over the mass media is small. Data from US, presented in Chart 1, indicate that the 100 largest advertisers account for more than half the advertising revenues accruing to the major media. The concentration of media advertising may be even more extreme in Latin America, but very little data is available on this subject. The control exercised over the media by these few advertisers is especially apparent in those contexts where there are several media channels competing for limited advertising expenditures. This is true for newspapers, consumer magazines and radio. In those cases where the media channels are limited in number and under monopoly control, as is often true of television, the media also enjoy considerable power vis-à-vis their advertisers. In both cases, however, free access and open participation by the majority of the population is limited.

* There is a trend towards the replacement of the state-financed model of broadcasting with the commercial model, for which the principal source of revenue is advertising. This trend may be observed especially in Africa and Asia, where the media are increasingly accepting advertising. Even in Europe, the traditionally strong state media financing systems have one by one shifted to policies allowing for some combination of commercial support. Britain, France, Holland and Switzerland have all opened broadcasting to advertising in the last decade.

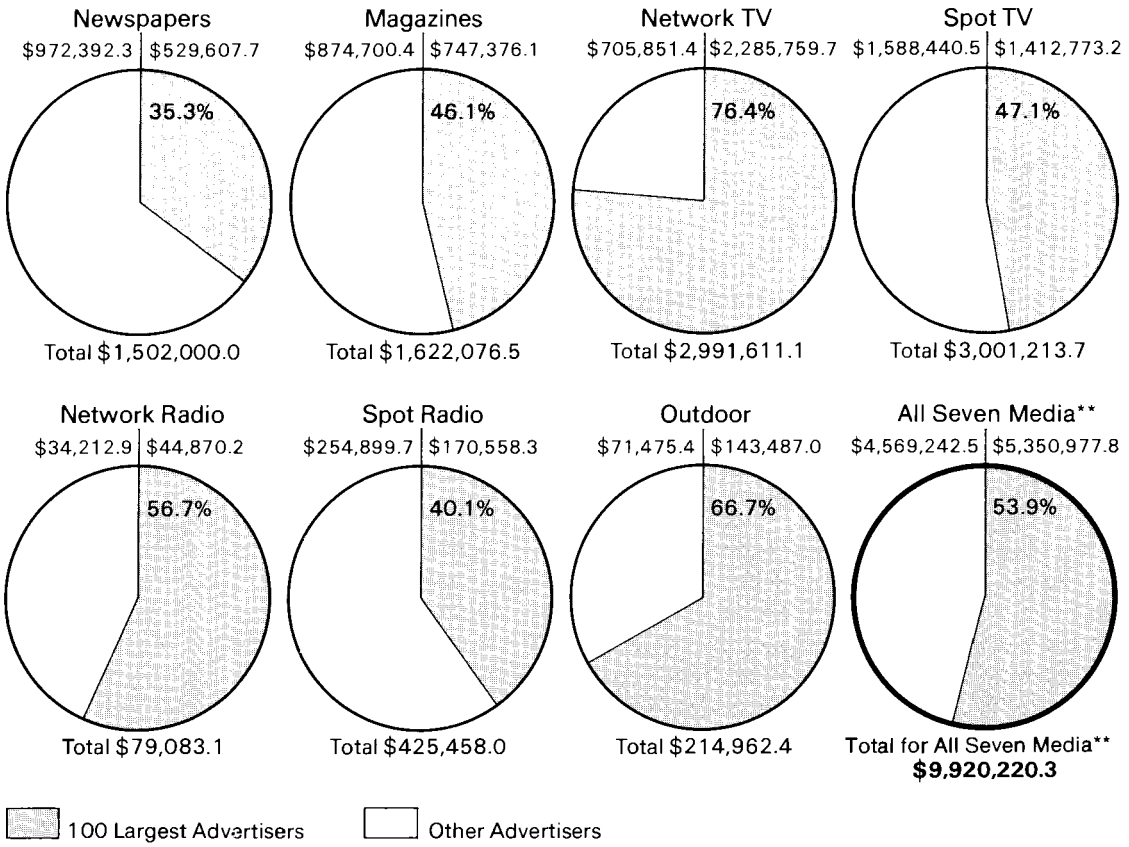
Advertising and the capitalist model of development

The relationship between advertising and democracy extends beyond the mere number of advertisers who with their advertising budgets contribute to the financing of the mass media. The specific functions that advertising fulfils within Latin American societies must be examined. These are as undemocratic as the system which they serve. A historical analysis of the growth and development of advertising shows that it has specific purposes: a generalized advertising common to all types of societies does not exist. Advertising reflects the capitalist economic structures in which it has developed.

Modern advertising is very different from what de Girardin proposed 35 years ago as the standard for a commercial announcement: 'The advertisement should be concise, simple and frank. It should never wear a mask. It should go straight to its objective, the head'.[3]

Today's advertising has little relation to frankness and objectivity. It has developed its own linguistic and iconic codes. It is no longer conceivable to develop advertising without the use of psychological research to discover the most efficient methods of linking certain moods, lifestyles and social status to the product, rather than emphasizing its utilitarian values. Advertising has grown in nearly all regions of the world. Table 1 shows the expansion of advertising in Latin America between 1968 and 1974. Associated with this growth is the unlimited extension of advertising to many parts of the social landscape. Using both the mass media channels as well as billboards,

Chart 1 Relative share of US media advertising from 100 largest advertisers in 1976*



* Of $9.9 billion invested by national advertisers in eight media last year, more than half ($5.3 billion) came from the 100 leading national advertisers.

** Includes also farm publications.

Sources: Leading National Advertisers; Publishers Information Bureau; Broadcast Advertisers Reports; Robert J. Coen, McCann-Erickson; Radio Expenditure Reports; Institute of Outdoor Advertising; Outdoor Advertising Association of America; Radio Advertising Bureau Media Records.

beauty shops, curbstones, matchbooks, etc., advertising has become a cultural form 'par excellence'. From product information, advertising has become the 'parole culturelle' of contemporary capitalism.[4]

Not only have the style and extent of advertising changed, however. From an activity that was marginal to production and consumption, advertising has become a fundamental instrument in the accumulation of capital. It helps to open new markets and preserve old ones for the production of goods, it allows for increased turnover time of capital, it enables manufacturers to use such capitalist production strategies as 'planned obsolescense' and the differentiation of parity products, and it even allows firms to advertise themselves and the free enterprise system.

Thus, advertising is a powerful tool in the perpetuation of a specific type of society. In fulfilling this function, however, it has a great impact on the people who make up that society. A discussion of advertising and democracy must therefore go beyond the overall economic effects to examine the specific implications of advertising for the majority of the population.

First, advertising has been used as part of a larger strategy of industrial management. In the United States, during the labour unrest in the first decades of the twentieth century, consumption was used along with other forms of control to diffuse protest. The function of advertising, like welfare programmes, was to promote the positive and beneficial side of modern capitalism by focusing on the con-

Table 1 Growth of advertising expenditures in Latin America 1968–74 (in US millions of dollars)*

Countries	1968	1974	Diff. % 1968–74
Argentina	247.4	285.0	15.2
Bolivia	7.6	3.6	−52.6
Brazil	233.7	941.9	303.0
Chile	33.7	31.2	− 7.4
Colombia	66.0	81.7	23.8
Costa Rica	1.1	12.8	1 063.6
Ecuador	11.0	23.4	112.7
El Salvador	2.1	2.9	38.1
Guatemala	3.2	7.2	125.0
Honduras	1.6	2.4	50.0
Mexico	319.7	353.4	10.5
Nicaragua	1.2	3.4	183.3
Panama	.9	8.9	888.9
Peru	33.6	59.5	77.1
Puerto Rico	50.0	72.3	44.6
Uruguay	5.6	10.2	82.1
Venezuela	48.2	124.3	157.9
	1 066.6	2 024.1	89.8

* Figures are not given in constant prices nor have they been deflated against an index of prices in the advertising industry.
Source: Starch, INRA, Hooper & International Advertising Association *World Advertising Expenditures* (yearly).

sumption of goods rather than the production process. During this period of US history, the creators of this strategy were very clear that 'the so-called democratic idea' should be avoided 'within such classes'.[5]

In the post World War Two period in the United States, advertising was an important tool in the promotion of consumption which was thought to be the best way to maintain a healthy economy and prevent post-war depression. During this period, the political aspect of consumption was made explicit for the first time. To consume was to be patriotic. Advertising of that period claimed that to support the country in time of need was to buy: 'It doesn't matter what you buy, but buy something' was the message of advertising of the post-war decade.

The period of rising consumerism has been one of limited democracy. Political participation is generally limited to the act of voting once every four years and the voting rate of the population has been alarmingly low in many industrialized countries.

Advertising has emerged within a context of labour conflicts, political struggles and mass protest. It is the principal mechanism by which corporate and political leaders have tried to neutralize the ills associated with modern industrial organization with an ideology that emphasizes hedonism, consumption and individualism. 'Consumer democracy', as it has been called, is meant to replace all other forms of political allegiance and participation. The problem of democracy, in this sense, is limited to the right to consume, and in most Third World contexts the right to '*hope* to consume'.

At the international level, the concept of 'consumer democracy' helps the transnational corporation to attract the loyalties of workers, middle managers and political leaders. Its most powerful appeal for loyalty, however, is to the general public. Barnet and Muller report that the Council of the Americas suggested 'Consumer Democracy is more important than Political Democracy' as a slogan for their corporate members.[6] This concept helps them to legitimize their presence and promote their products. Furthermore it helps them to achieve a 'world without borders', minimizing the threat of nationalism. To the extent that the transnational corporation is able to create primary identification with a product or life style, rather than with a political community, it may diffuse political protest and ensure its own survival.

Second, the price of the goods which are

offered to the consumer must include the cost of advertising. While there is disagreement over the relationship between the cost of advertising and the cost of the product, research has shown that many industries with high advertising-to-sales ratios reap higher than average profits.[7] Bernal reports that in several Mexican industries, costs for advertising and promotion may exceed production costs.[8] This is especially true in the tobacco industry, which is at the same time one of the industries with the highest relative penetration of foreign capital. Excessive advertising budgets are ultimately passed on to the consumer, limiting even further the access to 'consumer democracy'.

Third, the very production of goods in this model of development is antidemocratic. Decisions about what should be produced are made by giant corporations according to their potential sales within the limited sectors with purchasing power. Production of goods is not determined according to the needs of the majority of the population, but rather according to the basic rule of capitalist development: highest returns on capital.

Those products which yield the highest profits are often consumer goods of marginal utility requiring large advertising budgets. The most heavily advertised products tend to be detergents, tobacco, pharmaceuticals, prepared foods, beer and soft drinks. Furthermore, Table 2 shows that this range of most advertised product types varies little from country to country. Advertising perpetuates the antidemocratic system whereby manufacturers rather than consumers decide what should be produced.

Fourth, modern advertising makes use of all the scientific advances in the fields of psychology, psychobiology and the social sciences for the purpose of manipulating potential consumers. Although the democratic idea is based on freedom of thought, freedom to make one's own choices and freedom to decide one's own actions, advertising uses every available technique to restrict that freedom, reorienting it towards increased consumption. The most glaring assault on this freedom of choice is in the case of children, whose free development is distorted and constrained according to the logic of marketing.

The control exercised by advertising in the context of production and consumption is analogous to the coercion and repression of expression in dictatorial regimes. Though they operate in different ways, and for different purposes, they are both antidemocratic.

The mass media as advertising channels

The mass media can only reflect the organization of the system in which they operate. Since they serve as the principal channel by which manufacturers reach their potential consumers, they have become indispensable marketing tools. While there are several aspects to the relationship between advertising and the mass media, only the most important of these will be treated here. They confirm the fact that the form and content of the media reflect the media's role in capitalist accumulation rather than as a form of expression in a democratic and pluralistic model of communication.

This relationship between advertising and the mass media began to emerge in the middle of the last century, when the newspaper became an effective advertising vehicle.[9] Since then, the mass media have become increasingly commercialized. The non-commercial parts of communication, including news and cultural materials, have become merchandise subject to the laws of supply and demand and

Table 2 Advertising expenditures by industry classification, 1974: Panama, South Korea, Taiwan* and Austria**

Panama		South Korea		Taiwan**		Austria	
Industrial sector	% av total advertising	Industrial sector	% of total advertising	Industrial sector	% of total advertising	Industrial sector	% of total advertising
Clothing	15.5	Textiles	39.3	Pharmaceutical	26.3	Food	20.4
Food	11.5	Food	20.6	Food	21.7	Retail	15.1
Beverages	7.7	Drugs	18.6	Department stores	17.5	Household products	11.0
Detergents	7.7	Beverages	8.5	Electrical appliances	12.4	Services	10.6
Pharmaceutical	7.7	Cosmetics	5.6	Clothing	3.7	Cars	10.5
Airlines	5.4	Electronics	3.2	Watches	3.7	Toiletries and medical	10.4
Accessories	3.8	Fats and Oils	2.6	Stationery	3.0	Detergent	7.1
Tobacco	3.8	Others	1.8	Transportation	2.8	Clothing	3.7
Cars	2.3			Machines	2.6	Others	11.1
Others	34.6			Others	6.2		
Total advertising in US$ million	8.9	Total advertising in US$ million	85.9	Total advertising in US$ million	98.5	Total advertising in US$ million	342.6

* (Taiwan Province of China)
** Strict comparison between countries is not possible since product categories are different in each case.
***(Taiwan Province of China)Television advertising only.
Source: American Association of Advertising Agencies. *The Advertising Agency Business Around the World*. 7th edition. New York, 1975.

the maximization of profits. Even more serious, the mass media have become *producers of audiences and potential markets* which are then sold like merchandise to advertisers.

Empirical analysis of actual newspaper space shows the extent to which the media are dependent on advertising. In Latin America, advertising takes up more than half of the space in major newspapers. When the total commercial space (including classified ads) is considered, the part that is sold may reach 70 per cent leaving only 30 per cent for news, cultural materials, and other journalistic content.[10]

However, the growing presence of advertising in the mass media is not simply a matter of the distribution of space. Rather, the distribution of space is a mere manifestation of the underlying relationship. More significant than data concerning the time or space sold to advertisers would be data that measure the amount of power that such advertising affords. Schmid points out that as much as 80 per cent of a newspaper's revenues come from advertising, which gives the major advertisers the power to make or break the paper.[11] In Latin America, there are numerous cases where this power has actually been exercised to punish the occasional misbehaviour of the major newspapers. In the case of *El Nacional* of Caracas or *El Comercio* of Lima, the advertisers removed their advertising and placed it in a competitor's newspaper. This type of action is not possible when the paper contains a large amount of advertising by small businesses, trade unions and private individuals rather

than a few large firms. In this case, the large firms and their political allies will often resort to other forms of direct repression of the outspoken newspaper, as has occurred many times in Uruguay.

The case of radio and television in Latin America is even more dramatic. These media, virtually entirely dependent on advertising for their revenues, are considered 'good' when they attract large audiences with sufficient purchasing power and 'bad' when their non-commercial programming interferes with the commercial objective of the advertising.[12]

Whenever possible, the political and corporate élite will avoid the use of open repression of the free and democratic participation of the people. They prefer to limit these freedoms without having to resort to violence. Advertising in Latin America serves much the same purpose as it did in the United States of the 1920s and 1930s: a tool to regulate conflict keeping 'freedom' and 'democracy' within safe limits. It has become one of the most effective modern strategies limiting free expression. In some cases, the financial control exercised in liberal political conditions is as effective as the more covert ways in which the media are regulated in more repressive regimes. Neither method is conducive to a free, pluralistic and democratic form of communication.

Advertising and cultural sovereignty

The use of the mass media as advertising channels enhances the control that the economic and political élite exercise over the communication system and the audience, limiting free expression and participation of those who own or finance the media. The large majority of newspapers and broadcast networks are locally owned, with little cross directorship.* The case of Edwards, who owns *El Mercurio* of Santiago and serves at the same time as Vice-President of the giant transnational firm Pepsi-Cola, is uncommon. It would follow, then, that control over Latin American mass media is largely in the hands of Latin Americans—but nothing could be further from the truth. The transnational power structure no longer relies on legal ownership to obtain control over the Latin American media. Other mechanisms, including advertising, serve the same purpose. Schmid reports:

> Normally the newspaper owners are anxious to collaborate with foreign capital ... More than 80 per cent of newspaper, radio and television advertising in Peru was (during the period 1967–70) done by US advertising agencies. *El Correo*, one of the major newspapers of Lima, received 40 per cent of its revenues during the first half of 1969 from just two transnationals, Sears and IBEC ... It has been estimated that two-thirds of the advertising revenues of the Latin American press comes from some thirty transnational corporations, most of which are of US origin ... It is probably not an exaggeration to say that most of the Latin American press is as 'free' as these 'free enterprise' corporations and their advertising agencies allow it to be.[13]

Transnational advertising has virtually taken over most Latin American media channels. A study carried out on the broadcasting media of Mexico, for example, reported that of the 270 commercials transmitted by a popular radio station on an average day in 1971, 84 per cent were for transnational products. Similarly, of the 647 commercials transmitted

* This is not the case with consumer magazines, however. A large and growing number of the most successful consumer magazines in Latin America are published by US firms or under contract to US firms. The number of European and other foreign magazines is minimal.

by the five television channels operating in Mexico City, 77 per cent advertised transnational products.* [14]

In the major women's magazines of Latin America, the transnational control over advertising is even greater. Santa Cruz and Erazo analysed the 25 largest women's magazines (by circulation) in six Latin American countries and found that they carried an average of 60 per cent transnational advertising.[15] The ratio is the same in practically all Latin American media. All the available data suggest that the principal beneficiary of the commercial model of mass media in Third World countries is the transnational corporation. The mass media serve to generate consumer awareness of transnational brands.** More importantly, however, they serve to promote the 'transnational ideology' as a global cultural model.

It must be emphasized that this drive to create a universal transnational culture reflects international marketing logic rather than a corporate strategy to subvert local cultures.

The standardization of production at a global level requires a parallel standardization of consumption and cultural characteristics. Global marketing techniques derive from the necessity to create a world consumption community that drinks, eats and smokes identical products.[16] The US cosmetics firm Revlon, for example, faced with rising advertising costs, believes that one single advertising campaign may be used successfully and more cheaply in all the foreign markets where their goods are produced and distributed. Thus, the same campaign for 'Charlie' perfume, which shows a blonde Anglo-saxon woman on New York's Fifth Avenue, is used for both Latin American audiences and US audiences. The message is the same everywhere: 'Consumption is the key to happiness and the global corporation has the products that make life worth living.'[17] Through the image of 'Charlie' perfume, the viewer in any Third World country may associate that product with membership of the world consumption community, even if that membership is, in reality, available to only a small minority of the population.

Towards a democratic communication

The seriousness of the problems discussed here suggests the opposite of the common liberal assumption that there is a direct relationship between private financing of the media and freedom of expression. On the contrary, this form of financing typically converts the media into a social monopoly of the dominant classes and transnational interests. They have become authoritarian and manipulative tools whose orientation and content represent the antithesis of democratic affirmation.

The problem of the mass media in contemporary society should, therefore, be separated from the false polarities of public vs private; of *de jure* monopoly exercised by the state vs *de facto* monopoly exercised by the major economic powers; of political authoritarianism vs

* The term 'transnational advertising' refers to advertising by corporations which are partially or wholly owned and controlled by foreign capital, for the purpose of promoting their own products or company image. (See Juan Somavía 'La Estructura Transnacional de Poder y La Informacion Internacional' in Fernando Reyes Matta (*ed.*) *La Información en el Nuevo Orden Internacional*, Mexico: ILET, 1977.)

** A sample of television viewers in Indonesia, when asked to recall television advertisements of the previous week, responded with transnational brands exclusively. (See Alfian, 'Some Observations on Television in Indonesia' in Jim Richstad (*ed.*), *New Perspectives in International Communication*. Honolulu: East-West Center, 1979.)

economic authoritarianism. In other words, the task ahead consists of designing and implementing a form of communication which, like work, education and other basic rights, may be integrated into the growing field of *social rights* organized for participation and oriented towards democracy.

Notes

1. For a general background to the problem of advertising and the mass media in Third World countries, see Janus, Noreene and Roncagliolo, Rafael, 'Advertising, Mass Media and Dependency' in *Development Dialogue*, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Uppsala, 1979:1. This includes basic information concerning the expansion of the largest transnational agencies, the growth of advertising in Latin America, and forms in which control exercised by advertisers over the media perpetuates dependency. It serves as a conceptual and practical framework for the discussion of the democratization of communication.
2. See especially Juan Somavía's article 'The Democratization of Communications', published in this issue of *Development Dialogue*, which is an expanded version of his paper 'Democratización de las Communicaciones: una perspectiva Latinoamericana', presented to the UNESCO Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, 1979.
3. Cathelat, Bernard, *Publicité et Société*, Petite Bibliothéque Payot, Paris, 1976, p. 36.
4. Ibid., p. 246.
5. Ewen, Stuart, *Captains of Consciousness*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1976, p. 15.
6. Barnet, Richard and Muller, Ronald E., *Global Reach*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1974, pp. 89–91.
7. Comanov, William S. and Wilson, Thomas A., *Advertising and Market Power*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1974.
8. Bernal Sahagún, Victor M., *Anatomía de la Publicidad en México*, Editorial Nuestro Tiempo, Mexico, 1974.
9. Cathelat, Bernard, op.cit., pp. 33–37.
10. There is considerable variation in the relative amounts of space devoted to advertising in Latin American newspapers. In Costa Rica, the four newspapers analysed averaged about 42 per cent advertising with the largest percentage being 66 per cent. See Fonseca, José M., *Las Políticas de Comunicación en Costa Rica*, UNESCO, Paris, 1976, p. 47. In Peru, during 1958, an analysis of the seven newspapers with the largest circulation included no less than 35.5 per cent advertising and in one case reached as high as 58.4 per cent. See *Investigación de los Medios de Communicación Colectiva*, Pontifica Universidad Católica del Perú, Lima, 1961.
Even higher relative amounts are reported in Schmid, Alex, 'The North American Penetration of the Latin American Knowledge Sector—Some Aspects of Communication and Information Dependence', Paper prepared for the Seventh International Peace Research Association Meeting, Oaxtepec, Mexico.
11. Schmid, Alex, op.cit.
12. Ibid., pp. 13–14.
13. Ibid.
15. Bernal Sahagún, Victor M., op.cit., p. 117.
15. Santa Cruz, Adriana and Erazo, Viviana, *'Compropolitan': El orden Transnacional y su Modelo Femenino*, ILET, Mexico, 1979.
16. Barnet, Richard and Muller, Ronald E., op.cit., p. 31.
17. Ibid., p. 33.

The Microelectronics Revolution: Implications for the Third World

By Juan F. Rada

This article attempts to show how the unfolding of information technology affects Third World countries and poses a challenge to traditional development strategies. It should, however, also be seen in the broader context of how developments in science and technology affect the international division of labour. In summing up his detailed analysis of the many serious implications of the microelectronics revolution, Juan F. Rada states that 'data, information and new productive infrastructure should benefit not only the few; we cannot have a world divided between information "poor" and "rich". Data and information should not be used to infringe on a people's cultural identity and invade, by means of different lifestyles, patterns of consumption and values, a world that is struggling to reach its own identity and development path. More than legislation and protocols, a new atmosphere of social command of technologies should be developed. In this atmosphere, a participatory and plural discussion about the use of technologies could take place and the wonders of current change could help solve pressing needs and benefit all in a more interdependent rather than dependent world.'

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Introduction

When the discussion about a New International Order (NIO) and alternative development strategies started, the implications of microelectronics-based innovations were not felt as they are today. In the NIO debate, technology has—by and large—been treated in two ways. The first relates to a more equitable distribution of know-how, scientific and technological infrastructure, and the questioning of restric-

tive practices on technology transfers. The second relates to the need to tailor technology to particular socio-economic contexts and development aims, encouraging at the same time the use and further sophistication of indigenous capabilities.

The importance of technology for development and for a more equitable world system is commonly recognized today. The control of technology often means the control of development, the definition of its aims and even its pace.

Given current conditions, the debate on technology should be placed in a wider framework; one which encompasses the very essence of commonly practised development strategies and styles.

Today's technological innovations foreshadow profound changes that will further alter the perception of development strategies. We are confronted with the economic availability of a powerful technological package for the handling and processing of information: a 'good' as pervasive as energy. This development is not a sudden event, but the result of decades of scientific discoveries. One could say that it is the result of a synthesis of many scientific disciplines: physics of materials and light, chemistry, optics, engineering, mathematics, logic, etc.

Although the potential of information technology has existed since the development of the first computers in the early 1950s, realization is only possible today through the invention of the microprocessor and microcomputer.

All systems operate through some form of information exchange (input-processing-output), whether they are mechanical systems or human intelligence functions. The commonly used pocket calculator, for instance, receives information and instructions through the keyboard, processes it, recalling elements from its memory if required, and displays the results. It is essentially an information processing machine programmed to handle arithmetic operations. At the centre of these exchanges of information are electronic components whose tasks are to process, store and manipulate information which is carried through the system in the form of electrical signals which can have only two values (binary): one and zero. Thus a digital system enables the translation and codification of words, numbers and other variables into strings of ones and zeros for processing by microprocessors and microcomputers. This explains the most essential characteristics of the technology and its revolutionary dimension: the economic availability of a coherent system to handle information using a uniform signal with binary values. A complex design can be made with the aid of a computer, transmitted to another continent through the telephone line and satellites, and picked up by a computer-programmed machine tool which manufactures a product according to the specifications transmitted. The design, transmission and production are operating in the same language. This has been termed digitalization of information. Thus in this article, the term information technology is used, rather than microelectronics, since the abstract nature of the technology is related to information exchanges. The above-mentioned developments also explain the convergence of electronic components, computers and telecommunications into one single sector: the information sector.

The microprocessor and microcomputer are produced in a standard form and can be programmed to perform different functions. In this sense they are universal components, which permit mass production and economies of scale. (There are tailor-made circuits which

are not mass-produced; their design and production is different.) In fact, the same component used in a pocket calculator can be used in an aircraft landing system, satellites or computers.

These information processing units are becoming more and more pervasive as increasing computation power is engraved on tiny 'chips' of silicon. They have altered the watch, the cash register, the sewing machine, the washing machine, instruments, machine tools: they are finding their way into the automobile engine and control panel; they are revolutionizing the office with the introduction of word processing equipment; they are making photocopying machines more 'intelligent' and of course, they have revolutionized the electronics industry. They alter products and processes by replacing mechanical components (as in the watch), electromechanical components (as in cash registers) and older electronic components (as in computers). They permit the upgrading and redesign of products (as in word processors) and they transform control mechanisms in many areas (as in machine tools).

The mastering of such an essential and basic element of economic and human activities can then be rightly compared to the mastering of another basic element: energy. The role of the steam engine as a reliable and permanent source of energy helped substantially to unfold the most expansive phase of the industrial revolution, changing the face of economic activities and profoundly altering the international division of labour.

Given these changes, we reach a point where the development prospects of the South are not only conditioned by the ways and means of transferring technology but by the very logic and dynamism of scientific development in the advanced countries. Failure to see this crucial issue is tantamount to severely mortgaging the future. In the aftermath of Cancun, it is clear that the prospect for fruitful North-South negotiations are bleak, while at the same time a dialogue becomes more important than ever because more complex and intractable issues are emerging at a speed that renders obsolete traditional institutional arrangements and political clichés.

One of these issues is, of course, the implications of technology, that while they are widely discussed in the advanced countries, their international dimension is not fully acknowledged, except for a 'paragraph homage' to the problem. The OECD Interfutures report, for instance, recognized the importance of the technology for the advanced countries, but failed to recognize the international consequence of their own assessment. The Brandt Commission report, which inspired the meeting in Cancun, acknowledged in passing, when referring to countries with export-oriented development strategies (NICs), that: 'They may suffer new setbacks with the development of microprocessors, which could reduce some of their advantages.' The assessment stops here, and no further attempt is made to follow through the potential implications implicit in the above statement. The topic was only slightly touched on by the United Nations Conference for Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTD) in Vienna.[1]

The readjustment policy of industrialized countries, together with their mastery of information technology, is reinforcing the present international division of labour due to a substantial increase in productivity and concentration of 'information intensive' sectors in these countries. The increase in productivity affects all economic activities, industry, office and service work.

Historical evidence of how technological

and scientific developments alter the international division of labour is overwhelming. Suffice it to mention here England's increased textile productivity during the nineteenth century and its impact on traditional producers, the development of artificial nitrate which ruined Chile's main source of external revenues in the 1920s, and the development of artificial fertilizers which profoundly affected the Peruvian economy in the last century; one can go on to enumerate artificial fibres, colourants rubber, etc.

The advanced countries now control an all-pervasive technology which, while changing their productive and service infrastructures, is also reinforcing one of their traditional advantages; science and technology.

The use of comparative advantages, either natural or historical, such as low labour costs, has always been a part of development strategies. It seems, however, that today's comparative advantages are increasingly man-made, brought about through the mastering of science and technology. 'Knowledge-intensive industries' are becoming the rule rather than the exception. A further polarization of the international division of labour is not only possible but probable. This process should compel Third World countries to search more actively for alternative development strategies based on indigenous capabilities and the need for more South–South trade, technological agreements, and exchange of experience and managerial know-how; in two words, collective self-reliance.

This article will attempt to show how the unfolding of information technology affects Third World countries and poses a challenge to traditional development strategies. The article should, however, be seen in a much broader context—the study of how developments in science and technology affect the international division of labour. Today we are faced with microelectronics, tomorrow biotechnology and, on the horizon, the substitution of materials; all three have profound implications for Third World and industrialized countries alike. These issues will change the very fabric of society and the future of the social, cultural, economic and political life within countries in the international system.

Microelectronics and information technology

The spectacular developments taking place in information technology are posing questions at such a pace that, even before answers can be found, a new wave of even more complicated issues emerge to confront policy- and decision-makers.

The manifold consequences of information technology are explained by at least three interrelated issues: (a) its economy, (b) the sectors and activities it touches, and (c) the concentration of the industrial and R and D capability that pushes it.

Economy

Information is a multifaceted 'commodity' assuming different forms and undergoing continuous metamorphosis through its use and circulation. It constitutes the material base of knowledge, the raw material of news, and an essential component of science, business and trade. Since World War Two, the number of activities dependent on different forms of information has grown exponentially (business decisions, research and development, political matters, legislation, consumption). The number of people dealing with information has also grown.

The presence of a large potential market for information, coupled with the technological 'spill over' of the United States military and

space programmes (e.g. high performance integrated circuits, satellites, laser technology, etc.), explains the increasing price/performance economy of the information 'package technology', which encompasses components, computers and telecommunications.

By using photographic techniques, 65,000 components are now packed in one 'chip', the size of a little fingernail; in the early 1960s, the density was ten per 'chip'. With electron beam and X-ray patterning techniques, the density per chip will increase to a forecast one million components (Very Large Scale Integration—VLSI) with a corresponding reduction of cost per function. The cost reduction resulting from higher integration has been unparalleled. The electronic calculator is a well-known example; its cost has been reduced by a factor of 500:1 in the last eight years, while its performance, reliability and number of functions have increased.[2]

Table 1 Comparison of the characteristics of a 1955 computer and a 1978 calculator

Characteristics	1955 Computer (IBM 650)	1978 Calculator (TI-59)
Components	2000 vacuum tubes	166,500 transistor equivalents
Power (KVA)	17.7	0.00018
Volume (cu.ft)	270	0.017
Weight (lbs)	5,650	0.67
Air conditioning (tons)	5 to 10	None
Memory capacity (bits)		
– primary	3,000	7,680
– secondary	100,000	40,000
Execution time (milliseconds)		
– Add	0.75	0.070
– Multiply	20.0	4.0
Price	200,000 ($ 1955)	300 ($ 1978)

Source: Texas Instruments, Inc., Shareholders Meeting Report, 1978.

At the heart of developments are the memory chips, microprocessors and microcomputers which together constitute the 'nuts and bolts' of the information revolution.

Table 1 compares price/performance and the use of other auxiliary systems.

In telecommunications and related equipment, the economy has also been tremendous. A good indicator is the fact that, even taking inflation into account, it cost about 100 times more to call from the United States to London 50 years ago than it does today.[3] The cost of telecommunications is decreasing through the use of satellites since the distance of a communication has virtually no effect on the price.

In 1965, a single satellite carried 240 telephone circuits; today they can carry 12,000. In 1965, the cost per circuit per year was US $22,000; today it is US $800. For 1985, the next generation predict 100,000 circuits at a cost per circuit per year of US $30. The cost of launching satellites will be considerably reduced by the use of the NASA Space Shuttle. At the same time, the cost of ground stations has been falling from about US $10 million in 1965 to about US $300,000 now. Small receive-only ground stations are being sold in Japan for US $200.[4]

Decreasing costs have been accompanied by a tremendous increase in the speed of transmission due to the digitalization of messages. Thus the speed of transmission of the Satellite Business System (IBM, COM-SAT, and AETNA Casualty Insurance) is 6.3 million bits per second or 200,000 words as compared to nearly 10,000 bits per second for a normal telephone line.

Adding to the cornucopia of developments is the arrival of fibre-optics, which consist of a tube of self-reflecting glass no thicker than a human hair which carries messages in digital form using laser beams. One fibre-optic cable

can transmit 30,000 simultaneous telephone calls, as opposed to a package of copper wires ten inches in diameter. Once certain technical constraints are overcome, fibre-optics will become the standard cable.[5]

The concurrence of components, computer and telecommunications will transform profoundly many human activities.

Areas affected by information technology

The digitalization of different forms of information permits the use of technology in many areas.[6] It is explicitly an organizational and production technology and as such it affects:

1. Production, by the transformation of products (watches, cash registers, etc.) and processes (batch production, robotics, distributed intelligence, etc.).
2. Office work, by further automating formalized work (billing, invoicing, word processing) and by increasing the independence from traditional information channels for those who work in a less formalized environment (management, R and D, etc.)
3. Services, by increasing self-service and by the replacement of human-to-human services by goods.
4. Information flows, due to the economic development of vast networks and easy access to stored information.

The OECD Interfutures report characterized the development of microprocessors as 'a decisive qualitative leap forward' and states: '*The electronics complex during the next quarter of a century will be the main pole around which the productive structures of the advanced industrial societies will be reorganized.*'[7]

The concentration of manufacturing and service capabilities

The nature of information technology and the cost of its development imply that it can only be economically viable when aimed at a world market. In the component, computer, telecommunication, software and machine services, the industry is transnational and highly concentrated. The degree of concentration will most likely increase in the future, due to R and D costs and capital requirements.[8] Underlying this concentration is the integration of many different activities under the heading 'information processing'. Thus computer giants such as IBM have moved into telecommunications (Satellite Business Systems). Office equipment manufacturer Rank Xerox is moving in the same direction, while AT&T is moving into computer terminals and related equipment. Some European PTT and private companies are also moving in this direction and manufacturers of components are shifting to finished products.

US supremacy in the field of integrated circuits has been decreasing due to price competition from Japan. In Japan, Europe and the USA the industry is highly concentrated with few companies controlling more than half of total production. At the same time some of the biggest producers of integrated circuits do not sell in the open market, such as IBM and Western Electric. There has been a trend in the last few years for setting up captive facilities.[9]

The components sector is becoming even more capital intensive than in the past, diminishing the proportion of direct labour cost in the total business cost. This is particularly striking where automation of 'chip' testing and assembly is introduced. The advantages of off-shore installations are also being eroded for the same reason.

A similar situation already exists in the computer industry, with only a few companies controlling the business worldwide. At the

Table 2 Mainframe computer market* (share of market based on the value of total units installed)

Company	per cent
IBM	64.3
Honeywell	8.7
Sperry Rand-Univac	8.0
Burroughs	6.4
Control Data	4.1
NCR	1.9
Others	6.6

* For details of market shares in Western Europe and Japan, see Datamation, September 1976, pp. 63 and 93 respectively.
Source: Quantum Science Corporation, 1979.

same time, most of these companies are linked through marketing, technological and manufacturing joint-venture arrangements. This convergence is bound to intensify along with business concentration due to the financial and R and D requirements.

The USA, Western Europe and Japan possess most of the world computer population, though the dominating force is the US, which controls about 90 per cent of the computer sector in the market economy countries. All major computer manufacturers have facilities in several countries and worldwide marketing and service networks.

US manufacturers supply almost 100 per cent of their home market and it is only relatively recently that some inroads have been made by European and Japanese producers, particularly in minicomputers and peripheral equipment. IBM alone supplies about 65 per cent of the US market. Table 2 illustrates the world market share of the major computer manufacturers for mainframe computers.

The revenue of the main US computer companies more than quadrupled from $12.2 billion in 1972 to $53.3 billion in 1980. In 1980 IBM's share of the industry's total revenues was 49 per cent.[10]

The situation is similar in the telecommunications industry, with a few companies controlling and developing electronic switching and related equipment.

A similar concentration exists in software and machine services, data banks and bases. Table 3 shows the concentration in services.

Table 3 Main companies providing software and machine services in 1978 (millions of US dollars)

Software		Machine services	
Computer Sciences (USA)	198	IBM (USA)	400*
System Devt. Corp. (USA)	145	CDC (USA)	400
SOGETI-GEMINI (France)	115	Automatic Data Proc. (USA)	310
Informatics (USA)	85	General Electric (USA)	250
Planning Res. Corp. (USA)	80	EDS (USA)	220
Electronic Data Systems (USA)	70	Tymshare (USA)	150
SEMA (France)	60	Mac-Auto (USA)	130
SCICON (UK)	50	GSI (France)	100
		CISI (France)	95

* Estimate
Source: Pierre Audoin Conceil in Le Sicob, *Le Monde*, September 19th, 1979.

Table 4 Reference data bases and data-base records: geographic distribution, 1975–79

Area	Year		
	1975	1977	1979
United States			
Number of data bases	177	208	259
Number of records (million)	46	58	94
Other Developed Market Economies			
Number of data bases	124	154	269
Number of records (million)	6	13	55
Total			
Number of data bases	301	362	528
Number of records (million)	52	71	148

Source: Martha E. Williams: Data Base and On-line Statistics for 1979. *ASIS Bulletin*, no. 7, December 1980, pp. 27–29.

In the case of data bases and data base records, Table 4 shows geographic distribution of bases, with about 49 per cent in the USA holding nearly 64 per cent of records.

Data banks and bases have their origin in the late 1950s and on-line information searches are growing at a rate of 30 per cent per year. It is not difficult to locate the most important users and 'owners' of the information stored in data banks: 75 per cent of the two million computer searches carried out annually originate in the US. The world's 'big two' data base hosts are Lockheed and SDC (System Development Corporation), which account for 75 per cent of the European market and 60 per cent of the US market. In 1977, Lockheed possessed about 100 of the 500 publicly available data bases in the world.[11] The tremendous concentration of manufacturing and service facilities poses crucial economic, social and political questions that need to be addressed promptly.

The global scope of the information industry is an essential element in understanding its impact. The concentration of financial and technological capital in a few companies and countries will increase dependence rather than interdependence between countries. For some time, this point has caused concern in Western Europe and the Third World countries and a number of policies have been designed to counteract the trend.

The impact of information technology

The implications of this powerful technological package which is just unfolding range from the alteration of the productive infrastructure to questions of cultural identity and dependence. The aim here is to restrict the discussion to some general issues directly pertinent to the Third World.

The productive infrastructure

The impact of developments in science and technology on the international division of labour has long been a neglected issue, although innumerable examples exist. Many of them show an erosion of comparative advantages by technological change which, incidentally, shows how endogenous technology is to development.

What we face today is the concentrated force of two elements: the reorganization of the productive infrastructure based increasingly on technology, which in turn is increasingly dependent on scientific developments. This has been called 'knowledge-based industrial capacity', applying especially to 'high technology industries, e.g. nuclear, aerospace, computers, etc. It was argued—simplifying the issue here—that while industrialized countries will preserve their lead in these sort of industries, the Third World countries will increasingly take over 'labour-intensive industries', since their comparative advantage is low

labour costs. Most of the arguments for an NIO are based on such premises, as was the 'Lima Target' of having 25 per cent of the world industrial capacity in the Third World by the year 2000.

The Third World's capacity in science and technology is a well-debated issue and the world imbalance in this field is too well documented to be repeated. The point now is that most industries are actually in the process of moving towards the 'high technology' category or can potentially move in that direction due to a combination of socio-economic and technological developments.

Due to the application of microprocessors, microcomputers, alteration of products and processes, office automation and other changes, the productivity increase in industrialized countries is at or can potentially reach levels which are competitive with low labour costs.

Automation, by reducing the importance of direct labour cost in total business cost, implies that the incidence of this factor of production diminishes and others, such as capital equipment, design and management, become much more important. At the same time, there is a shift of skill requirements towards software-based and system engineering skills which are more difficult to attain and develop than those commonly used in basic industries in the past.[12]

The technical and international division of labour is acquiring a new dynamism which calls for a reconceptualization of traditional thinking. The theory of comparative advantages was classically defined by Paul Samuelson when he said that it is 'better for fat men to do the fishing, lean men the hunting, and smart men to make the medicine'. But what happens when the fat men do the fishing, the hunting and make the medicine? What happens when electronics becomes a *convergence* industry, indispensable to other industries, conditioning skill requirements and affecting employment levels? What will this mean for development strategy in terms of productive infrastructure? What of the Third World's hopes of acquiring a powerful industrial capability? Even under the most optimistic assumptions, it will not be possible to meet the 'Lima Target' by the year 2000, without even considering present technological changes and trends.[13]

The industrialized countries have engaged themselves in a far-reaching policy of readjustment provoked largely by competition among themselves, lower growth prospects, high and most likely higher unemployment in the future, higher energy costs, and competition from some Third World countries. One of the most important tools in this readjustment process is the use of new technologies, particularly microelectronics, for the upgrading of products and processes.

The Advisory Council for Applied Research and Development (UK) summarized the position by stating: 'If we neglect or reject it [semiconductor technology] as a nation, the United Kingdom will join the ranks of the underdeveloped countries.'[14]

Trends in several industries show changes in investment patterns and location of facilities, and industries which were potential candidates to move South will remain in the North.

The electronics industry has traditionally used offshore installations for the assembling and wiring of 'chips'. Now, due to automatic techniques, the industry is developing its new generation of plants in the industrialized countries. The companies see automation as the only way to minimize costs, increase efficiency, maintain employment levels in industrialized countries and be closer to the majority of end-users.

The latest main investments in the field of

integrated circuits are in the US, Japan, England, Scotland, Ireland, France and West Germany.[15] Some operations will remain in Third World countries in order to exploit regional markets or for the assembling and testing of simpler 'chips' where the production volume does not justify automated plants. Additionally, some plants are moving from higher-cost Asian countries (Hong Kong, Taiwan*, Republic of Korea and Singapore) to Thailand and The Philippines in an effort to cut costs further. The rate of plant realloca-tions will depend on the investment policy, amortization and financial constraints of each company. It is clear, however, that the trend is well under way.

Other examples of this trend are textiles and garments, although the tendency is less apparent. The situation here might not be one of withdrawing plants from the Third World, but rather to maintain current production in the North and recuperate terrain in some fields.

The readjustment policies of industrialized countries have greatly encouraged the automation and updating of industry. Automation is seen as the only way of maintaining industry in the North, albeit with reduced employment. At the same time, this process is leading to further industrial concentration through mergers and takeovers and, inevitably, to an uneven distribution of the technology.

The combined effect of automation and electronic-based innovations is reinforcing the transistion of industry as a whole towards the 'high technology' category, strongly oriented towards R and D and software. There will be improvements in the design of products and processes, quality, planning and marketing, already traditional advantages of industrialized countries. In fact, the links between end producers, machine manufacturers and electronic/computer firms have been multiplied in a joint effort to achieve higher levels of automation.

Looking at these trends, a report by the ILO states: 'The competitiveness of low labor cost firms with labor intensive techniques is continually being eroded by the installation of high productivity capital-intensive machines in developed and some developing countries.'[16]

Long-term forecasts with a time-horizon to the year 2000 suggest that, by that year, textile production will be so capital intensive that labour cost differentials will no longer play the decisive role in total product cost that they do today.[17] This forecast was made in 1976, before the massive introduction of microelectronics, and all the evidence suggests that the timing of the change has been drastically reduced.

Nevertheless, erosion of labour cost advantages in some Third World countries will take much longer than in others. One study of 20 countries shows that in textiles, the lowest labour cost (Pakistan) was one-thirtieth of the highest (Belgium). However, it should be added that, in this industry, proximity to the main markets and end-users is a considerable advantage because of the incidence of transport costs in the final price.[18]

Protectionist measures, particularly the quota systems, have forced exporters from some Third World countries to move up-market in order to obtain more value for the same quantity of products, thus forcing their own industry to upgrade and enter a market where their advantage is the lowest. Those countries and territories with the capacity to upgrade successfully will tend to monopolize the exports of Third World countries by decreasing the competitiveness of others. It is already becoming evident that, in the upper part of the textile and clothing industry and also in new products, competitive edge is now provided by

* (Taiwan Province of China)

technology and not by labour costs. Over the medium term, this will permeate the industry as a whole.

Given the state of research on these problems, it is not possible to provide a precise time scale or quantification of side effects. What is clear, however, is that this industry will not enjoy the same importance in Third World countries as in the past, nor will it be a low investment short-cut for employment provision and external revenues. Once technology becomes the industry's competitive edge, it is only a question of time before reallocation of plants starts taking place.

Preliminary evidence shows that similar trends might be under way in the footwear and leather industry. The possibility of combining low labour costs with high technology is also a doubtful alternative, except perhaps where highly sophisticated machine tools are used. In this case, precision engineering can be substituted by parts assembly which may not warrant investment in automation but which may profitably use cheap labour. A candidate might be the watch and clock industry in the lower segment of the market. However, in most cases the alteration of products leads to industrial concentrations and economies of scale rather than deconcentration. A more general obstacle to the low labour costs/high technology solution is that the technologies are controlled by a few transnational companies with worldwide production and marketing policies. In the field of integrated circuits, there is an explicit policy against technology transfer.

The process of transfer of technology is extremely complex since the industry relied very heavily on trade secrets and what has been called 'intangible knowledge'. In addition much of the state of the art of technology is not transferable due to national security regulations. Companies in general try to avoid transfering technology unless they can get technology or market entry in return.

In this industry, as in all advanced technology industries, what is important is to be part of the *innovation process* rather than have access to the technology of a given product. This is because of the short product cycle of products. The only way to have access to the process of technological change is through participation in equity, which is what many European and US corporations have done by taking over small innovative companies.

One of the important new developments in the industry are joint R and D programmes particularly in basic research. This is an extension of joint manufacturing or marketing ventures. Joint R and D has been a characteristic of the Japanese industrial strategy but this is being imitated in the USA and Europe.[19]

To turn to another aspect of the new technology, microelectronics is software-based and requires a set of skills which are more sophisticated and difficult to obtain than traditional skills of a mechanical nature. Particularly important in this respect is the shift towards the design of production *systems* rather than separate items of machinery; this calls for systems engineering skills which are only acquired after high-level training and long experience. The distinction between mechanical and electronics engineers is tending to disappear at a time when Third World countries are reproducing this now obsolete division of skills. Even in industrialized countries, the transition to electronics in formerly mechanical industries, such as watches and office equipment, has shown that the retraining of personnel is almost impossible and involves high cost and risk, especially when dealing with older workers.[20]

The efficient use of software, besides being

a highly sophisticated skill, depends on experience gained in solving programming problems and is thus a further contribution to unequal development between industrial market economy countries and Third World countries, which is likely to be maintained. There may be a few exceptions to this general rule, however, where creation of software may provide some employment.

In the product cycle of software, its initial development represents about 20 per cent of total revenues, the rest being created in the maintenance, which involves a close relationship with end-users and a vast service network. This suggests that software developed for export by Third World producers will most likely take the form of subcontracting by the emerging software industry of the industrialized countries, rather than autonomous businesses. It is in these countries that most of the software market lies.

In the two sectors briefly examined, microelectronics will have a significant effect by eroding the advantage of 'cheap labour'. In addition to these trends, the existence of a single information system provides the capacity to transmit blueprints and specifications directly to machinery, concentrating knowledge and skill with the prime contractor rather than duplicating them in an off-shore plant.[21] Office automation, on the other hand, permits further increases in the overall business productivity which, in some cases, might be more valuable than shop-floor increases.* We are witnessing the beginning of an important change. Historical evidence shows how developments of this nature can render obsolete 'comparative advantages' and this is particularly true when the driving force of the reorganization of the productive infrastructure is precisely science and technology.

However, this science and technology has been increasingly controlled by corporate organizations which do not necessarily ensure socially valuable uses of technology or heed its economic disadvantages to the Third World countries. Furthermore, the technology as such has an inbuilt organizational concept and its design caters for needs, skills and social forms seldom encountered in the Third World.

At the productive level, the claim for an NIEO must be based on the acknowledgement of those tendencies and the likely possibility that the gap between North and South will be even wider in the future.

The use of these technologies in Third World countries has the effect of decreasing labour-creation potential or producing labour displacement. Thus, the reinforcement of the present international division of labour is coupled with internal effects on employment and obviously on the balance of payments.[22]

Nevertheless, in the analysis of benefits and cost, it should be borne in mind that from an employment point of view, the mechanization of agriculture has a dramatic effect on employment, as compared to industrial or service automation. The conditions in most Third World countries are so different from the advanced ones, particularly in relation to the labour market, that the experience in relation to employment cannot be extrapolated. In addition, in Third World countries the equipment is more expensive while labour is less costly, which makes automation an option that is not often followed.

The present informatic order

For the Third World, the policy alternatives in

* The use of word-processing equipment increases typist productivity by about 100 per cent (new words typed). This does not necessarily mean the same increase in terms of final products.

the communication field are becoming more complex. While these countries need to emphasize self-reliance and independence, and protect themselves against further domination of their economic, social, cultural and political life, they also need to participate in the international exchange of views, knowledge and, indeed, commodities. This is a difficult, if not impossible, balance, made all the more complex by the changing information infrastructure.

Digitalization of different forms of information creates a tremendous potential increase in productivity, but it also affects the forms and means of information flows.

In the first place, the digitalized network produces a fusion of print, voice and video, blurring the traditional distinction between the different means of communication. All messages are transmitted in indistinguishable strings of ones and zeros; each node in the network, as in the telephone system, can be an originator and receiver of messages in multiple forms. This is no longer a possibility but a reality reflected in services such as teletext (Viewdata or Prestel), integrated office systems and on-line data networks.

In the second place, this fluid network has no frontiers and the insensitivity to distance of broadband bitstreams does not allow national segmentation.

Transborder Data Flows (defined as the transmission of machine readable information across borders) and the development of interactive international networks is one of today's crucial developments. These networks provide 'real time' access to information regardless of location. Information can be stored in remote computers and retrieved from many places. Information is, however, an intangible 'good' which is extremely difficult to monitor and which possesses great political, cultural and economic importance. Strings of ones and zeros can be used to transmit documents, voice or image over telephone lines, microwaves and satellites; they can be ciphered and manipulated, and the sheer number of users makes monitoring difficult.[23]

There are two main issues here. The first deals with the type of information being used and the second deals with transborder data flows that will be treated later. The first type of information can be tailor-made, specialized information that can be retrieved through electronic systems without the use of traditional means such as newspapers, radio and the mass media in general. The alternative is the specialization of these traditional means of communications through increasing fragmentation with local and specialized items taking most of the coverage, while editorial, political and international news are beamed to the local press from a central location.

The first alternative is the one most used by business and government, with specialized organizations producing and storing information in central data banks and bases. This is often more influential in determining policy than the traditional media and escapes traditional forms of social control and monitoring.

The second alternative creates the possibility of a more concentrated control of the 'content', with a 'mother-newspaper' dictating the editorial line to many provincial or even foreign newspapers.

The concentration of data banks and bases in the hands of a few companies and countries aggravates the issue. The 'biased' character of international press agencies is well documented, but we now need to consider the 'biased' character of the background information used to produce the analytical news. Computerized information leads to a different form of ex-

change and interpretation. Figures and data do not provide for the social context or political realities. Nevertheless, the computerization of references and data leads to a further normalization and quantification of the socio-political analyses. The growth of GNP as a standard of progress, and the balance of payments as a standard of economic soundness, regardless of required structural changes, permeates the technocratic 'bias' of such information systems. The database entry word for 'democratic movements' could easily be 'subversion'. 'Intervention in Third World countries' could be listed as 'Democracy ... defence of' and 'Arabian oil' as 'National interest ... strategic'. The normalization of information does not lead to its 'objectivization'; on the contrary, it leads to an apparent scientificity in the same manner as using an average leads to a figurative representation and to false reproductions of reality.

Interactive information systems should not be opposed to, but rather geared towards, a more balanced and diversified expression of news and realities. As *telématique* progresses, this sort of system will be the *main* source of information for news, education, scientific work and political decisions. The present control, concentration and organization of data banks and bases, and of information technology hardware, not only make the use of these information networks inadequate for the Third World's needs but also reproduce the old patterns of dependency and domination between North and South. The Nora Report, officially endorsed in France, stated:

> Information is inseparable from its organization and form of storage. In the long term, it is not only the advantage that the knowledge of one or other piece of data provides. The knowledge will end up by modelling itself—as it always has done—on the stocks of information.
>
> Left to others, e.g. American banks, the task of organizing this 'collective memory', and putting up with delving into it, is equal to accepting cultural alienation. The location of data banks constitutes an imperative of sovereignty.[24]

The second main issue concerns Transborder Data Flows (TDF), which increases the dependency of the Third World due to the concentration of data processing facilities in the industrialized countries. This, in turn, makes the Third World vulnerable to decisions taken in the country holding the data. Third World countries tend to use the data processing facilities of the industrialized countries for several reasons: routine data processing can be done more economically, the data centres may possess expertise not available locally, and their data bases contain vital information not obtainable in the Third World.[25]

Data flows in the direction of short- and/or long-term economic advantage, and most of this exchange of data relates to intercorporate requirements. The worldwide manufacturing, marketing and financial policies of transnational corporations imply that data providing the bases for decision-making (raw data) flows towards the headquarters and data containing decisions already taken flows towards the subsidiaries (policies).

But this is the tip of the iceberg. What is in fact taking place today is a process of growing information content of goods and services. Traditionally the service sector has been considered the place where most 'information processing' takes place, but this traditional concept is changing due to the 'information intensity' of consumer and capital goods.

Brazil has been one of the first Third World countries to react to the changing situation. The Executive Secretary of the Special Secretariat for Informatics sees the issue as follows:

TDF, given its fast growth, is an essential component of a more embracing process: the informatization of society. This is the back-cloth to which all of us who operate in the informatics or communication field are submitted. The consequences of this process to nations are not yet known—as neither were the effects of the industrial revolution at the end of the last century. However, there exists a constant aspect: the feeling that the union of telecommunications and informatics will have a strong impact on the culture of the next generation. Some countries have already even established institutional models to prepare their populations, for example Japan and France. TDF as an indicator of this process should have its social effects evaluated. The Brazilian Government intends to establish a mechanism for this purpose.

He later states:

In international trade a new mechandise has emerged—information—without material consistence and containing its own characteristics, challenging even the basis of western economic policy, property, the right to exclusive use and the competitive set-up. The political frontiers which a short time ago surrounded physical areas and protected the nation's privacy have begun to become scattered.[26]

Brazil has implemented a number of measures to minimize adverse effects of current change while trying to exploit the new opportunities that are open.

The Canadian Minister of State for Science and Technology, opening the Congress of the International Federation of Information Processing in 1977, summarized the issues when he stated:

The problem of transnational data flows has created the potential of growing dependence, rather than interdependence, and with it the danger of loss of legitimate access to vital information and the danger that industrial and social development will largely be governed by the decisions of interest groups residing in another country.[27]

This, of course, is not a hypothetical question; its implications are largely political. The risk of retention or selective release of data is real. Under conditions of economic war, deterioration of the international political climate or, indeed, by unilateral decisions, a country can withhold data with extremely harmful consequences. In the US, the transfer of know-how software, equipment, etc. can be regulated by the State Department (Jackson Amendment, 1974) and effectively used as a tool in foreign policy. Recent international events show how effectively this can operate and Third World countries realize through past experience that this sort of mechanism operates to influence their internal economic and political decisions.

The power of those who control data services, hardware, manufacturing, machine and software services increases in direct proportion to the diffusion and widespread use of information technology.

From an economic point of view, the shipping of data to industrialized countries for processing—mostly intracorporate—leads to a loss of jobs or job-creation potential and concentration of capabilities in the information 'rich' countries.

A case in point is Canada, where a government report in 1977 asserted that 7,500 data processing jobs and about $300 million in revenue were being lost because data processing was done abroad. The projections for 1985 estimate losses of 23,000 jobs and $1.5 billion in revenue.[28] This study refers to directly related jobs and was published in 1978. Since then the trend has been confirmed by a recent report submitted to the Canadian Department of Communications. The Canadians suffer severe dominance by foreign capital in their industry and services and many corporations ship their data abroad for processing. Foreign capital is also dominant in many Third World

countries. This is a growing pattern, curtailing progress in the development of local data processing facilities. The pressure on the balance of payments relates in this case to a service as well as the hardware and infrastructure required to receive the service. For example: France spends about US $2.5 million a year consulting US-based data banks and data bases.[29]

Furthermore, due to the decreasing cost of communications and the concentration of 'information intensive' sectors in industrialized countries, it is becoming cheaper in many cases for Third World enterprises and institutions to send their design problems, calculations, research and routine data abroad rather than to assemble and develop local teams. What happens, in fact, is a sort of 'electronic brain-drain' produced by reducing the opportunities for local development. The ever-growing dependency of many countries on large data networks will increase the importance of these issues.

Of particular importance in the overall question of TDF, besides the issues already mentioned, are those relating to the protection of privacy and cultural identity. The use of vast pools of information to monitor individuals and store information about them is not only real, but has already prompted legislation in several countries and many studies by international organizations. Privacy is a fundamental human right and the necessary legislative tools need to be devised and international standards established to ensure that this right is respected.[30]

Those who today have the leading edge and benefit most from TDF are using the argument of 'free flow' of data as it is used for the 'free flow' of information and commodities. Nevertheless, the unrestricted flow of data needs to be qualified because of potential negative consequences. When dealing with TDF, one encounters a reality that affects in a very concrete form the economic, social, political and cultural life of countries and people.

A 'free and balanced flow of information'—to use the jargon of the trade—is indispensable not only to the Third World but also to most Western European countries.

This debate is encompassing more areas due to the possibilities of direct television broadcasting via satellite, where transmission is beamed directly to individual receivers. There is as yet no test case to evaluate the concrete implications and consequences, and its realization would involve complex and unique technical undertakings. The application is limited at the moment to domestic systems using a common receiving station and passing the message through cable to individual television sets.

From a legal point of view, the question was apparently settled by Regulation No 428A of the International Telecommunication Union in 1971, which stipulates that all technical means should be used to reduce the radiation of the satellite beam over the territory of other countries 'unless agreement has previously been reached with such countries'. Nevertheless, the United States, for instance, regards the regulation as a purely technical requirement, having no bearing on the content of transmissions. Furthermore, it would like to consider itself free to take advantage of the potential of satellites, if necessary, without the consent of the recipient country.

Because of the US insistence on the principle of unrestricted free flow, the United Nations Outer Space Committee has been unable to reach agreement on whether the prior consent of the recipient country is required for direct satellite transmission to take place.[31]

It is self-evident that the power of protocols

and agreements 'in principle' is minimized when the time comes to voluntarily renounce a commercial, cultural and, indeed, powerful political weapon. This calls for closer attention and monitoring of developments by the Third World. For the time being, the unique technical complexities of this type of transmission make their materialization unlikely in the medium term, but it is one area where anticipatory policy is required in order to be prepared to handle such developments when they reach maturity.

Information technology and development

Information technology poses a formidable challenge to development policy. There are three main reasons for this:

1. Production factors are increasingly conditioned by scientific and technological change, i.e. the industrial and service infrastructure is becoming independent from geographical location, natural or traditional economic advantages.
2. Concentration of the manufacturing and service capabilities of information technology in a few companies and countries makes the danger of growing dependency greater due to the all-pervasive character of the technology and the fact that electronics is becoming a convergence industry.
3. The concentration of 'information intensive' sectors in industrialized countries and the increase in productivity of commercial and economic transactions further reinforces the traditional advantages of these countries.

Information technology is a reality, and a rapidly expanding one. The question, therefore, is how to master the changes and deal with these issues to the best advantage for development strategies.

What is needed is a socio-economic command of the development of science and technology. It is obvious that the issues being confronted today, which will increase in complexity in the future, demand a global approach. This is also true for science and technology (S and T).

The implementation of such an approach will undoubtedly take many years, but it is unavoidable. In the economic, social and cultural fields, a number of regulations exist and established mechanisms feed back social concerns; in the future, S and T must also be governed by such mechanisms, as it is becoming increasingly important for every aspect of human activity.

Policy- and decision-makers in the Third World could accelerate this process by putting it on the international agenda. Nevertheless, the process should start within the Third World countries themselves. The need is to define areas of particular S and T concern, national priorities for their immediate and future needs, and a well-defined timetable of concrete action. This could serve as a starting point for joint efforts at the sub-regional, regional and continental levels and as the basis for proposing programmes and exchanges to the industrialized countries in areas where collaboration could be most fruitful. These steps could be building blocks for a global S and T strategy. The World Conservation Strategy is an example of such a global effort.[32]

Unless Third World countries—through their existing political tools—start moving in the direction described, they will not have much hope of establishing a New International Order but will rather be reinforcing the present one.

The essential starting point is the development of a system of scientific and technologi-

cal assessment, forecasting and policy design. There is no time to waste, as changes are already under way with the increasing economy of devices such as robots, the possibility of complex direct verbal input, direct satellite links, etc. In addition, the first significant investments are paying off in biotechnology, which has been called 'the living micro revolution', and considerable research and investment is taking place in areas such as composites for the substitution of metals.

Just as microelectronics is related to the mastering of intelligence functions, the development of biotechnology would seem to be related to the mastering of biological cycles and mechanisms. This will, of course, have a considerable impact on industrialized as well as Third World countries. Furthermore, information technology increases enormously S and T and R and D capacity by providing easy access to information and interactive relations. This in itself could accelerate the rate of discoveries and innovations.

The Third World can no longer remain a passive observer of changes that were foreseen, digested and transformed into policy in the industrialized countries before the South took notice of their existence and impact at the proper level. The Third World requires a formalized or *ad hoc* instrumentality to assess the types of changes described in this article, and also to monitor closely and forecast developments such as substitution of materials and biotechnology.

The capacity for prospective assessment permits not only a better bargaining position, but also puts the elaboration of development strategies on a more solid basis by developing a more refined conceptualization of short-, medium- and long-term comparative advantages.

We must learn how to harness current changes, while avoiding the undesirable effects of technology. In fact, microelectronics-based innovations can be of great benefit if properly applied.

Three general principles apply to the use of technology within countries. First is the need for a national policy based on the selectivity of applications aimed at overcoming bottlenecks and optimizing the use of resources, rather than using the technology to replace labour or increase efficiency which could be increased by other means. This undoubtedly calls for policies that strike a careful balance between pros and cons.

Selectivity and conscious planning can, for instance, minimize hard currency expenditure if data banks and bases are developed for domestic use and export. By avoiding imports of services, the foreign exchange savings could be greater in the medium term than the cost of installing the equipment, while at the same time developing local expertise and capabilities. It will also have the added advantage of organizing a system which meets the needs and culture of the country. Selectivity can also gear applications to areas where it is beneficial for the country as a whole to maintain international competitiveness.

Additionally, selectivity implies a policy on technical obsolescence and upgrading of equipment, together with clear technical criteria on the types of equipment that should be used. This, of course, applies differently to each sector and area. More often than not, equipment is upgraded according to new technical breakthroughs rather than based on a careful evaluation of the alternatives. Old equipment can often be useful and economical, within the objectives of a development plan; there is no need to replace old equipment each time a new product arrives on the international market.

Second is the need to assure diversified sources of supply in the market and to avoid becoming dependent on a few companies which can greatly distort prices and application criteria because of their disproportionate marketing power. This must be accompanied by a policy on software. The reservation of market segments for nationally or regionally assembled equipment is also an important consideration here. The diversification of suppliers benefits the economy by encouraging price/service performance of producers or importers, thus minimizing their margins and the outflow of profits.

On the service side, the 'technological package' should be unwrapped in such a way that conversion software and other services could be produced locally, providing that an adequate manpower policy is followed to train and develop local personnel and firms.

The diversification of suppliers is the only way to minimize dependency, given the fact that it is highly unlikely that Third World countries could develop their own manufacturing capabilities. The possibility of manufacturing exists only when the adopted criteria of obsolescence differ from the international market and the system is developed behind strong protective barriers. The technical specifications of the equipment would, however, be several years and generations behind the leading producers. Under these conditions, the manufacturing alternative is only justifiable within a large potential internal market (e.g. India) or within a regional market that could permit appropriate economies of scale.

The difficulties that European manufacturers are encountering when trying to jump on the integrated circuits bandwagon show that the possibilities for Third World countries are practically nil, especially because in this area, as well as in computers, there is an explicit policy of no transfer of technology. The United States and Japan are so far down the semiconductor industry's learning curve that it might be impossible for European newcomers to catch up, let alone for the Third World.

Third is the need to monitor the national integration of locally assembled or partly manufactured electronic-based products. This is important because, due to technological change, the picture is distorted. In general, countries use an index of national integration combining weight/volume/value to measure how much of a given product is nationally made in compliance, in some cases, with local legislation or plans.

Today, integrated circuits which are the heart of electronic-based products have a very low weight/volume/value, but they incorporate all the 'real' value of the product from the point of view of technology and know-how. If the purpose of a country is to upgrade slowly its own national capability in this area, it is important to monitor national integration in the light of current change. This is also related to the fact that many 'intelligent' products appear under traditional or very general descriptions of import classifications or the SITC (Standards International Trade Classification), which not only could decrease the capacity of local industry to compete, but also implies that many products escape general guidelines and automation policy. For example, in one Latin American country where a regulatory policy and supporting legislation exist for data processing, it is 'technically' feasible to exclude word processing from the policy and leave it unregulated.

Given the trends described, it is advisable to devise wider information policies rather than computer policies on their own, although, as has been explained, the computer is penetrating all areas and many products.

In order to be more explicit concerning the beneficial use of the technology in the immediate future, certain areas need to be examined. The benefits are related, as mentioned earlier, to the capacity to implement national policies which can balance pros and cons to the advantage of the population as a whole.

Possible economies

The decreasing cost of the technology, as mentioned earlier, in itself permits more economical applications. Nevertheless, the cost of labour in most Third World countries means that equipment is less competitive and amortization takes longer. Therefore, many traditional technologies and organizational forms will remain competitive for a long time.

In many cases, the use of information technology in products or processes saves capital per unit of output although it increases capital per worker employed. As the saving of capital is a crucial factor for the Third World, the technology could be used beneficially, providing that the application complies with a well thought-out plan aimed at fulfilling the needs of the majority of the population.

In addition, the use of the technology can be skill-saving in many cases in areas where the development of local skills would be a costly long-term venture; thus, a form of leap-frogging can take place. This is particularly true in the case of precision engineering, where reliable, sophisticated and economical machine tools are becoming available in which most of the skills required are in-built in the programme of the machines. At the same time, traditional equipment is rapidly being pushed to obsolescence, not because it is intrinsically outdated, but because industrialized countries need to use the latest equipment available to be able to compete among themselves. This 'obsolete' equipment can become available at scrap value and remain economically viable when combined with lower labour costs, appropriate skills, and managerial and government policies.

In many of these new areas of development, some skills are not difficult to obtain (conversion software, simple programming, etc), although mastering the programming needs of standard types of equipment is not equal to the creation of innovative capacity and systems engineering skills. It is one thing to learn how to drive an automobile or a tractor and another to know how to make it, repair it or upgrade it.

The 'core' of the software is generally part of the producer's package and, as the competitive edge will be increasingly on the software rather than the hardware content, we are witnessing a shift whereby the 'incorporated technology' will become even more important while becoming intangible. 'Reverse engineering' in this context will be even more difficult. It was not at random that many powerful companies, instead of manufacturing their own self-contained systems in the computer field, opted for producing IBM plug-compatible equipment, which uses IBM software, due to the sophistication, cost and service infrastructure required to implement complete software packages.

Transfer of technology, patents and licensing will therefore be much more complex in as much as one is dealing with a good as intangible as non-materialized knowledge. At the same time, one needs to bear in mind that current changes are accompanied by increasing concentration, vertical/forward integration, and global marketing and production policies.

The technology also carries with it certain diseconomies. Forecast losses because of inadequate use of computerized equipment or

losses due to equipment failure could run extremely high. The growing dependency on automatic equipment and the rigidity introduced because of it call for careful evaluation of its use and convenience.

Social and government applications

Computer technology has long been used by government services in Third World countries, especially for statistical purposes. This could increase further, improving the accuracy, reliability and timing of statistical information valuable for decision-making and planning. The time lag between events/policy implementation and its proper evaluation can be shortened considerably, thus increasing the efficiency of decisions, policy design and the monitoring of the performance of different measures. With a solid information base, the technology can be used to optimize the allocation and use of resources, which in itself could mean considerable economies. A tighter control of commercial stocks, imports and exports, and tax collection could be of great benefit, while saving foreign exchange in many areas.

Although employment could increase marginally when new or supplementary services are created, in general the technology will diminish job-creation potential. Thus a careful evaluation is needed to combine traditional and modern methods between desirable information and employment results.

Countries can further their planning and bargaining capacity if they are capable of assembling the relevant information.

Other important areas of application are those which enhance social services, particularly health and education. One of the most beneficial applications of information technology is in health, particularly as aid for the handicapped, prevention of accidents, industrial safety and pollution control, which serve to solve important problems without increasing the 'capital intensity' of the health sector.[34] It must be borne in mind, however, that there is a danger in using the information processing capabilities of computers in the health, banking and social control areas. Computers can communicate in an interactive network and therefore an insurance company or bank computer can, if arranged, interrogate a health data bank computer concerning the health of a particular client seeking a policy, credit or mortgage. Third World countries have been slow in enforcing privacy laws and the right of individuals to have access to information stored about themselves, which might be incorrect, incomplete, out of context, or related to events which have already been corrected. This is important at national and international levels, since the technology can be and has already been used for massive violations of human rights.

In education, information technology can serve to enhance economically the capability of the traditional system, integrating remote and isolated sectors with national life and increasing the diversity and national content of programmes. For instance, the economy of audio-visual equipment and production can boost national programmes for schools, television, village education and rural extension, as the mimeograph boosted the local press and atomized the production of educational materials. This could help to avoid the alienating tyranny of imported canned programmes which are foreign to local culture.

However, this potential needs to be qualified. Information technology is accompanied by its own sub-culture and an apparently neutral concept of efficiency and organizational forms, a universal technical language and a functional language: English. Most data

banks, bases, keyboards, instructions, literature, etc. related to the technology are in English. This means that only those with an adequate knowledge of the language can have access to many services. There is a tremendous need here for cultural diversity not only linguistically, but also in terms of content and format. Third World countries should collectively implement the storage of the 'collective memory' in their own language and according to their own interests. How much information is stored and easily available on appropriate technology and the different alternatives to a given production process? How much is stored on traditional medicines and organizational experiences of rural extension programmes? Will a Latin American country be forced to go to a computer in the USA—importing a service—to find out import-export possibilities to India or Nigeria? Will the Third World newspaper industry be forced—as with the news agencies—to rely for information on data banks and bases in the industrialized countries?

Science and technology

The development of S and T is based on stocks of knowledge and also on the way the information is kept and transmitted. The same information transmitted differently can yield entirely different results. The proliferation of pedagogical techniques and educational methods bears testimony to this—in brief, the abysmal qualitative difference between a teacher and a master. It is in the light of these types of consideration that access to the vast pool of data which information technology creates needs to be looked at. The development of S and T is a qualitative process parallel to, and conditioning the quantity and nature of, the stock of information and the form of its transmission. It is clear from the argument developed here and the angle of this article that 'the perpetuation and repetition of the trajectory of industrialized countries is both impossible and undesirable.'[35]

This being the case, the 'quality' of S and T developments must, in the last instance, be epistemologically and contextually different. Information technology can serve not only to store and manipulate information but to integrate science and production, upgrade traditional technologies, collect information about local materials or experiences, etc. The possibility of economically combining and integrating different layers of knowledge and experience can serve to bridge the gap between the theoretical potentiality of a given local technology and the concrete study of its viability in mass production. This will serve to link more closely production, S and T, and R and D.

Policy-makers will need to devise measures to cover all the links from research to development, production, marketing. They will need to understand how S and T systems link and interact with the social, cultural and ecological environment. They will also need to develop forms of social command of technological and scientific change. Technological assessment is not just a 'technique' but a participatory process that involves those affected, producers of technology, and a careful evaluation of the links with imported technologies.

In science and technology, great benefits could also accrue due to the optimization of the use of scientists and the creation of 'critical masses' through interactive systems within countries and across borders, without the need for costly, and sometimes undesirable, geographical concentration. This could serve also for a more rational division of labour among scientists in countries and across borders. At

the same time, easy access to scientific and technological information could eliminate one of the causes of the brain drain. The flow of scientists to the North, particularly in the natural sciences, is often caused by the impossibility of obtaining the necessary information and feedback essential for their career development.

International dimensions

There are many areas where Third World countries are called upon to act collectively. These could be facilitated by the use of information technology.

Five broad areas were initially identified by the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report *What Now: Another Development*, prepared on the occasion of the Seventh Session of the United Nations General Assembly and put forward as the minimum practicable steps towards Third World collective self-reliance.[36]

First is the 'coordination of industrial and agricultural development'. The technology can be invaluable here to monitor policies, plan and allocate resources. At the same time, the simple fluid exchange of information could allow massive horizontal links in the field of trade. The lack of marketing capacity of individual countries can be lessened by information networks where country A will know what is available in country B, rather than relying exclusively on the marketing and information drive of companies in industrialized countries and their battery of advertising aids. The development of these types of information networks is an important step towards increasing collective self-reliance.

The first step will be for countries to compile such information under generally agreed rules. The information should then be assembled regionally, and finally globally, using the codification of the SITC (Standard International Trade Classification) as an initial guideline. Additionally, joint or coordinated efforts can be facilitated in areas as diverse as transport, marketing consultancy, managerial practices and expertise, and so on.

The second and third areas referred to in the above-mentioned report relate to the development of an autonomous financial capacity and monetary system. This is, of course, closely linked to the first area; it is also heavily conditioned by information exchanges and data processing. The increased productivity of commercial transactions could benefit Third World countries if used by their own institutions.

The fourth area is the 'strengthening of technological capacities', This point was largely covered earlier. Diversified and efficient technologies offering flexibility of scale, resource utilization, labour-based product mix and participation already exist in many places, as for example with energy generating/saving devices. The use of fluid information could serve to identify this base and develop channels to make it readily and economically available.

This aspect is closely linked to the fifth area: 'Towards Third World Communication'. Although the report refers essentially to the questions of news agencies and the need for a different 'Information Order', changes in technology make this much wider. In effect, the whole information infrastructure is suffering profound changes. If the Third World does not develop its own data banks, bases and networks, information relevant to research, science, or the mass media will be further concentrated and the system will suffer even more acute problems and disparities than those it faces today. At least two elements are of importance here: the question of cultural identity and diversity mentioned

earlier, especially in relation to language, and the classification, codification and sorting systems of present banks and bases. Newspapers (such as the *New York Times*) organize their news banks according to their own editorial line, principles and the characteristics of the news the paper carries, and based largely on their own past news and files. What appears relevant to Third World countries, in terms of items or content, is not necessarily represented and, furthermore, the analysis will not necessarily conform with the development policies and priorities of the Third World. There is no need to underscore here the shortcomings of these systems in the light of the long debate about the New International Information Order.

The issues involved here also concern industrialized countries, for basically the same reasons. Mr A. Minc stated the point of view of France in an OECD meeting in September 1978:

> What we do claim is that there are non-technical fields generally having to do, say, with the human sciences where data banks are being built up, mainly in the United States, and that in this regard the possession of data banks is a problem of an altogether different kind, since that of a cultural model is involved. Today, most French newspapers are being connected to the best existing news data bank, which is that of the *New York Times*. Thus if this bank is questioned regarding certain episodes of French political history, a very interesting picture is obtained, one which of course very naturally depends on the views which reporters of the *New York Times* may have held but which is not exactly the same as ours concerning our own history. We do not claim that the latter should be the only view, but there should at least be two ways of looking at our history. We already have one interpretation, that of the *New York Times*; we should now arrange for also providing a French viewpoint, since within the next ten years any journalist of a local, peripheral newspaper connected only to the *New York Times* would obtain a picture of French political history which, while interesting, deserves to be compared with some other slant. A second one has to do with history proper, where clearly the way information is structured is altogether fundamental, and at research level is responsible for many of the conclusions which are drawn. In our opinion this means that here again data banks should provide a dual picture in relation to our own model of cultural development. ... I do argue, very definitely, in the case of anything which seems closely to affect our cultural model and cultural identity. A sort of hard national core is involved here, one which we all have and which, unless we are careful, data banks can cause either to shift or to change.[37]

Unless action is taken, the Third World will buy not only the news but also the background information to produce it and the 'news about the news', ranging from abstracts of magazine articles to book reviews.

Finally, in summary, collective action should be taken in four main areas:

1. Joint efforts to develop technological and scientific assessment and forecasting in those areas likely to affect most profoundly. Third World countries and the international division of labour. Social command of scientific and technological development is thus broader than mere control; it assumes an orientation of S and T development rather than a regulatory and reactive position in regard to changes. This, of necessity, requires a formalized body responsible for assessment and policy recommendations. Its task should be short-, medium- and long-term assessment and policy recommendations as a service to Third World countries for planning and negotiation purposes.

2. Joint efforts to evolve a common information policy, based on a development of building blocks that could stem from the as-

sessment provided by the body or networks of institutions described above. This policy should encompass data banks, bases, networks in the economic, S and T, R and D, cultural and mass media fields. The Third World should also evolve a common policy towards communications, transborder data flows, satellite links and transfer of technology. Particularly important in this field is to work towards an international agreement to deregulate as much as possible software copyrights, especially in products. It could also evolve into common facilities for manufacturing in selected areas, applications and R and D, with special emphasis, at least initially, on software.

3. Common policies on regulatory international protocols about privacy, monitoring of flows of data, and on information requirements about the type of data that any given institution should hold in a country and/or ship abroad. This is an area where much progress has been made among OECD countries, but the Third World has not participated actively in the debate.

4. Joint efforts to obtain preferential treatment for access to data banks and bases as a way to mitigate the growing gap between North and South in areas such as S and T. Free access to these sources could be part of aid and transfer of technology agreements.

At this stage, a warning is necessary: the potential benefits of the technology, as with other technologies, could remain paper and words, as they have in many cases. The benefits assume a short- and long-term direction, i.e. the active search for alternative development strategies. This in the final analysis is related to the power structure within and between countries. If this structure is not altered in most countries and internationally, there is little hope that desirable benefits will materialize.

Data, information and a new productive infrastructure should benefit not only the few; we cannot have a world divided between information 'poor' and 'rich'. Data and information should not be used to infringe on a people's cultural identity and invade, by means of different lifestyles, patterns of consumption and values, a world that is struggling to reach its own identity and development path. More than legislation and protocols, a new atmosphere of social command of technologies should be developed. In this atmosphere a participatory and plural discussion about the use of technologies could take place and the wonders of current change could help solve pressing needs and benefit all in a more interdependent rather than dependent world.

Information is a 'social good', embodying in its content and form of transmission cultural patterns, social organizations, complex and subtle forms of social reproduction and economic value.

We are confronting a change, as profound as major changes in the past, which masters an essential component of economic activity and human interaction. The outcome of this change will depend on society's ability to harness the technological cornucopia which is unfolding, in order to avoid the creation of an order which might take decades to dismantle. Present change could lead to planetary uniformization and greater dependency for the Third World or it could serve to manifest the basic unity of humanity in the diversity of its expression.

Notes

1. See Independent Commission on International Development Issues (Brandt Commission), *North-South: A Programme for Survival*, London, 1980, p. 53 and OECD Interfutures, *Facing the Future:*

Mastering the Probable and Managing the Unpredictable, OECD, Paris, 1979.

2. These points have been developed in greater detail in Rada, J., *The Impact of Microelectronics: A Tentative Appraisal of Information Technology*, ILO, Geneva, 1980. See also Ide, R., *Microelectronics—The Technological Thrust*, Information & Communications Technology, Ontario, Canada, 1979.

3. Merrit, R.L., 'The Revolution in Communications Technology and the Transformation of the International System' in Mendes, C. (*et al.*), *The Control of Technocracy*, Brazil, 1979.

4. Ide, R., op.cit. See also Branscomb, L.M., 'Computer Technology and the Evolution of World Communications in International Telecommunication Union (ITU)', *Third World Telecommunication Forum*, Geneva, 1979, Part I.

5. For details on the economy and applications of fibre-optics see Chang, K.Y., 'Fiber Optic Integrated Distribution and its Applications' in *International Conference on Communications, Conference Record Vol. I*, Boston, Ma., June 1979, and Corfield, K.G., 'Optical Fibres in Communications—A Review of the Benefits in ITU', *Third World Telecommunication Forum*, op.cit.

6. For details, see Rada, J., op.cit., and Friedrichs, G., *Microelectronics: A New Dimension of Technological Change and Automation*, Vienna Centre Conference on Microelectronics, September 1979. Important material is compiled in a pedagogical form in National Extension College, *The Silicon Factor*, London, 1979.

7. OECD Interfutures, op.cit., pp. 114 and 336.

8. Most US semiconductor manufacturers (the 'pioneers') have been acquired either wholly or in part by large US and European corporations. In Europe, a process of concentration is also taking place through mergers, takeovers and joint ventures. The EEC Commission has devised a plan to streamline the European electronics industry. Also see Rada, J. 'Structure and behaviour of the international semiconductor industry', UNCTC, New York (Forthcoming 1982).

9. See Fabre, J.M. and Moulonguat, T., 'L'Industrie Informatique' in Nora, S. and Minc, A., *L'Informatisation de la Société*, Vol. II, Annexe No 7, Paris, 1978. See Rada, J. Structure and behaviour ...', op.cit.

10. International Data Corporation in *Fortune Magazine*, June 5th, 1978, and *Financial Times*, February 6th, 1979.

11. *New Scientist*, January 11th, 1979. Also see 'La guerre des données', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, November 1979. Beca, R., 'Les Banques des Données' in Nora, S. and Minc, A., op.cit., Vol. I, Annexe No. 2.

12. See on this point Jacobson, J., *Technical Change, Employment and Technological Dependency*, Research Policy Institute, University of Lund, Discussion Paper No. 122, August 1979, and Rada, J., op.cit.

13. See the outcome of 'Scenario A' in the OECD Interfutures Report, op.cit. This is the best possible scenario and the Lima Target is not accomplished, even though the exercise does not consider the technological changes described here.

14. Advisory Council for Applied Research and Development, *The Application of Semiconductor Technology*, London, 1978, p. 7.

15. This is the case of Inmos, GEC-Fairchild and ITT in the UK, Thomson-Motorola in France, Mostek in Ireland, National Semiconductors, Motorola and NEC in Scotland and Hitachi in West Germany. See Roessle, H.F.L., 'Prospects for the European Semiconductor Industry' in *Financial Times Conference: Tomorrow in World Electronics*, Conference Papers, London, 1979.

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More of the Same: The Impact of Information Technology on Domestic Life in Japan

By Tarja Cronberg and Inga-Lisa Sangregorio

The revolutionary changes in information technology during the past decade have serious implications not only for the Third World and the international division of labour but also for lifestyles in the industrialized countries. Technological change and 'progress' is not necessarily the same as human development and social and economic progress.

In order to study the impact of the new information technologies on the lifestyles and domestic life of a technologically highly advanced society, Tarja Cronberg and Inga-Lisa Sangregorio went to Tama New Town and Higashi-Ikoma in Japan, where a series of full-scale experiments have been carried out in two housing areas. They found that the new technologies were used to reinforce existing social patterns rather than to test out in an imaginative manner the possibilities for social change. Thus they were surprised to find, to take one example, that there was no mention of the possibility of using the new data and communication technologies to decentralize work, although work places are concentrated in the metropolitan centres involving, in the case of Tokyo, up to fours hours daily travel to and from work.

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Technology assessment is not only a question of the technology itself. The impact of a particular technology is highly dependent on the social context into which it is introduced and in which it is used.

Assessment must first take account of the goals we intend to achieve by the application of the technology in question. Technology solves the problem we ask it to solve. There is always a choice of goals, even when the course of events appears to be 'spontaneous'. This choice should not be dictated by technology (e.g. 'a car for every family' or 'a computer in every kitchen'), but rather spring from a holistic view of man and society. How do we want to live in the future? What are our goals?

Nor should the consequences of technology be measured only by such macroeconomic criteria as the balance of payments or energy consumption. It is at least as important to

identify and evaluate the impacts of a particular technology on the organization and content of everyday life.

Today, we stand at the threshold of a major technological change: the widespread application of microprocessors. Some call it a revolution. Experts claim that this technology, at least in the industrialized world, will radically change working life during the eighties and domestic life in the home in the nineties. It is primarily the applications in information and communication technologies which may transform daily life. The number of information services available in the home is expected to multiply rapidly. People may also be able to do personal errands, and even their jobs, without leaving home.

It is high time a discussion began on the possible consequences of this trend on domestic life. Industry is ready to launch the products. The technology is fully developed, and commercially viable (or expected soon to become so). The question is whether it is also socially desirable? How will 'the computerization of everyday life' affect the home and the family? What effects will such technology have on the ways people use their time and money, on relationships between family members and between the family and society? How will it affect the distribution of work within the family, and between the family and other members of society?

These are a few of the questions which we have discussed in a study of the impact which technology has had so far on everyday life and lifestyles.[1] In this study we analysed the ways that innovations such as TV and washing machines had affected living patterns. Our conclusion was that technological development, or rather the way new technology hade been implemented and its diffusion organized, had encouraged privatization in society during the period studied (circa 1900-75). Activities and equipment had been moved into the home, making fewer reasons to leave it, and so opportunities for contact with people outside the family had diminished and the immediate environment hade become impoverished. Material needs ('to have') had no doubt been satisfied, but individually and in a way which seemed to have made it more difficult to satisfy non-material needs, such as those for social contact and self-realization.

In a recently completed study, we followed up the earlier work and analysed the probable consequences of introducing the new data processing and communication technologies into the home.[2] In the autumn of 1980 we visited Japan in order to study their experiments with advanced information technology which are explicitly directed toward the 'computerization of domestic life' and the introduction of the necessary equipment into the home itself. Our objective was to analyse the interrelationships between technology and lifestyles. We met and interviewed not only those involved in the technical experiments, but also specialists in studying lifestyles in Japan, in an effort to gain insight into not only the technology and its applications but also the social context in which it is being used.

In this article, we will describe and evaluate these experiments from a social perspective and draw some general conclusions on both the evaluation of technology and a desirable course for future developments.

New technology on trial

In many countries, the new computer and communication technologies are hailed as a solution to the economic crisis. Microelectronics, it is hoped, will breathe new life into an

industry suffering from overproduction crises and create a whole new range of attractive products for the mass market.

Japan is the country which most deliberately, and as part of an explicit government policy, has promoted this technology. In the late sixties, the government, the universities and the electronics industry collaborated in the working out of a national development plan. Even though this plan has subsequently been revised, the thought behind it remains the same: only a large domestic demand can make an industry competitive on the international market.

Japanese industry has been very successful in developing applications for use in the home. The household sector is a much larger potential market than that of business or industry. For many products, only household consumption will allow mass production.

There is little evidence of official concern for the social consequences of a rapid 'computerization' of society. In a government review the goal for industrial policy in this sector is described as follows: 'The purpose is to accelerate computerization in individual life and promote the formation of regional communities.'[3]

It is primarily in the field of information transfer systems (e.g. via optical fibres) that Japan is a world leader. To test these systems, full-scale experiments have been initiated in two housing areas: Tama New Town outside Tokyo, and Higashi-Ikoma near Kyoto.

In Tama New Town, 500 households were provided with equipment which gave access to local TV programmes and to a large number of information services.[4] In Higashi-Ikoma, 158 households were provided with similar services based on a advanced optical fibre transmission system: HI-OVIS (Highly Interactive Optical Visual Information System).[5] Both systems also allow a limited amount of two-way communication. In Tama New Town, questions can be answered by pressing a button (quiz games or questions on local matters such as traffic circulation). In Higashi-Ikoma, the equipment includes a TV camera, allowing people in the household to be on TV-programmes without leaving home.

The experiments are being conducted with the close collaboration of government and industry, a typically Japanese phenomenon. The government finances the R and D for the systems and pays the salaries of the project staff. Other participants came from various electronics companies and from the commercial TV broadcasting corporations. The evaluation committees are composed of professors of electronics and representatives from the manufacturing companies, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and the broadcasting companies. All of them are men.

The design of the projects and the composition of the committees indicate clearly that the primary purpose of the experiments has been to test and further develop the technology and to explore the possibilities for commercial exploitation. However, a number of social goals were also stated. The HI-OVIS project, for example, is expected to contribute to:

- a sense of local community;
- 'restoration of subjectivity';
- life-long education;
- the welfare of children and of the aged.

The first goal was to be achieved by an emphasis on local programmes and local information; the second by the system's provision of the option to select desired information; and the third by education programmes. How the technology could achieve the fourth goal was not immediately obvious from the design of the experiments. The official video presentation of HI-OVIS, in which the speaker talks of

'a historical mission for humanity', indicates clearly that expectations for this new technology are by no means modest.

Considering these aspirations, it seems all the more remarkable that 'humanity' apparently consists of those who are at home between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. on weekdays, since most broadcast time is scheduled for these hours. This means that the experiments are directed primarily toward housewives (and to some extent children). The project is thus a matter of experiments planned, directed and evaluated by men, with women as the primary target group. (It should be mentioned that this circumstance was not brought out either in the official presentations and evaluations of the experiments, or in the reports of visiting delegations which we studied before our visit.)

Bearing in mind the necessity of evaluating technology in its social context, we will now try to portray the social situation of men and women in modern Japan.

A society divided

Even though there are a few signs of change, it is still basically accurate to state that Japanese society is divided into a man's world and a woman's world, and that the two have very little in common.

Home, sweet home—the world of the Japanese woman

A married woman in Japan is nearly always a housewife, particularly if she has children. After she finishes her studies, she works for a few years before marriage, maybe until the birth of her first child. Neither she herself, her employer, nor anyone else around her expects her to continue working all her life, and these expectations naturally affect her career. Even if she has had a good education, she will seldom be able to get a job with any potential for professional advancement. The age of twenty-five marks the point at which a 'proper woman' should have the good taste to leave professional life. If she does not, she will be exposed to the many direct and indirect sanctions reserved for those who break a society's unwritten laws.[6]

Attitudes towards women and work change very slowly. In a survey made in 1973, 77 per cent of those questioned thought that a woman should confine herself to the home after marriage, and only 20 per cent thought it proper for her to continue working after the birth of her first child. In 1978 the corresponding figures were 70 per cent and 27 per cent. Between 1968 and 1977, the number of women who had never worked outside the home but who, on being questioned, responded that they would like to work if they had the chance, increased from two million to nearly four million. This indicates a growing dissatisfaction with their role as a housewife.

What shape, then, does the housewife's day take?

In spite of the fact that homes are small and the number of children low, a large part of the housewife's day is occupied with housework. On average, a Japanese woman spends almost $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours per day doing housework, a figure which changed only slightly between 1960 and 1975. During the same period, the amount of time spent watching television increased rapidly. The average for all adult women in 1960 was 1 hour per day, in 1975 over 4 hours per day.[7] For housewives the figures are even higher—5 to $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours per day.*

* For comparison, television watching in Sweden averages between 11 and 12 hours per week. In contrast to Japanese women, Swedish women watch less TV than Swedish men.

The fact that Japanese women spend so much time watching TV does not prove that they prefer watching TV to other activities. Research indicates that it is rather a question of not having any alternative ways of using their time. Japan differs from the US and other countries where many women have traditionally been housewives, in that there is no corresponding tradition of women's active participation in community volunteer work such as PTA associations, charities or local organizations. In Japan, only 1 or 2 per cent of the entire population spends time on such activities.

This is the social situation into which the new communications technology is being introduced. The experiments are directed primarily toward women, who already watch about 5 hours of TV per day and rarely participate in activities outside their own home.

My office is my castle—the world of the Japanese man

If the home is the woman's world, the office is the man's world. It is in relation to his work that the Japanese man defines his identity and his social relations. This applies particularly to the men who have managed to gain entrance into the most desirable part of the employment market, the large corporations, where employment generally means lifelong security.

Work and the companionship of fellow workers characterizes not only the working day, but also a large part of leisure time. After work, men often go out for a drink and perhaps dinner with colleagues. It may be as late as 10 or 11 p.m. before a husband reaches his home in the suburbs—just in time for 'Men's Hour' on the commercial TV channels.

The average amount of time a Japanese man spends watching TV is a little over 2 hours on weekdays and about 4 hours on Saturdays and Sundays.[8] They thus watch television less than women, not surprisingly since they spend so little time at home. They also watch different types of programmes. Whereas women learn flower arranging or cooking in the morning hours, the 'Men's Hour' features a master of ceremonies in a white tuxedo, surrounded by beautiful hostesses.

The gulf between men and women is also found in leisure time activities; men (besides watching TV) devote their spare time to sports, hobbies and gambling. That there are not many topics of conversation which cross the sexual border is hardly surprising. One study found that the preferred topics when 'salaried men' talk with friends and colleagues are hobbies, sports and gambling, work, and gossip about other people in the company.[9] Topics of more general interest, such as politics or news events, take up only 3 per cent of the conversation.

The roles of father and husband take only a minor place in the daily life of a Japanese man. These are roles which he must neglect if he is to succeed professionally. A manager of a large corporation expressed his attitude toward the family life of his employees in these terms:

> For me, an employee is like a soldier, and a manager is like an officer. When I hire someone, I demand that he choose between his family and the company. If he gives his family priority, that's his business, but then he will never amount to more than an ordinary employee. If he wants to become a manager he has to sacrifice home and family, and work must be his only interest.[10]

There are, however, signs that these 'ideal employees' are becoming harder to find, even in Japan. In 1967, when the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation asked people what they

regarded as the most important thing in life, 54 per cent said work. By 1978 this had dropped to 37 per cent.[11] However, this reduced interest in work does not mean that men are willing to accept more responsibility for housework and child-raising. Their interest is instead directed more toward their free time, and the personal satisfaction they can gain from leisure activities.

If it is correct, as most observers agree, that a smaller work force will be needed in the future, it seems more probable that the man's desire for more leisure time will be realized than the woman's wish to find a job outside the home.

And never the twain shall meet ...

To sum up, there are not many signs that the strict segregation between the man's world and the woman's world is breaking down. The Japanese woman is still securely tied to the home by many invisible bonds. The strongest ones are the lack of opportunity for professional activity and the lack of child care facilities and other social services. Other problems are the long working days and the tiresome commuting in metropolitan areas. And last but not least there is social pressure; and its effect on a Japanese woman's expectations of her role and behaviour.

The Japanese man, on the other hand, is heavily burdened by the pressures of a demanding career, but this is not without its advantages. Not only does he receive a salary which rises with the number of years of employment, but there are also a large amount of fringe benefits. Most important is the feeling of belonging to a group, and of having a place and an identity.

'Tie her with optic fibres'

This is the background to our evaluation of the two experiments. Our conclusions, which are based on both the social context and the goals which had been set for the projects, will concentrate on the following three areas:

- the need for more information (at any chosen time) in the home;
- the need for 'two-way communication' and for active participation in programmes and programme production;
- the opportunities which the new information technology provides for the creation of a 'local community', or at least a local identity.

The experiments can hardly be said to have provided evidence that the households (i.e. women) have any major unsatisfied needs for information. In fact, the need for a wide selection of information available in the living room at any time doesn't seem to be as large as anticipated. Surveys in both the Tama New Town and HI-OVIS (Higashi-Ikoma) projects indicate that neither the availability nor the content of information was valued very highly.[12] In Tama New Town, half of the services offered initially were discontinued after the first phase.

The lack of interest was also reflected in the willingness, or rather unwillingness to pay, which was noted in both projects (during the experimental period the services had been free). In Tama New Town, 60 per cent of the participants in the experiment (primarily households with a woman at home) were willing to pay up to 500 yen per month. To cover costs, at least 5000 households in the area would need to be connected to the system. Ten per cent of the households, primarily young working couples, were simply not interested in information for a fee. (According to later reports, the Tama New Town project has been discontinued after the completion of the two experimental phases, due to the fact

that it was not commercially viable). The reluctance to pay has not led those responsible to question whether the services are necessary or whether the information system is itself justifiable. The people we interviewed indicated that this lack of response would mean at most that it would take a little longer before the systems were introduced on a large scale, and explained that other sources of finance (such as rental fees and local advertising) were being explored.

The new information systems differ from ordinary television in that they offer some opportunity for 'two-way communication' and for active participation in programmes and programme production. How do the test families regard these options?

In both areas, programme planning committees had been formed, members of which could influence the content and formulation of programmes and submit their own programme proposals. However, these committees lack both decision power and independent resources. Their ideas are only suggestions, and according to those we interviewed, usually too expansive to be realized. In HI-OVIS, however, the committee produces with professional assistance, a one-hour programme each week, which is broadcast during prime time on Sundays.

In Tama New Town, most of the local programmes are made by semi-professional 'housewife reporters'. These women, who often have experience in the mass media, live in the area and know it well, making it easier for people to contact them to discuss programmes or programme ideas. Although these women can not be said to be representative of the viewers, they nevertheless constitute an interesting example of how people in such residential areas can contribute to a realistic depiction of their own environment.

As already mentioned, the two experiments offer completely different opportunities for 'two-way communication'. In Tama New Town, 100 of the participating families can answer questions by pushing a button. The more advanced HI-OVIS system includes a TV camera as part of the household equipment. A person at home can thus participate in a programme and be seen by the other viewers. Participation along these lines was particularly high among children. During our visit we saw an English lesson with the teacher in the studio and the children participating from their own homes.

It is obvious that the opportunity to take part in a programme becomes smaller as the number of participants increases. The importance of a sensitivity to changes in scale appears to have been underestimated in the official assessments. The programmes which most interested the households participating in the experiment were those in which someone from the household (preferably a child) or some close acquaintance took part. In a fully developed system, which has enough participating households to make it economically viable, the chances of this happening will of course be greatly reduced.

Seeing an acquaintance on the TV screen seems to be the thing which the participants in the experiments appreciated most. In Tama New Town, 49 per cent of those questioned said that this was the reason why they considered the project 'significant'.[13] In Higashi-Ikoma, 32 per cent of the participants reported that they had found friends via the system.[14] After seeing your next-door neighbour on TV, it is easier to begin a conversation in a shop or on the street.

This is an interesting and important result, which indirectly indicates the shortcomings of modern housing schemes. Without any infor-

mation system to tell you who your neighbours are and where their interests lie, it is difficult to make contact with them. The new media seem to have managed to fill this vacuum, at least when they are used on the small scale of these Japanese projects.

We have the impression that these results came as somewhat of a surprise to the decision makers. Although one of the stated social goals was to foster 'sense of local community', this apparently meant knowledge of local affairs. (When was Tama New Town built? When do the shops close? How do you call the fire department?) rather than contact with the neighbours. The purpose of the experiment was to spread practical knowledge of local matters ('Most people aren't interested in what happens far off, anyhow,' as one of our interviewees expressed it) and, in fact, interest in local matters did increase somewhat. However, the isolation of women in the home was a problem unknown to those who planned the experiment—or at any rate was a problem they ignored. The way the project is designed is actually likely to make women even more isolated in their homes; with more appliances and more information available at home there is even less reason to go out, to participate in courses, etc. ('Think how convenient—she doesn't need to find a baby-sitter!'). That the result, in spite of everything, seems to be just the opposite bears witness to the—ignored—need for personal contact and a social network in the neighbourhood.

Evaluation of the experiments with regard to the stated goals and to the social situation in which the technology will be used thus yields a clear picture. The technology hardly fills any unsatisfied information needs for women, and there is little interest in two-way communication. But the system does provide new (and unexpected) opportunities to find out who the neighbours are and does increase interest in local matters, and in this way contributes to the creation of a local identity, which was one of the goals of the experiment. The question which arises is whether it might not be possible to achieve the same effect through other, somewhat simpler and less expensive, means.

The experiments—not by design, but in practice—have had women as a target group. From the woman's point of view, this application of technology doesn't imply any revolutionary structural changes. Woman's place is still in the home, to which she is now tied not only by all the invisible bonds we described earlier but also by ultramodern optical fibres. She gets more of something she already has a surplus of: household appliances and TV services. The only positive factor is the chance to see the neighbours on TV, and in that way to get to know somebody else in the area where she spends 24 hours a day.

Seen from the male viewpoint, this application of technology makes little difference. It does not threaten his professional standing or his lifestyle. It may even have a positive effect. His wife may be more satisfied with her lot if she no longer feels a stranger in her home environment. She can be a better homemaker and mother if she knows more about her immediate environment. The man can remain free from housework and from responsibility for home and children.

The limits of imagination

At least as interesting as seeing to what extent the goals set up for the experiments have been met, is noting which goals were *not* selected in the first place.

We have already pointed out that the technology in question has been developed, and its use planned and administrated, by men,

while those who enjoy its blessings are primarily women. The goals selected reflect a specific male perspective. In good faith, they have tried to make life a little easier for women, while keeping their own lives basically unaffected. Technology solves the problems we ask it to solve.

What other problems in Japanese society could have been solved with the help of the new technology?

We were particularly surprised that there was no mention of the possibility of using the new data and communication technologies to decentralize work. One of the major problems in Japan is that the workplaces are concentrated in the metropolitan centres, and many people have long and tiring journeys to and from work—in Tokyo sometimes up to two hours each way daily. The new communications technologies facilitate access to information wherever it may be and offer the possibility of performing a wide range of jobs away from the city. Theoretically, people could easily be employed in the same company and even in the same department without necessarily being located in the same building.

We can imagine several ways of decentralizing the workplace. The most extreme, to quote an American magazine, would be to place a computer terminal in every living room.[15] A better solution would probably be a local office where people who aren't necessarily employed by the same company but who live in the same area would be able to work with the aid of computer terminals and other technical equipment. Without taking a position on whether a development in this direction would be desirable or not, we did find it surprising that nobody we met had even considered the possibility. When we took up the question in our interviews, everybody (all men) dismissed the thought as being against the Japanese character. The life-style of the Japanese man would be seriously threatened if he couldn't place a safe distance between himself and home every day.

The male visions of the future follow a completely different direction. One of the leaders of the HI-OVIS project described his vision to us. In his 'brave new world', men would spend four days per week in the skyscrapers of the inner city's office district. Since the central city would consist only of offices, there would be little need to worry about the environment or to waste expensive land on parks for children, etc. On Thursday evening or Friday morning, the hard-working man would leave his office to enjoy a three-day period of rest in his home, far from the pressures of the city. His vision included nothing on what would be going on at the periphery while the men were busy making decisions in the city centre.

Towards another organization of everyday life

We have chosen the Japanese example because it illustrates so clearly how new technology can be used to reinforce existing social patterns. Its potential for change is not explored and so the limits of imagination, not technology as such, determine its future applications.

That the social outcome of the technologically-advanced Japanese experiments is so trivial, is no doubt a result of their being planned and directed by men who reflect the prejudices of their time, their country, their social class and their sex. This is not to imply that a corresponding group in another country could come up with better solutions; we are well aware that it is easier for us to point out Japanese idiosyncracies than to pick up similar biases in cultures closer to our own.

The Japanese experiments do, however, make an important contribution by indicating the trend of a desirable future development. What did the participants in the experiments appreciate most? Not the intended effects: more information or entertainment or even the opportunity of two-way communication which the new systems placed at their fingertips. No, it was instead an unanticipated side-effect: the opportunity to get to know the neighbours, itself an incidental result of the extremely small scale of the projects.

If, as a great deal of other research indicates, isolation is an urgent problem in modern society, it would of course be sensible to organize society in such a way as to facilitate contact between neighbours, and preferably in a way based on something more substantial than an information system.

The new microelectronic technology is not a necessary condition for such a development, but it could make matters easier in several ways:

1. The new technology will increase productivity and lead to a reduction of manpower needs, which should in turn make it possible to reduce the length of the working day in the formal economy.
2. The new technology will reduce the length of the working day in the formal economy.
3. The new technology will reduce the need for transportation in general and for commuting in particular. It will be (is) possible for people to work together without being in the same place and to obtain immediate access to information stored elsewhere.
4. The new technology can help to break the economy of large scale at a time when increasing transportation costs are further reducing the profitability of the currently dominant centralistic models.

Together these trends could be the catalyst for a dynamic development in the local community and contribute to the gradual transformation of today's 'bedroom towns' into living communities. More time spent in the residential area (thanks to shorter working days and reduced, or nonexistent, commuting) should, with proper organization, stimulate the development of social networks in the neighbourhoods, which could cooperate in solving common problems and sharing work outside the formal economy. There could also be small-scale production for local use, which would lead to greater self-reliance and reduced vulnerability. In countries where the distance, both physical and mental, between home and work is presently large, the gulf could be reduced or completely eliminated; in countries which have not yet experienced this separation, it can perhaps be prevented.

This, of course, will not happen automatically. It is indeed highly improbable that it will be encouraged by those who presently control development (and this certainly refers not only to Japan). The reason is not that they are particularly evil, but rather that such a development is a complete departure from the lives they themselves lead and from their accustomed ways of thinking. Only a widespread debate at the grass-roots level, not solely or even primarily about the potential of technology, but about how we should organize society in order to lead better and more fulfilling lives than today, can contribute to breaking the trend towards 'more of the same' which characterizes the present development of technology.

Notes

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A Model for Democratic Communication

By Fernando Reyes Matta

'In order to raise educational levels for a better understanding of the communication process and to create true participation based upon adequate social awareness', Fernando Reyes Matta, in this article, proposes a model for democratic communication based on the assumption that communication is a social good. The model has mainly been developed for the Third World and its current needs, in the hope of stimulating greater creativity in the search for social change and the promotion of Another Development.

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'In creating new models, rather than trying to find faults with those of the past, our endeavour must be to describe the new conditions of communication.'

Michael Buhler

The seventies have taken on special significance as the decade of debates among those seeking to change the structure of communication in contemporary society. A very important feature of these debates has been consistent and harsh criticism of communication systems that are unidirectional and non-participatory in character. These objections, which arise at both national and international levels, have had a tremendous impact. The most important aspect of the debates, however, is the search for new forms of access to and participation in social communication. Recent intergovernmental conferences and academic groups have formulated specific suggestions and resolutions which should help to achieve this objective. Furthermore, the experiences of certain grass roots groups prove that there are other ways to improve the quality of communications. Experiments in 'alternative communication'—a process in which participating constitutes an active and creative element—demonstrate the fundamental differences between traditional and alternative communication. The first is a system in which the contents and nature of information are decided upon by a restricted group; the second, a system in which the audience can actively participate in the process of communication.

The lack of effective participation affects communication systems in all social and political development models. In fact, verticalism is predominant in large communications systems. This is due to the fact that economic power imposes certain restrictions, thus limiting the exercise of communications to restricted groups, and also to the fact that authoritarian limitations impede the free flow of communications. At the end of the seventies, a new and distressing trend began to emerge: international capitalism began to admit that

there is an unfair and unequal situation in information at national and international levels. But the proposed solution, which offers an increase in technology and training—undoubtedly necessary and useful tools—will only help to reinforce verticalism and lack of participation if the basic concepts of communication are not modified. Thus, this is not a technical or professional problem but a political and social one. The issue is to make communication a constructive and positive element which will help to improve the quality of life for the individual and society in general.

However, in spite of the efforts to understand the problems of communication in contemporary society, certain fundamental questions still remain to be answered: How should communication policy be implemented so as to guarantee adequate participation in and access to the communication process? What are the necessary political, professional, educational, institutional and training requirements which should be met in order to change current communications systems? What changes should be made in current communications systems in order to transform the traditional and passive role of the receiver into one of active participation in each stage of communication activities and policy-making? What should be done in order to create a system in which journalists and social communicators can fulfill their role while simultaneously ensuring that all social groups participate actively in the communications process? And how can individuals and groups be made to acquire a critical awareness of the nature of current communications in order to contribute to its improvement?

This paper approaches some of these issues from a Third World perspective, but it also takes into consideration certain experiences from industrialized countries. In some countries, for instance, a limited organization of the audience is officially stimulated, but these organizations lack the necessary mechanisms in order to have an effective influence upon communications. In other countries, organized social groups are able to exert some influence upon the content and policies of mass media programmes, but lack education for communication. Yet in others, specific efforts are made to educate people for communication and make them aware of its possibilities by teaching this subject at elementary school level; however, the necessary mechanisms to implement this knowledge are nonexistent and thus cannot be combined with others to provoke changes in the prevailing situation. It is therefore necessary to take all these elements into consideration and to find the way to incorporate them into a model which will ensure the democratization of communication.

A model based on active social participation

Definition of participants

Based on the issues mentioned above, we propose a model which incorporates, expands and revises elements contained in traditional interpretations of communication, as well as recently developed concepts regarding the multidirectional and multidimensional nature of communication considered as a 'social good'. This approach has led to the development of a Model for Democratic Communication, which should ensure active social participation for all social sectors. Its purpose is to restructure the communication process so as to promote dynamic interaction between the participants. The following list describes the participants and the roles assigned to them by the model in order to create a democratic and independent communication process:

1. The receivers, with varied interests and motives, organized and prepared for access and participation.
2. The emitters, who vary in terms of professional skills and message-transmission techniques.
3. The entrepreneurs and administrators, both private and public, whose positions within the communication and mass media framework have been established by community consensus.
4. The educators, who create the necessary awareness for a broad understanding of and participation in communication.
5. The evaluators, who from academic, professional, technical and political positions contribute to the improvement of the communication system by providing guidance and direction.
6. The political representatives, who must develop policies for the implementation of prevailing social trends regarding the nature of communication, its role and contribution to society.

Effective and respectful collaboration between participants—who carry out the responsibilities assigned to them and make use of their rights—can produce a new communications structure which will lack the vices of the prevailing structure, particularly certain myths on access and participation. Some of these myths on access and participation have been created by the current nature of the media in industrialized countries, especially in those where the main organizations which handle transnational communications are located. These myths might lead us to think that certain relatively passive phenomena registered among the receivers are evidence of access and participation. Audience polls, ratings and the struggle to increase the number of buyers of a given newspaper or magazine and the number of copies printed or coverage, are some of the classical instruments whereby the media assure themselves that they are important and responsible in the social context. It is imperative to modify this situation. The model we propose is based on the analysis of experiences in the search for improvement. It arises from the analysis of attempts made to change society in certain Third World countries; from community experience in industrial countries; from documents and debates on the need to establish national communication policies; from the possibilities derived from the concept of permanent education and the role of the media therein; from the formulation of principles regarding the social responsibility and role of communication; and finally, from the reformulation of the right to information, which is not only an individual but also a collective right.

Objectives

In view of the foregoing, the objectives of the Model for Democratic Communication are the following:

1. To define communication as a social function, carried out within a given sociopolitical structure which determines the nature and influence of the communication process.
2. To define the right to information as an individual and social right, which is delegated to appropriate group, community, technical and professional representatives.
3. To establish that the organization and administrative structure of the media should emerge from a consensual formulation adopted by society.
4. To determine that the processing of national and international information constitutes a social responsibility, and takes

Explanation of the diagram

The diagram shows the interaction between the participants in the communication process. The informative current appears in a horizontal perspective. It goes from the whole of society to the specialized and professional sectors, who deliver their message to the receivers. Furthermore, the receivers operate through collective organizations which may be of a political, cultural, communicative or social nature, in which the outflow of the media is discussed, analysed and processed. The activities of organized audiences generate two operational currents: access to the messages transmitted by the media and access to the media in order to broadcast the messages of organized audiences: and participation in education for communication, in decisions at media level on programme content, and in decisions on national communication policy. The existence of organized audiences also generates two currents which guarantee the possibility of participation in the evaluation of the actual operation of the communication policy model; and access to instances of appeal against omissions or malfunctioning of the system. The model provides not only an explanation of the informative current which goes from the top of society to the audience. It also defines the contribution of organized and conscious audiences to the communication process.

Definition of the elements of the model

1.1 Social organization for communication: *the model proposes the creation of a coordinating entity: it defines the administrative structure within which the media should operate and ensures the possibility to communicate for all social sectors.*

1.2 Media: *an organized set of instruments for communication and transmission of information, determined by each country's organization.*

1.3 Processing of national information: *the mechanism whereby the media obtain, for themselves and for the receivers, a critical panorama of national reality, determined by their internal and national norms.*

1.4 Processing of international information: *the relationship between local media and international agencies which shall provide information in accordance with local and international regulations.*

2. Messages: *information concerning events, conceived, produced and transmitted in accordance with the definition of information as a social and individual right, previously determined at a social and global level. This information will thus portray an analytical view of society in its proper context.*

3. R: *receivers of messages, previously trained in order to be capable of adopting a critical attitude towards the messages they receive. This training should help them to become active subjects in the communication process.*

4. Education for communication: *the use of traditional educational resources at all levels, to enable receivers to form an opinion regarding information and the role of the media as transmitters of knowledge and information.*

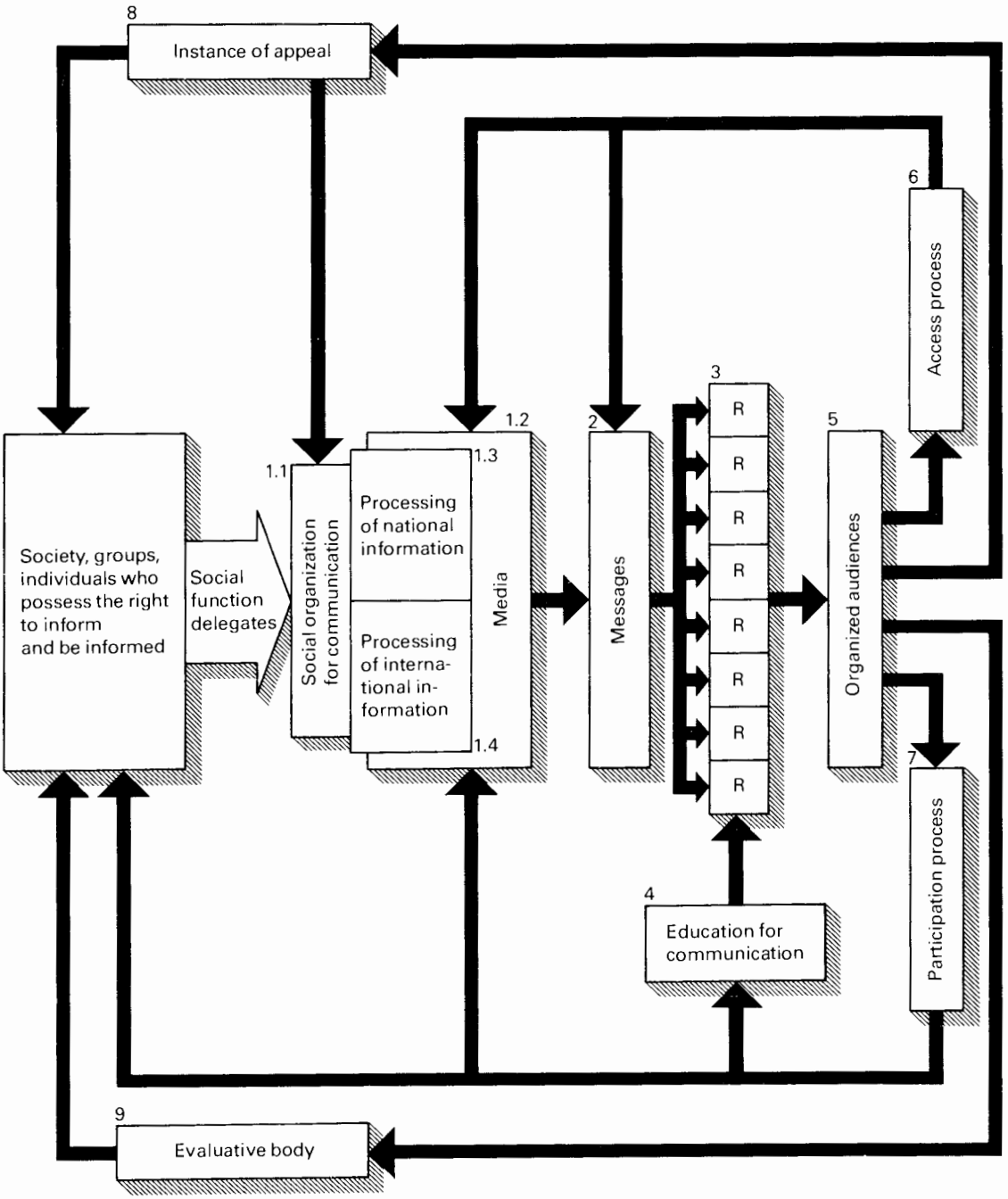
5. Organized audiences: *the receivers as a whole, conceived neither individually nor quantitatively as an amorphous mass but rather as organic groups structurally connected to the rest of society through their work and social and community organizations.*

6. Access process: *the concept and implementation of information as a right of the receiver, as well as the latter's potential access to use the media to supply information.*

7. Participation process: *mechanism which permits access of organized audiences to decision-making and internal planning structures within the media, as well as to organizations who deliver education for communication.*

8. Right to appeal: *legal bodies created to support the receivers' right to critical information and to organized participation in the media.*

9. Evaluative body and positive action: *institutional mechanisms designed to ensure the operation of communication as a social right and obligation, and to offer guidance for its improvement.*


8
Instance of appeal
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Access process
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R
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1.1
2
5
Society, groups, individuals who possess the right to inform and be informed
Social function delegates
Social organization for communication
Processing of national information
Processing of international information
Media
Messages
Organized audiences
7
Participation process
4
Education for communication
9
Evaluative body

place within a given institutional and legal framework, thus creating specific rights and obligations.

5. To strengthen the role of the receiver, considering him or her as the subject of the communication process who, as such, must be organized and prepared in order to achieve greater participation in and access to communication.
6. To establish that education for communication currently constitutes an indispensable element in every individual's education, hence the need to create a regular and extracurricular context for this special training.
7. To define organized audiences as the sum of institutional experiences in which receivers interact in order to criticize, analyse and participate in communication processes.
8. To establish that access and participation are the means whereby organized receivers may actively relate to the levels at which political, informative, educational and evaluation decisions are made.
9. To define communication as a dynamic process, ratified or modified when necessary by evaluation, which is a fundamental instrument of society.
10. To emphasize the importance of entities of appeal to which organized audiences and those responsible for communication may resort in order to improve the mechanisms and methods of access and participation.

How the model operates

The way in which the model operates reflects previous experiences and the objectives stated above, and includes the following components:

1. Emitters and receivers interacting in an effort to enrich current possibilities of communication.
2. Messages and contents produced by the interaction between the media and society, in which audience participation plays a fundamental role in the improvement of the informational and cultural values employed by professional communicators.
3. Messages received by the audience, trained to evaluate, use and interpret the contents of the information flow.
4. Access to messages and to the media, which operates in both directions—either by receiving or by broadcasting information.
5. Participation designed to influence, through appropriate spokespersons, institutions which design and deliver education for communication, decision-making related to media contents, and political circles which establish the guidelines for the communication process.
6. Organization of audiences at different social levels so that critical and analytical debates on communication may take place, thus creating the means whereby access and participation may fully reflect the diverse nature of the receivers.
7. Representative mechanisms, in which the interests of society as a whole are coordinated with the delegation of society's right to information, and which create the fields of operation for professional and technical communicators.
8. Adequate structures for evaluation and appeal, designed to provide society with an activating and multidirectional process of communication.

A fundamental part of the proposed model stems from current social needs. It is based on four areas which, if well balanced, will create a

dynamic communication process. These areas are:

1. The social function of information, understood as a *delegated right*.
1. Social organization, coordination and professional structures.
3. Access to and participation in the communication process for organized audiences.
4. *Education for communication* at formal and extracurricular levels.

An analysis of each of these areas is given below, taking into consideration data and possibilities derived from previous experience; they provide the basis for a communication model which ensures active social participation.

Delegating the exercise of a social right

From 'delegation' to 'appropriation'

One of the basic principles to be taken into consideration is that the right to information is a social right, and that society necessarily delegates the execution of this right to experts, to the media, or in broader terms to 'those in charge' of seeking, processing and delivering the information to which society is entitled. But it seems that this principle has been forgotten. Mass media and communicators frequently behave as the initial depositaries of the right to information, entitled to act according to their own will. The right to information—of society and individuals—is thus limited to messages whose contents and characteristics are decided upon by communicators, self-instated as the 'fourth estate'. Our model intends to modify this situation by restoring the principle of the right to information as primordially an individual and social right. Communicators, as individuals, also possess this right, but in their role of experts fulfill a task delegated by society.

Technological development, economic concentration and political interest in communication, along with the expansion of communication activities, have distorted the nature of this 'delegation'. The media, while advocating principles inherited from nineteenth-century liberalism which conform to current transnational principles, have gone so far as to claim that if freedom of expression and the right to information are currently in vogue, it is thanks to them and their own free choice.

It is necessary to modify the media's activities within a social context with regard to active participation because 'the existence of a free-enterprise system has become synonymous with individual freedom'. As Herbert Schiller says: 'The system of industrial exploitation of culture claims that the system itself keeps freedom of expression alive thus denouncing the danger in any attempt to convert communication and information into a social right.'[1]

In industrialized countries as well as in certain parts of the Third World, we are faced with a situation in which restricted groups possess the power to inform and influence social communication. They have converted the 'delegation' of the right to information into an 'appropriation' of this right.

Towards the end of World War Two, a large movement postulated the principles of information and expression which have been in force ever since. Even then, some expressed concern about the consequences of these principles. In 1945, in an article entitled 'Freedom of the Press for Whom?', Earl Vance asks: 'Will freedom of the press be a personal right belonging to all citizens, as conceived by the Founding Fathers? Or will it be a property right belonging to the owners of newspapers and others publications, as we have increasingly come to believe nowadays?'[2]

The current nature of mass communication, the concentration of economic, political and social power which is reflected in the media, and existing forms of control intended to favour certain élite sectors, may serve as a reply to Vance's question. Undoubtedly, the principles of 'free flow' and freedom of expression have served to uphold the current system of communication control, and the economic and political sectors which support these principles in turn.

Urho Kekkonen, then President of Finland, said in 1973: 'The traditional concept of freedom in the Western world, by which the State's only obligation is to guarantee "laissez faire", has signified that society has left it up to each individual to enforce his freedom of expression by whatever means he has at his disposal'. And, regarding the consequences of this fact, he went on to point out: 'Thus, in practice, freedom of expression has actually become the freedom of the rich ... On an international level, it will be found that the ideals of free communication and their implementation are truly distorted for the rich on the one hand, and for the poor on the other.'[3]

Some experts, such as Antonio Pasquali, have pointed out that as a consequence of this policy of 'laissez faire' freedom of information is now concentrated in new communication-information oligarchies, which contravenes society's right to be informed. 'Free information', says Pasquali, 'exists only along the irreversible vector that goes from the informer to the receiver; democracy, as well as the reciprocal action of public opinion, is reduced to a mass opinion authoritatively manipulated with the help of imported technology.'[4] Pasquali also points out that the handling of information and communication constitutes a super-power which 'often operates in a legal vacuum due to legal liberalism of pre-communication times, and which confers upon this super-power an incalculable margin of freedom'.

The recovery of a right

The search for active participation channels tends to place communication in its proper context—as a social phenomenon based upon the need to know, upon man's natural desire to be informed, and upon the fact that the world's significance increases as we know more about it. Communication nowadays has the social responsibility of providing the daily background upon which each individual shapes an awareness of the historical process in which he or she is involved. The essence of democracy implies that each individual should be aware of the society in which he or she lives in order to uphold the ideas and interests of the community. The social role of the media involves obligations and responsibilities. Society itself should also create conditions to promote the development of this type of activity, based upon the need to regard information as a fundamental social need.

These concepts apply to national and international media. The latter are accepted at certain social levels because of the need for information regarding other countries and to inform people of different national situations upon which the international structure is based. Following this principle, the presence and activity of a transnational information agency, for example, is functional only if it recognizes the nature of the social function delegated to it and its inherent responsibility.

Consequently, participation in and access to the communication process by society leads to the recovery of the right to information. Information as a 'social benefit' rationalizes access and participation, and re-establishes the right to information as a *delegated right*,

through which the community may guide, enrich, demand or criticize the communication process and the media.

Social organization, coordination and professional structures

Relevant experiences

The rationale of the proposed model requires the creation of institutional mechanisms whereby the interests of sectors in charge of gathering, selecting and processing current events may be made compatible with those of the social sectors that benefit from this daily information. It is also necessary to create mechanisms to coordinate 'active social participation' in communication and offer guidance if access is to be easily achieved. Undoubtedly, the creation and operation of this mechanism will reflect existing social conflicts and contradictions. But consensus about specific activities will arise from democratic debates in which all participants in the communication process are represented.

In recent years, there have been several significant efforts to coordinate institutional control over the communication process in order to promote the type of social responsibility described above. In March 1973, a proposal was made to the Canadian public regarding Canada's future communication policy. In March 1977 Law C-43 was approved, delegating to the provinces the responsibility for communication policies. In Canada, communication, education and cultural tradition zealously guarded in the provinces are closely linked to one another. It was logical, therefore, that communication control should be in the hands of regional institutions.[5] In Sweden greater participation has been accomplished in the media through democratic and collective action. The Swedish radio and television companies, for instance, function in such a way that programme planning is not restricted to the management, but includes the participation of photographers, scenographers and editors.[6]

The Constitution of Yugoslavia states that communication is a public service and is based upon the concept of reciprocal exchange between manual workers and intellectuals. This concept may be implemented by planning programmes in advance, based on consultation and discussion with the body of social representatives at their work and educational institutions, and other centres of Yugoslav social life.[7] In Great Britain, among other innovative documents, we find the proposals made in 'The People and the Media' and the results of the 'Open Door' programme.[8]

Interesting experiences of this type have also taken place in Third World countries. Peru, for instance, designed legal formulas which, regardless of the way they have been applied, provide the possibility for different social sectors to participate directly in communication mechanisms, especially in the press. The *Expreso,* for example, was a newspaper that reflected the participation of the education sector, with its specific interests and contributions to the community. Representatives of teachers, parents, students, workers and community institutions met with information professionals (in this case two members of the newspaper staff) and together they appointed a governing body to determine the contents and editorial line of the newspaper. The reponsibility for implementing this course was left to the newspaper Director, elected by representatives of the educational community.

The approval of the Chilean National Television Act in 1968, during Chile's democratic period, provides another significant example. This law created a National Television Council

and established that television broadcasting was the responsibility of Chilean universities and of an autonomous state corporation known as 'Televisiòn Nacional de Chile' which controlled a nation-wide network. The law permitted both entities to be financed by commercial sponsors. The National Television Council was basically composed of communication experts and university and community representatives, designated by democratically elected legislative bodies. Thus, different political tendencies, labour sectors and labour organizations, as well as other social forces, had direct access to the Council. The content and nature of Chilean television, with particular emphasis on its contribution to the national development programme, was determined by this Council.

Social coordination and responsibility

These experiences, among others, confirm the fact that the coordinating institutions contained in the proposed model are valid and necessary. The specific characteristics of these institutions will depend on the social and political situation within which this model is applied. These institutions will help to improve the methods used by entrepreneurs, professionals, and administrative and executive sectors of communication organizations.

Another function of the coordinating body will be to establish a relationship between manifold political decision-makers and the media, in order to define the specific nature of the media in national and international development programmes.

These political decisions should be based upon background information provided by the evaluative body which delivers specific data on the contribution of communication to society, and on the participation of multiple sectors which receive communication from different sources.

The basic purpose of these institutions should be to guide and harmonize various components brought together for communication purposes. Essentially, they should guarantee the balance between social freedom and responsibility—a binomial composed of complementary rather than conflicting concepts—since complete informational and social responsibility implies authentic freedom. This balance requires due representation of the sectors which make communication possible, that is:

- The creators of basic ideas who propose possible courses of action for society.
- The mediators, who generally include communication specialists, attitude processors and message producers.
- The receivers, or the general audience in its diversity.

In this multilevel institutional organization of the model we could perhaps apply the proposition made by Jorge Xifra Heras in his book entitled *La Información*: 'It is imperative to develop a statute or law of information, in addition to the "right of information" (which entitles people and enterprises to inform) and the "right to information" (which entitles the public to be informed).'[9] The same spirit is reflected in the resolutions and recommendations approved in Nairobi in 1976, especially the one which refers to the participation and contribution of the popular masses to cultural life. In the second section, on legislative measures pertaining to regulations, it was recommended that 'the mass media be granted a statute guaranteeing their autonomy and ensuring the effective participation of the creator and the public.'[10]

Specific responsibilities are thus outlined for the institutional aspects of the proposed mod-

el. Its fundamental responsibility should be to ensure that multidirectional and useful information is produced for all sectors of society and that active participation should enrich the communication process, as well as the contents and values handled by those in charge of information.

From responsibility to action

If we were to identify specific activities for the institutions indicated in the proposed model, we might select some from the resolutions approved in Nairobi in 1976:

> Promote ample use of audio-visual media so that broad sectors of the population can have access to the best of the past and the present including, whenever possible, the use of oral traditions which the media may help to retrieve.
>
> Promote active public participation through participation in programme selection and production; and encourage a permanent exchange of ideas with artists and producers and stimulate the creation of local and community production centres for public use.
>
> Encourage communication organizations to increase and diversify their programmes in order to provide a wide selection, taking into account the heterogeneity of the audience; improve the cultural quality of broadcasts addressed to the general public; choose an easily accessible visual and spoken language; assign greater importance to information and education than to propaganda and advertising; take special care in protecting national cultures against the possible pernicious influence of certain types of mass production.
>
> Promote comparative studies and research on the reciprocal influence between artists, the media and society; and on the relationship between the production and the reception of cultural programmes.[11]

These suggestions also appear in Recommendation No. 7, approved at the Regional Conference on Communication Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in San José, Costa Rica, in July 1976 – a meeting which became famous for the debates on the resolutions. The conference specifically recommended that member states of Latin America and the Caribbean should 'create National Communication Policy Councils in which interested groups and basic social sectors will participate in accordance with each country's internal laws; these councils will have the necessary authority to advise on the formulation of communication policies that the competent legislative bodies might wish to approve'.[12]

Paragraph 7 of our model's basic characteristics proposes the creation of institutional mechanisms to defend the interests of different sectors involved in the information process. This is based on current theoretical trends which support the creation of these institutions and seek to develop the principle of communication as a social responsibility. Consequently, all social sectors should participate in the definition of the content, scope and raison d'être of communication.

Raymond Williams, who writes about similar experiences in Great Britain, emphasizes the need to create this new type of institutional organization. His opinion is valuable since the British are already aware of the social responsibility involved in establishing norms to govern communication and its effects. Williams states: 'I believe that we shall only have responsible institutions when the programmes to be followed must be justified in regular, open and fair debate. That is the only way to achieve authentic change. This might be undertaken by a Radio and Television Council. But, although undoubtedly useful, a Council of Radio Listeners and Televiewers would mainly be a step toward a broader distribution of responsibility.'[13]

Access and participation: a requirement for communication

Actual meaning and myths

Access to communication may be defined as the right to *receive and emit messages* through the appropriate channels and as efficiently as possible, according to the conditions under which the media operate.

Active participation in communication implies the *right to participate* in decisions on the contents and nature of messages, and to influence decisions regarding communication policies approved by the community for internal and international purposes. Paragraphs 5, 7 and 8 of the model's objectives, as well as paragraphs 6 and 8 of its basic characteristics, are based on both these definitions and on the following analysis.

Overall development may be promoted by ensuring access to and participation in the communication process in so far as communication is an important element of development strategies. The media, in one way or another, put forward development models which are becoming an increasingly significant variable in the process of 'socialization'.

As indicated in the recommendations of the Nairobi Conference, 'mass media can play an instrumental role in cultural enrichment, by affording unprecedented possibilities for cultural development; by contributing to the liberation of the people's cultural potential, to the safeguard and popularization of traditional cultural expressions, to the creation and dissemination of new manifestations: and by turning to groups and facilitating the direct intervention of the population'. Within this context, 'the ultimate objective of access and participation is to raise the cultural and spiritual level of society upon a human value basis, and to give culture a humanitarian and democratic character; this in turn, presupposes the need to adopt measures with which to fight the pernicious influence of a "commercial culture of the masses" which is a menace to national cultures and to the cultural development of humanity, in so far as it degrades personality and, above all, has an ominous influence on youth.'[14]

We have already referred to the myths on access and participation created by the media and the industrial exploitation of information. Because the public makes a daily choice, the media assume that they are participating in the communication process. The media are the senders, while the receivers are merely rated according to commercial interests; between the two, the phenomenon of communication is produced. This attitude falsifies the concept of authentic participation and, even more so, that of truly efficient access. The problem lies in the fact that, by definition, the commercial concept of communication excludes participation, since in the final analysis the media select the information to be transmitted to a captive audience which is presented with a limited number of options, the final selection being left to a toss up between the interests of the media executive and the sponsor. Thus, the receiver only appears to be playing an active role.

Current communication problems in industrialized countries reflect an imperative need to create authentic forms of participation in and broad access to communication. The expansion of television does not seem to be creating a mass of receivers who are better informed, more involved in the problems of their society, or willing to participate in solving them.

Jarol Manheim points out that 'independently of the degree to which people accept the idea of participation, a substantial majority of

the American population seems relatively aloof toward everyday political events (except when it comes to the elections); far from being involved, they consider that the political process in general is something foreign to their lives ... Evidently, for most Americans, politics is barely more than a succession of images that go through their living-rooms, and then vanish into the subterranean world of history. It is something that is contemplated, probably mistrusted, but rarely worthy of profound consideration.'[15]

Based on extensive research undertaken in recent years, Manheim concludes that a great and increasing number of Americans depend on television for their political information. Confidence in television increases daily and thus he concludes that 'there is reason to believe that the inhabitants of the United States are beginning to depend more and more for their political information on a media that is giving them less and less.'[16]

From a Third World point of view, these statements cannot be dismissed lightly. They confirm the validity of the proposition of 'alternative, endogenous and participatory development' and confirm that the social problem posed by the creation of new and authentic forms of access must be resolved not only in Third World countries but also in the main industrialized powers.

Mass communication and technological development

Conventional definitions of communication usually imply the presence of the masses, as receivers or emitters. This provokes a distortion which affects the definition of the right to access and participation.

Mass communication actually exists in so far as the emitter simultaneously issues information to thousands or millions of people. But it is questionable from the receiver's standpoint, since no social mechanisms exist which enable receivers to be recognized as influential groups in the process. The atomization of the audience is probably a consequence of the very way in which the communication process takes place.

A television station might claim that its message reaches ten million viewers, but this does not mean that those ten million people are socially integrated and capable of actively participating in the communication process.

The concept of mass communication is valid for the media, but it is misleading from the audience's standpoint.

If the media could get millions of people to rush to their windows and shout 'I am mad', as in the film *Network*, we would still not be witnessing a mass phenomenon of active participation in communication. We would be witnessing a mere extension of the unidirectional message, multiplied by the number of motivated receivers. How do the receivers relate to one another? They generally don't! Do they react collectively to the message and critically analyse the situation in which the diversity of the audience is evident? The answer is: only rarely and within limits.

It is dangerous to assume that participation exists merely because certain media offer broad and simultaneous coverage. The consequences of this assumption are evident: its intention is to prove that, in future, access to adequate technology will enable individuals to participate simply because technology is available. The following proposal by McHale, for example, refers to this type of assumption:

> Could the functions of television and computers be integrated in a new apparatus which would help to develop the human intellect? One could imagine an apparatus similar to a TV set, capable of generating

a wondrously rich variety of images, as well as symbolic forms; simultaneously, it would also be like a computer, as it would invite the spectator to participate actively in the production and control of the information presented. Then, for the first time, man would easily be able to create visual images to communicate ideas that previously were practically impossible for him to express.[17]

Such proposals must be viewed with distrust. Although technological development is valid and necessary, the key question in this development process is man's capacity to converse with others. To what extent can the development of communication technology modify the current situation in which our *standpoint, dialogue and interaction between individuals and groups are basic to the achievement of participation in communication?*

Education and organization: requirements for participation and access

Justification of a need

The need to make receivers active agents in communication requires education for communication, a process which up to now has not been given sufficient attention.

Isolated and almost insignificant experiments, generally initiated in the industrialized nations, are the only record of attempts made to satisfy this need, which we consider to be basic today. The reasons why these formative processes must be improved include the following:

1. The media currently constitute a powerful culture-creating mechanism, which surpasses the range of traditional education processes; yet adequate training to enable us to rationalize its influence and uses is not available.
2. The qualitative change which will transform information media into communication media will be possible when the audience stops acting as a consumer-receiver and starts to act as creator-perceiver.
3. Schools (institutions which many people feel are undergoing a crisis) in their efforts to meet the challenge of the times, will inevitably come into contact with the methods and consequences of communication, since the media and schools are linked through the use of a global semiotic language.
4. The comprehension of the multiple dimensions of communication implies the discovery of the authentic meaning of messages, thus enabling man to distinguish values and antivalues in a process which creates greater awareness and liberty.
5. The current social phenomenon of communication shows, paradoxically, a smooth and accelerated expansion of the media, but in inverse proportion to the communication that takes place between one human being and another.

These observations, sustained by theoreticians such as Francisco Gutiérrez of Costa Rica, and Lauro de Oliveira Lima of Brazil, demonstrate the need for imaginative new approaches regarding the relationship between education and communication. The role of education is to help man develop his analytical ability and acquire knowledge on diverse matters; it would thus be logical to design an adequate training system to understand the nature, influence and uses of communication. Some people, however, remain sceptical about the results that can be achieved, and those disenchanted voices which speak up against change often come from the media.

'Actually, only those who run the newspapers or similar organizations have an idea how

indifferent, stupid or disinterested the great majority of the British public is regarding any sort of education,' declared Cecil Kind, President of the 'Mirror' group. Norman Collins, of the British network ITV adds:

> If the public were given exactly what it wants, the service would be perfectly dreadful ... It is quite evident that the level of education in this country is deplorable ... The overwhelming number of letters that we receive come from ignorant people who know nothing of grammar, who write poorly, and what's worse, reveal attitudes that I believe would hardly be considered admirable. All they want are photographs of movie stars and television celebrities; or they ask us why we don't devote more time to jazz or music hall. I believe professors are responsible for this attitude which is so common among teenagers.[18]

Obviously, Norman Collins is overlooking the media's share or responsibility in shaping the attitude of teenagers. These opinions show, however, that the belief that education can give communication a new social perspective is not only present in the Third World. Furthermore, they indicate the need to create awareness among communication specialists regarding changes and new possibilities. The opinions expressed by King and Collins possibly reflect the real situation in their unidirectional relationship with the receivers. But the fundamental issue is to find, in just such a state of affairs, clues that might indicate what educational action can be taken in order to convert the public's interest in movie stars into a broader, more global interest and an adequate appreciation of multiple aspects of current events.

Mass media and schools

Education for communication is also justified by the growing use of media techniques in the pedagogical field. In most Third World countries and some industrialized nations, television screens are meant to transmit messages created by commercial systems as well as educational programmes. The consequence is a totally visual culture where commercial and pedagogical images are indistinguishable. Educational programmes add prestige, reinforce the validity of television's educational potential and ratify the supposed veracity of its messages, all of which benefits commercial programmes. Commercial television is further validated whenever it appears to be sharing time with educational programmes.

Evidently, educational television has not encouraged awareness regarding communication. It has merely used television in an attempt to extend the classroom. To teach receivers to develop their own analytical abilities implies giving them the possibility to distinguish between the commercial and educational contents and use of television.

The media reflect an external world, and in so doing, offer an alternative cultural experience which exceeds that offered in school, especially if the latter maintains the tradition of classroom walls and rigid discipline. The media tell children and young people, in a dazzling and attractive language, that learning and education can take place anywhere and at all times. This is precisely one of the means through which the transnational power structure has easily been able to achieve ideological and cultural penetration.

Schools generally do not prepare young people to understand the uses and effects of the media. The media educate people in spite of the fact that society has not assigned them that role nor defined the media's educational activities (whose scope exceeds that of the television classroom, which is of questionable benefit). The challenge is to integrate both

formative processes—education and communication—in such a way as to find a rationality for joint social action. Louis Porcher, a French expert, has pointed out: 'The only way to help students find their way through the maze of information fed to them is to bring the mass media into the classroom. Only then will students be able to guide the media and the true purpose of education will be achieved, enabling us to benefit from the enormous potential of mass media.'[19]

According to Ben Bagdikian, who has diligently analysed communication phenomena, one should be concerned because technological changes will affect social forms of education sooner whan we expect, at least in some societies, such as America:

> It is conceivable that there will be a day when basic communications devices will be required in all dwellings the way running water and electricity are required in all urban homes. Tax-supported education could be the basis for this. New machines will be useful for preschool, adolescent, and adult education, often as a scheduled part of normal schooling. It may be less expensive for a community to install certain kinds of computer-assisted televised teaching systems in homes than to attempt to expand conventional systems of classrooms and teachers for all subjects for all students.[20]

The technology and simultaneous action of the media are inevitably becoming attractive to education planners. They are tempted to believe that it will be sufficient for education to absorb the techniques in order to achieve the communication-education symbiosis. They do no realize, however, that there is an inmediate need to understand fully the true meaning of communication. *The educational process, instead of striving to incorporate new communication methods should accelerate the process of understanding communication and its media.* After all, this would perhaps be the best way to unite communication and education in order to create a joint formative phenomenon.

This training should begin at the elementary level, and increase at high-school level, where students tend to adopt their first critical attitudes.

Education in and for communication

The incorporation of systematic communication training in the school curriculum is part of a much broader process. If the audience begins to develop an increasingly critical outlook towards the media, towards education for communication not only in the school context but also in the entire social system, this type of training will become increasingly important to communication.

In the case of the Third World countries, work centres, women's clubs, community centres and students' unions could be places where receivers might learn, through open and critical debate, about the nature of this social function and their role as participants from the planning stage onwards.

Similarly, we must incorporate the media in the education in communication. Television should have a free or open-camera time, where several community representatives might express their opinions on what television offers society, and what it could offer in the future. Perhaps the quality of radio broadcasts should improve, inviting listeners to participate more actively than by telephone. If the media understand the social importance of their activities and that their daily task of providing information to the public is a 'social good', they will discover that if they use their capacity to communicate in training the receiver to participate actively in the communication process, the quality of their endeavour will im-

prove, not only to the receivers' benefit but also to their own. The ability to enrich a message with new points of view based upon the receivers' demands and contributions reinforces the role of communication professionals.

One of the major problems in the implementation of the proposed model is how to establish a relationship between different social sectors and communication professionals in order to ensure active social participation.

The basic challenge for the coordinating bodies established in the system, as well as for the professionals and organized receivers, is to find an adequate method of mutual cooperation. The purpose of access to and participation in the communication process is to enrich it by broadening the communicators' criteria, values and processing methods.

Undoubtedly, the change from unidirectional communication with passive participation to communication with active receiver participation involves many profound modifications. Communication professionals must accept that their method of codifying reality is not unique. In many cases, classical methods of determining what is news and how to present it reflect commercial interests rather than the needs of society. The average citizen is often well aware of this situation. 'Reporters would rather speak with those on top, the managers and the ministers, perhaps because they feel more at home with them, or perhaps because the worker is going to tell a reporter how workers talk, and then he'll feel bad, because the reporter is on a different level—he has a different type of background. On the other hand, he hasn't done anything to learn how to chat with the worker.' This illustrative observation came from a Chilean *poblador* (Santiago slum dweller) in a survey conducted in Santiago early in 1973.[21]

Thus, we are faced with an educational problem of multiple aspect. The press will also have to learn how different sectors of the population speak and choose to communicate in an effort to get their message across. In spite of the fact that this is a first priority in Third World countries, in order to achieve authentic communication, it does not imply that professionals will be less important; quite the contrary, it means that they must realize the communication potential of a dialogue with audiences who have always been passive receivers of what they have been offered.

In this general context, education for communication may help to develop the following skills:

1. Critical judgement of the media, their influence and social organization.
2. The capacity to analyse and evaluate the contents of messages.
3. Development of a more analytical approach towards communication phenomena and the media.
4. The capacity to criticize the negative effects of foreign media and messages on national reality.
5. The capacity to propose alternatives for the programme structure and content of communication.
6. The capacity to participate in decisions on communication policy.
7. The ability to participate directly in producing alternative content and messages.

In a broader analysis, we find that this type of training should provide people with the necessary criteria to accept or reject foreign cultural models. The absence of this training has permitted the appearance of neocolonialism, which encourages passivity, if not complacence, in the face of cultural penetration.

This, in turn, has facilitated ideological invasion by the transnational power structure.

The changes proposed for international communication, particularly the search for balanced and multicultural flows, require the participation of critical national audiences. Based upon the demands and proposals of the audiences, the nature of international communication could be modified so as to contribute to international dialogue.

Education for communication—a task which involves communicators and educators alike—also leads to new horizontal models of organization and social action. Adequate training can give organized receivers a better opportunity to use the social apparatus, and ensure efficient participation and timely access.

Conclusion

The structure of the Model for Democratic Communication to ensure active social participation incorporates the elements described above.

In order to raise educational levels for a better understanding of the communication process and to create true participation based upon adequate social awareness, we propose a model of communication policy based on the assumption that communication is a 'social good'. The search for dynamic interaction between the elements mentioned in the preceding pages is aimed mainly at the Third World and its current needs, in the hope of encouraging greater creativity in the search for social change and the creation of 'alternative development'.

Undoubtedly, the lack of both adequate training and an awareness of the nature of communication are grounds for distortion, manipulation of information and cultural alienation. Furthermore, they prevent us from seeing the multiple positive aspects of communication. We are not aware of the benefits and potential influence of this process, particularly if it is considered as part of a general development policy.

It is probable that many people will still consider our suggestions as a utopian formulation—a model with slim chances of application. But perhaps their doubts will be dispelled with the help of the following words by Paulo Freire: 'Utopian does not necessarily mean unattainable, it is a dialectic process of denouncing and announcing; denouncing the dehumanizing structure and announcing the humanizing structure. That is why the process of gaining awareness compels us to assume a utopian position when faced with reality.'[22]

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IPS— An Information Alternative for a New International Order

Inter Press Service
Third World News Agency

Inter Press Service is the world's newest international news agency, and the only international cooperative of Third World and other journalists. From its establishment in 1964 as an 'information bridge' between Latin America and Europe, the agency has steadily grown, and has come to be closely identified with the attempts to build a new international information order.

IPS has its own extensive network of bureaux and correspondents in the Third World and many industrialized countries. It also exchanges news and promotes the services of many Third World national news agencies, and provides direct 'south-south' telecommunications facilities for Third World media which have traditionally been dependent on information structures dominated by the large transnational agencies.

IPS pioneered the introduction of new formats of news and information which are not solely event-oriented, but take account of the complex processes of development. Its service emphasizes contextualized, analytical, background and feature material as well as standard news items, in order to provide full and timely information about a wide range of development issues and processes.

IPS' basic daily service is transmitted in Spanish, English, Arabic and Portuguese. A German service has recently been launched, and a French service is planned in the near future.

The agency also provides its subscribers with a wide range of special services, and has launched a number of initiatives outside the traditional news field. It has also undertaken an ambitious feasibility study for the UN Development Programme, proposing the establishment of a global Third World development information network to promote technical and scientific cooperation between Third World countries. A decision on the implementation of this project is expected in 1982.

IPS claims to have made important steps toward filling a part of the gap left by the transnational news agencies in international news flows, especially through its treatment of information as a social right, rather than a marketable commodity like any other, and through its promotion of 'horizontal' news exchange directly between the 'actors' and information bodies of the Third World countries.

The development of an alternative news agency

Since its establishment in 1964, IPS has seen four major stages of growth.

1964–1968. IPS developed as a cooperative of journalists supportive of processes of reform in Latin America, whose aim was to provide an 'information bridge' between Latin America and Europe. The agency launched a special technical service for the distribution of bulletins from a number of Latin American countries, preparing the ground for a wider network.

1968–1971. During this period, IPS broadened its perspective and its focus widened to include the whole process of struggle against underdevelopment.

1971–1977. Finding many points of common concern between Latin America and other regions, IPS extended its network on the international level and widened its focus to include other regions as well. It established close links with national news agencies in different parts of the Third World, notably in the Arab states and some countries of Africa. The agency established links with the non-aligned movement and entered into a working relationship with TANJUG (the national news agency of Yugoslavia) and later, through TANJUG, with the news pool of the non-aligned nations, and was invited to provide official coverage of the 'Group of 77' conference in Lima, Peru.

1977–present. IPS adopted as its major objective the creation of direct 'south-south' links in a global Third World strategy. In addition to increasing its cooperation with Third World na-

tional news agencies, IPS began to make a series of special agreements with international and regional organizations concerned with development. The number and range of the agency's services was increased. The agency began to regionalize its own news-gathering and distribution structures, and to develop plans for the extension of its network on a regional basis, including major new projects in Africa and Asia. IPS also began to operate a regional news exchange (ASIN) for 13 national news agencies of Latin America and the Caribbean, and to extend its support for national news agencies beyond the simple exchange and distribution of news to the provision of professional and technical training and support.

The role of IPS in the New International Information Order

The demands for a New International Information Order, which are supported and promoted by IPS, are based on a fundamental rejection of a number of major imbalances in the existing information order:

- more than 85 per cent of the international news flow is controlled and dominated by the transnational news agencies;
- dominant news flows take place in a north-south direction, and there is little exchange south-south, or south-north;
- Third World news media are given little space for participation in the international information system;
- the focus of the transnational news agencies on 'spot' or event-oriented news leads to the exclusion of development-oriented coverage;
- Transnational news agency coverage, linked as it is to the interests of northern news markets, often means that the realities of the Third World countries are misreported or distorted, and can lead to negative reporting;
- information structures are dominated by a small number of powerful interests, and there is little or no participation by other groups.

IPS promotes a larger Third World voice in the international information system by providing a structure and telecommunications network which permits national news agencies to circulate and exchange information directly between themselves. With its own network of satellite teleprinter channels, linked via regional centres to the 'IRICON' computer switching system in Rome, IPS has been one of the major pioneers in building information bridges directly between the countries of the Third World.

Unlike commercial carrier services, IPS also promotes national news agency material to its own customers and provides distribution services to the news media. In all cases IPS retransmits other agencies' material intact and with the original credit, allowing their own voice to be heard.

In the course of the development of this policy of horizontal communication, IPS has reached cooperation and exchange agreements with some 30 national news agencies of the Third World; acts as carrier for the news pool of the non-aligned nations to a number of regional redistribution centres; and also acts as operational secretariat for 'accion de sistemas informativos nacionales' (ASIN), a regional news exchange network of 13 national news agencies in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Recently this cooperation has been further extended to provide professional and technical training and support. Creation of the ASIN network has involved IPS in support and technical upgrading of a number of recently-formed national agencies, such as those of Guyana, Jamaica and Panama.

As regards its own services, IPS provides information with a content and function devised by Third World professionals for the Third World. IPS emphasizes the solidarity of the Third World countries by examining common interests, problems and perspectives—without neglecting individual national concerns, but seeking to avoid the disjointed and sporadic approach of the Western agencies.

Table 1 Third World and non-aligned news agencies linked with IPS

ACI	Congo
AIM	Mozambique
ANA*	Peru
ANGOP	Angola
ANN*	Nicaragua
BOLPRESS*	Bolivia
CANA	Caribbean
COLPRESS*	Colombia
CRI*	Costa Rica
DOMPRESS*	Dominican Republic
GNA*	Guyana
INA	Iraq
JAMPRESS*	Jamaica
JANA	Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah
LANKAPUVATH	Sri Lanka
NOTIMEX*	Mexico
PANAPRESS*	Panama
P.L.	Cuba
PNA	Philippines
SENDIP*	Ecuador
SNA*	Surinam
TANJUG	Jugoslavia
TAP	Tunisia
VENPRESS*	Venezuela
WAFA	P.L.O.
WAM	U.A.E.

* Member of ASIN

The major themes on which IPS focuses are:

- The needs of the mass of the people and the efforts being made to meet them;
- potential factors contributing to autonomous and self-reliant development (including such factors as economy, technology, culture and art);
- the efforts being made (short- and long-term, partial or total) to transform socio-economic structures.

In part, this coverage is supported by a series of agreements with regional and international development organizations. These include UN bodies such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF); regional bodies such as the Latin American Economic System (SELA) and the Third World Economic and Social Studies Centre (CEESTEM); and non-governmental bodies such as the World Council of Churches (WWC) or the International Foundation for Development Alternatives (IFDA).

IPS is also concerned to reverse the dominant north-south flow of news by improving outlets for news from the Third World in the industrialized countries. Both in North America and in Europe, IPS' services are regularly transmitted to northern news media; the agency's own outreach has been extended by distribution agreements with news agencies such as APA (Austria), ANOP (Portugal), ANP (Holland), EPD (Federal Republic of Germany), MTI (Hungary) and PAP (Poland). In Federal Germany, IPS has also launched a unique project, with support from the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, to translate and edit IPS news for German-language media; a similar venture for the Netherlands is under study. In the United States of America, IPS collaborates with a sister organization, Interlink Press Service, to secure alternative media outlets in cooperation with a wide range of non-governmental organizations.

IPS news services

Like any other agency, IPS' basic output is a daily news transmission, currently available in five languages (a French-language service is being planned), as follows:

Spanish:	14	hrs/day with	42.000 words averaging
English:	8	hrs/day with	24.000 words averaging
Portuguese:	3	hrs/day with	9.000 words averaging
Arabic:	3	hrs/day with	9.000 words averaging
German:	2	hrs/day with	6.000 words averaging

The IPS international network

The current IPS international network is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 The IPS international network

Africa			
Algiers	Algeria	tx	3
Brazzaville	Congo	tx	3
Maputo	Mozambique	pp	3
Nairobi	Kenya	tp	1,2
Salisbury	Zimbabwe	tp	3
Tripoli	Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah	tp	4
Tunis	Tunisia	tp	1,2 rc
Dakar	Senegal	tp	+
Luanda	Angola	tp	+
Asia and Arab States			
Abu Dhabi	United Arab Emirates	tp	1,2
Baghdad	Iraq	tp	4
Beirut	Lebanon	tp	1,2 rc
Colombo	Sri Lanka	tp	1,2 rc
Jerusalem		tx	1,2
Manila	Philippines	tp	3
Damascus	Syria	tp	+
Kuwait	Kuwait	tp	+
New Delhi	India	tp	+
Riyadh	Saudi Arabia	tp	+
Latin America and Caribbean			
Asuncion	Paraguay	tx	3
Bogota	Colombia	tp	1,2
Buenos Aires	Argentina	tp	1,2
Caracas	Venezuela	tp	1,2
Georgetown	Guyana	tp	1,2
Havana	Cuba	tp	1,2
Kingston	Jamaica	tp	1,2 rc
La Paz	Bolivia	tp	1,2
Lima	Peru	tp	1,2 rc
Managua	Nicaragua	tp	1,2
Mexico City	Mexico	tp	1,2
Montevideo	Uruguay	tx	1,3
Panama City	Panama	tp	1,2
Paramaribo	Suriname	tp	2
Quito	Ecuador	tp	1,2
Rio de Janeiro	Brazil	tp	1,2
San José	Costa Rica	tp	1,2
San Salvador	El Salvador	tp	1,2
Santiago	Chile	tp	1,2
Santo Domingo	Dominican Republic	tp	1,2
Bridgetown	Barbados	tp	+
Grenada	Grenada	tp	+
Guatemala City	Guatemala	tp	+
Port of Spain	Trinidad and Tobago	tp	+
St Lucia	St Lucia	tp	+
Tegucigalpa	Honduras	tp	+
Europe			
Belgrade	Jugoslavia	tp	4
Bonn	Fed. Rep. Germany	tp	1,2
Brussels	Belgium	tx	3
Bucharest	Romania	tp	4
Budapest	Hungary	tp	1,2
Geneva (UN)	Switzerland	tp	1,2
Lisbon	Portugal	tp	1,2
London	U.K.	tp	1,2
Madrid	Spain	tp	1,2
Moscow	U.S.S.R.	tx	3
Paris	France	tp	1,2
Rome	Italy	tp	1,2 ic
Stockholm	Sweden	tp	1,2
The Hague	Netherlands	tp	3
Vienna	Austria	tp	3
Warsaw	Poland	tp	4
Copenhagen	Denmark	tp	+
North America			
Montreal	Canada	tp	1,2
New York	USA	tp	1,2
Oakland	USA	tp	5
New York (UN)	USA	tp	5
Washington	USA	tp	1,2

tp=teleprinter; tx=telex; 1=IPS bureau; 2=full-time correspondent; 3=part-time correspondent; 4=link with national news agency only; 5=translation centre only; rc=regional or sub-regional communications centre; ic=international communications centre; +=bureau to be opened in 1981.

IPS Special Services

Special services include:

- Women's feature services: with support from UNESCO, IPS currently operates and distributes two regular feature services produced by women journalists in Latin America (Organizacion Informativa de la Mujer) and Africa (African Women's Feature Service). These focus on the role of women as seen by women.
- Special features: the IPS daily transmission includes a number of features on development issues of global concern, including women, the environment, the north-south dialogue, the non-aligned movement, science and technology, information and communications,

human settlements, natural resources, health, population, education, transnational corporations.

- Specialized bulletins: each Sunday, IPS transmits a series of weekly bulletins on themes of particular interest. At present, these are focused mainly on Latin America and cover economic issues, agriculture, petroleum, church affairs, minerals and the environment.
- Special UN service: together with the International Foundation for Development Alternatives, IPS produces a daily bulletin for missions of the 'Group of 77' (Third World countries) to the United Nations in New York and Geneva. These contain a selection from the IPS transmission of news on negotiations in UN and other fora, the activities of the UN system, and other items of importance to Third World moves toward greater self-reliance.

Future plans

The IPS network, strongest in Latin America and the Caribbean and in the Arab region, is currently being expanded in Africa and Asia also.

Africa

IPS has already established links with some national agencies, and has bureaux in Nairobi and Tunis. The agency is currently involved in the preparation of a three-year project for the creation of an African network of communications for development, the plans for which were discussed at a meeting held in Nairobi in January 1981, which reviewed the structure and organization of the network, training plans and budget. With its focus on development-oriented news and information, this project represents a major potential contribution to the improvement of news flows within Africa and between the continent and other regions of the Third World.

Asia

In Asia, IPS has developed plans for a regional network linked via satellite channels (where available) to a computer message switching and editing system in Colombo, in a joint venture with the Sri Lanka National News Agency (LANKAPUVATH). An IPS bureau is well established in Colombo, and more recently a further link has been made with Manila, under the terms of a bilateral agreement with the Philippines News Agency (PNA). The agency expects soon to open a line to New Delhi, and negotiations on cooperation and exchange agreements are under way with a number of other agencies in the region.

Institutional structure and finance

IPS is the only international cooperative of Third World and other journalists. The cooperative, registered under Italian law, also works through IPS Third World, a wholly-owned subsidary registered in Panama.

The cooperative is directed by an 11-member board of directors, the executive committee of which is currently made up as follows: Chairman: Gabriel Valdes (Chile); Vice-Chairman: Piervincenzo Porcacchia (Italy); Marc Nerfin (Switzerland); Juan Somavía (Chile); Mahmoud Triki (Tunisia); and Esmond Wickremesinghe (Sri Lanka). Director-General: Roberto Savio (Argentina/Italy).

IPS is a non profit-making organization. All profits are, by law, used to increase the cooperative's working capital and are ploughed back into it. Moreover, the agency receives no state or other subsidies. It has maintained its operations as an independent professional body, despite working with limited capital. Its budget for 1981 is in the region of US$ 5 million.

CODEV

Communication for Development Foundation

CODEV: Communications for Development is an international, non-governmental, non-profit foundation which has been set up to encourage alternatives to the present structure and content of information and communications, and thus contribute to a new world order in this field for the benefit of the people of all countries.

Communications are a central element in the processes of development. When they are democratic and diverse, communications broaden the horizons of thought and the options for action, for societies as well as for individuals. When monopolized and manipulated, they hinder personal and societal development.

CODEV is committed to democracy and pluralism in communications and to the perception of communication as a social function, not as a commodity nor as propaganda. It believes that there is a space for third system action in communications. In this spirit, CODEV will seek to remedy shortcomings in the present state of information and communications and support the efforts of others to this end.

The initiative to set up CODEV was taken by people working in and associated with six other international, non-governmental, non-profit institutions:

- International Foundation for Development Alternatives (IFDA), 2, place du Marché, CH-1260 Nyon, Switzerland;
- Inter Press Service Third World News Agency (IPS), Via Panisperna 207, 00184 Rome, Italy;
- Association of African Woman for Research and Development, P.O. Box 3186, Dakar, Senegal;
- Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Övre Slottsgatan 2, S-75220 Uppsala, Sweden.
- Instituto Latino Americano de Estudios Transnacionales (ILETI), P.O. Box 85025, 10200 Mexico DF, Mexico;
- Third World Forum, P.O. Box 43, Orman Cairo, Egypt.

CODEV was established by notarial deed in Malta on 30 April 1981. The legal seat of the foundation is in Malta. The Constitution of CODEV affirms the non-governmental and non-profit character of the foundation and its orientation towards the problems and needs of the Third World.

The rationale underlying the creation of CODEV, and the interests of its sponsors, are reflected in the aims of the Foundation, as set out in its Constitution. These aims are:

- to contribute to the establishment and development of a new world information and communication order;
- to facilitate direct communications between Third World people, and new flows of Third World generated information to people in industrialized countries so as to give international relations a fuller human dimension and to promote a genuine cooperation between peoples on the basis of equality and recognition of their cultural diversity;
- to promote communications between developments actors—organized groups and individuals—as both receivers and providers of information, thereby contributing to more diversified and pluralistic information flows;
- to encourage another journalism, both written and audiovisual, which would focus on the description and analysis of development processes, be they cultural, social, political, technological or economic, and their interrelations;
- to promote understanding of the role communications play in contemporary society in the Third World as well as in industrialized countries.

The methods which CODEV may use to achieve its aims include:

- providing training, consultative and other services in support of initiatives, especially in the Third World, to establish and develop local, national, regional and inter-regional communications systems;
- promoting technical cooperation among Third World countries in the field of communications;

- encouraging research in the field of communications and the new world information and communications order.

While CODEV may itself undertake such activities, it will normally operate through its constituent members or through other like-minded groups. It may contract to carry out projects on behalf of funding institutions, thus acting as a channel of resources between the latter and the growing network of alternative communications.

CODEV may receive contributions, gifts, grants and bequests to enable it to carry out its work.

The organs of CODEV are the Executive Committee and the Council. At least two-thirds of the members of each of these organs must be citizens of Third World countries.

The Executive Committee directs the work of the Foundation and takes all decisions necessary for the achievement of its aims. The Council is to comprise eminent persons, reflecting the character, scope and aims of the Foundation, whose function is to advise the Executive Committee. The Committee may seek the advice of Council members individually or collectively.

The Executive Committee of CODEV has been constituted and held its first meeting at Rabat, Malta, on 27th and 28th July 1981. Its second meeting was held in Rome on 1st and 2nd December 1981. The Council of CODEV is being formed.

The work programme of CODEV is being elaborated by the Executive Committee. Two projects are at present under consideration:

- *an inventory of alternative communications:* This project would aim to identify the communications actors and facilities with which CODEV could work and to help them to communicate with each other;
- *a development information network:* This project, which would be initiated under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme with support from a number of governments, aims to build a network of telecommunications links among Third World countries (at least 60 in the first six years) and to use this to stimulate the exchange of current and reliable information oriented to the development needs of Third World subscribers.

The members of the Executive Committee are the following. They serve in their personal capacity. Institutional affiliations are given for the purpose of identification. Ismaïl-Sabri Abdalla (Egypt), Chairman, Third World Forum; Salah Al-Shaikhly (Iraq), Director, Centre for Research on the New International Economic Order; William J. Maeda (Tanzania), Director-General, Posts and Telecommunications Corporation; Jan Meijer (Netherlands), Adviser to the Minister for Development Cooperation; Ernst Michanek (Sweden), Chariman, Board of Trustees, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, President, Swedish National Committee for UNESCO; March Nerfin (Switzerland), President, International Foundation for Development Alternatives; Manuel Perez Guerrero (Venezuela), Chairperson, Adviser to the President on International Economic Affairs, Chairman of the 'Group of 77'; Marie Angélique Savané (Senegal), Co-chairperson, President, Association of African Women for Research and Development; Roberto Savio (Italy), Director-General, Inter Press Service Third World News Agency; Juan Somavia (Chile), Executive Director, Latin American Institute for Transnational Studies (ILET); Gabriel Valdes (Chile), Chairman of the Board, Inter Press Service Third World News Agency; Tarzie Vittachi (Sri Lanka), Co-chairperson, Contributing editor, 'Newsweek' magazine; Michael Zammit Cutajar (Malta), Executive Secretary, Consultant on development matters.

The headquarters of CODEV are at: Pjazza Indipendenza 112, Triq il-Punent, Valletta, Malta, phone: (356)29066. For the time being, correspondence should be addressed to:
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Communications at an Impasse: A Plea for Humanized Communication

By Gail M. Martin and M. Patricia Hindley

The work of the Canadian scholar Harold A. Innis, who made a fundamental distinction between 'time-binding', and 'space-binding' communications technologies, forms the basis for this thought-provoking article. The increasing domination of space-binding communications, a result of the rapid technical development during the last decades, has had two unhealthy effects. The first is that every advance in high-speed technology has destroyed some elements of the human community and the second is that inequalities in speed of communications has led to monopolies of knowledge, serving the interests of those who control the technology. This has led to a situation where the structure of the communication systems is such that it is easier for North Americans to find out what is going on in Washington D.C. than it is to find out what is happening six blocks from home. Thus, 'high communications technologies project the human consciousnesses further and further away from the local centres in which most people have to live out their lives. They "leapfrog" neighbourhoods, communities and towns to plunge people, rootless and impotent, into a maze of "information" about events they cannot otherwise evaluate, places they will never visit, and people they will never know.'

Gail Martin and Pat Hindley are both Associate Professors of Communication at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Over the past fifteen years they have worked in rural communication projects with the indigenous people of the B.C. coast and in Africa and the South Pacific. Specifically, they have studied rural educational communications projects first-hand in Niger, the Ivory Coast, Tanzania, Australia and American Samoa. They participated in the design of the rural communication network in the Cook Islands in the South Pacific and are currently collaborating with staff of the University of Juba in the southern Sudan on a rural development education programme.

The work of Harold A. Innis deals with the consequences for society of following a high communications technology policy—a policy which determines that any technology which *can* further extend human communications space *will be* developed and implemented. Since Innis died as long ago as 1952, it is now left to others to demonstrate how apt to today's world of satellite and computer communications are the principles and interpretations of social phenomena that he derived from his reading of history.[1]

Time-binding and space-binding communications

Innis viewed all developments in communications technology—from smoke signals to television—as efforts to extend the range of human communications over time and/or space. Some technologies he saw as more useful in extending the range of the human voice over time—these he called *time-binding*.

Like the oral tradition and cuneiform writing, time-binding communications bound a culture to its past.

Innis was openly biased towards the values of time-binding communications and oral cultures rather than towards those of the space-binding culture within which he lived. He said:

> 'My bias is with the oral tradition, particularly as reflected in Greek civilization, and with the necessity of recapturing something of its spirit. For that purpose we should try to understand something of the importance of life or of the living tradition, which is peculiar to the oral as against the mechanized tradition, and of the contributions of Greek civilization.
>
> The results were evident in complexity, diversity, and perfection in a wide range of cultural achievements. The significance of the oral tradition was shown in the position of the assembly, the rise of democracy, the drama, the dialogues of Plato, and the speeches including the funeral speech of Pericles in the writings of Thucydides ... The Greeks produced the one entirely original literature of Europe. The epic and the lyric supported the drama. Democracy brought the comedy of Aristophanes.[2]

The oral tradition, in the sense Innis defined it, still predominates in large areas of the Third World. Where the advocates of development Western-style have rushed in to replace oral cultures as rapidly and efficiently as possible with literacy and mass media, as essential to modernization, Innis might well have asked: 'Why the rush?' He saw that cultures bound by an oral tradition to their own historical roots provided their members with at least two valuable assets that have proved elusive in industrialized societies: stability and community.

Against the oral or time-binding forms of communication Innis placed the mechanical (presumably electronic) or *space-binding* communications, which he defined as all those—from paper to satellites—that enable man to extend his voice, and hence his control, over larger and larger geographical areas. Innes sees this extension of power or influence as a dominant characteristic of Western society and a direct outcome of the implementation of a high communications technology policy.

Centralization—decentralization

The effects of the increasing domination of space through communications technology are twofold. The first effect is self-evident: space-binding communications yield greater *decentralization*, that is, empires and nations can spread over larger territories. Secondly, and almost paradoxically, they also breed administrative centralization. Each increase in the speed of long-distance communication allows a person ever further away to gather information about the far-flung reaches of the empire or state or multinational corporation. When communications are slow, authority for day-to-day decisions must be delegated. When they are at the speed of light, headquarters can handle everything, since the staff there can often know *before the man in the field* what is taking place in his region.

From these principles flow two corollaries that Innis regarded as particularly unhealthy and that seem germane to the problems we

face today: (a) every advance in high-speed communications technology destroys some elements of a human community, and (b) inequalities in speed of communications lead to monopolies of knowledge.

Destruction of local communities

Innis pointed out that as communications technology promotes *administrative* centralization and *geographical* decentralization, it simultaneously destroys the interpersonal communication patterns that had previously defined smaller units in the social organization. For example, the street car destroyed the community (long before the automobile got the chance). Ordinary patterns of buying and selling, interchange and interdependence that previously defined a neighbourhood were abruptly altered as the street car siphoned off shoppers, workers and gossip companions into a distant 'downtown' core. The telephone's impact, while more subtle, is similar and more pervasive. For people accustomed to the telephone, 'neighbours' can live across town or halfway around the world.[3]

In television entertainment programming, the centralization–decentralization phenomenon can be seen to be taking place on an *international basis*. 'Dialogue' within the community, the region, the nation, is bypassed within a broadcasting structure that is global in scope and controlled almost entirely from one centre—Hollywood, California. The structure and its products are oblivious to regional and national distinctions in culture, language, *mores* and dress. This statement is at once more accurate and more ominous than it appears from a casual look at the world television scene and we will return to a discussion of the data and their implications in the concluding section of the paper. Suffice it to say for now that analysis of the data available suggests that 30–75 per cent of the prime time television programming for countries of the capitalist world is provided from foreign sources, predominantly British and American.

Monopolies of knowledge

Anyone who receives information before others automatically enjoys advantages that are often measurable in financial terms. Alexander Dumas illustrated how monopolies of knowledge work when he described how the Count of Monte Christo sent a fake message along the semaphore line from Spain to France and the financial establishment, making use of its 'advance knowledge' of disaster in Spain, dumped its Spanish holdings at a severe loss. The Count's revenge was complete, and the establishment was chagrined, when the next day's newpapers reported to the world that all was well in Spain.

Monopolies of knowledge are both the instrument and the outcome of political domination. Throughout Western history communications have been appropriated to the extension and maintenance of political and/or religious organizations. Innis points as an example to the enduring compulsion of nations throughout history to collect together known written documents in libraries in their capital cities: Ninevah, Alexandria, Rome, Paris, Berlin, London, Moscow, Washington.

Protection of the monopoly of knowledge exerted by the eighteenth-century press was, according to Innis, the real purpose of the First Amendment to the US Constitution. As James Carey has summarized his position, Innis argued that:

> In granting freedom of the press, the constitution sacrificed, despite the qualifying clause, the right of people to speak to one another and to inform themselves. For such rights, the constitution substituted

the more abstract right to be spoken to and to be informed by others, especially by specialist, professional classes. He [Innes] refused to yield to the modern notion that the level of democratic process correlates with the amount of capital invested in communication, capital which can do our knowing for us, and fervently hoped that his work would break modern monopolies of knowledge in communication and restore faith in the political power of the foot and tongue.[4]

A New World Information Order

A clearer perception of this distinction between time-binding and space-binding cultures might be useful in conceptualizing what a New World Information Order might look like. Will it mean simply a more equitable sharing of the same kind of communication system as industrialized nations have devised? The West has tended to assume that any 'advance' in long-distance communications technology was indeed that—an advance. Educational television networks, telephone exchanges and satellite earth stations were unquestionably to be sought after, financed and made operational as soon as possible. The cultural bias of the industrialized nations affects basic planning decisions and shapes information.

The price exacted in human and community terms for each such advance has seldom been considered, even within Western society itself. For example, people in Vancouver, Canada, can at present receive nine television channels—five American, three Canadian, and one recently established 'local origination' or 'community programming' channel. The latter services, via a coaxial cable, only the 140,000 people in one section of the city. It provides informational programming, mostly of localized interest, for three hours a day, five days a week. Probably less than 10 per cent of the residents watch it, since the technical and programming quality is lower than the standard the public have been accustomed to from professional television, and local programming is scheduled during prime evening time when it must compete with high-budget, adventure-laden entertainment productions from the US networks.

The structure of the communication systems is such that it is easier for North Americans to find out what is going on in Washington, DC than it is to find out what is happening six blocks from home. They spend more of their waking hours in contact with distant events and occupied with the activities of fictional characters living in communities distant from them than in talking to their own neighbours. The consciousness of the average North American is thus filled with news, information and fantasies that have peripheral relevance to their daily lives and over which they have little control. In effect, the communication systems are designed to give them most information about what they can do, least information about what they can do most about.

This is the bias of communication to which Harold Innis was sensitive. High communications technologies project the human consciousnesses further and further away from the local centres in which most people have to live out their lives. They 'leapfrog' neighbourhoods, communities and towns to plunge people, rootless and impotent, into a maze of 'information' about events they cannot otherwise evaluate, places they will never visit, and people they will never know.

Focus for a moment on the 'information' in entertainment programming—*Mannix, I Love Lucy, Dallas,* or *Walt Disney*. Entertainment or drama programmes represent complex patternings of information in which value judgements and behavioural norms are interwoven in a culturally determined package. Canadians

are acutely aware of the idiosyncratic and particularist nature of these messages, even those who live only 2,300 km. due north and share the 'West Coast culture' of the place from which most of them originate. Those programmes can 'make sense' i.e. have the same meaning for their viewers as for their originators, only within a radius of at most 500 km. of Hollywood, California. In that particular region, there has been enough time and enough interaction between the film-generating industry and the community surrounding it for similar values, behaviours and expectations to shape the programming and the lifestyles of perhaps a majority of the people. The same is not true of the audiences viewing those programmes in Dubuque, Iowa; Sydney, Australia; Accra, Ghana; and Teheran, Iran.

However, these programmes, under the influence of a high communications technology policy, can now be marketed and distributed to people whose cultures provide almost no experience against which to evaluate the bias of the communication. They can only assume that North Americans—with all the generalization and abstraction that distance and unfamiliarity facilitate—behave, think and live like that. The 'like that', of course, hides a complex and nebulous communication process. We know that the 'message' in a fictional television programme or film is multilevelled and multivalent, dependent on the perceptions of the viewer as well as on the redundancy and richness of the data it makes available.

In Canada, we are acutely aware of the near impossibility of using television for our own cultural and national purposes, so choked is it with imported programmes on Canadian stations as well as with directly imported signals. Because of our proximity to the United States, we can receive US stations over the air in most cities. Cable television services distribute them further. We are consequently in a position to be sensitive to what a global electronic invasion can mean to the other nations of the world.

In the fifties and early sixties, fears were expressed that global communication systems would be the vehicles for 'cultural homogenization', for the creeping Coca-Cola culture to envelop the globe. Recently, however, it has been suggested that television programming alien to a community or culture may in fact have the opposite effect of sensitizing people to their differences and uniqueness. Recent emphasis on ethnic identity and preservation of minority languages and cultures has been viewed as a reaction generated at least in part by exposure to foreign messages on the TV tube. *This can remain but a negative step unless a people have a means of communication at their disposal that allows them to interact with and learn from one another as they seek to express themselves in new ways adapted to the changing conditions around them.* What Innis called the oral tradition must be allowed to persist wherever it can for as long as it is possible if communication development is to be just that—development, rather than disintegration, aimlessness and new-colonialism. People from the Third World often regard observations like this as subversive, designed to keep the Third World nations from moving into positions of equality and competition with the industrialized countries. But too many of us are genuine in our disaffection with the poverty of tradition, loss of community, disaffiliation and anomie, which life in industrialized nations now comprises. We have a firm conviction that Africans, Polynesians and Indians can return to the richness of their sociocultural tradition at the same time as they move into greater participation in economic development. We are also convinced, follow-

ing Innes, that they will not maintain their heritage if they uncritically pursue a high communications technology policy as their route to a New International Information Order.

It will require vigilance, resistance and wisdom to protect and foster the diversity of cultures that characterize human life in the world today. Evolutionary biologists suggest that the survival of the species has depended on variation in lifestyles. When one way of life becomes non-viable, another lifestyle can continue. Some, of course, maintain that all cultures must eventually be assimilated to that of the industrialized nations if all are to share in the benefits of economic development. From this point of view, global one-way television traffic makes sense.

Others would argue that assimilation is an oversimplified and repugnant concept, that industrialization can be adapted by a people to their way of life and not vice versa. They would also maintain, particularly the young of the industrialized nations, that if the richness and diversity of human cultures are destroyed, Western society will have nothing left to draw from and will indeed be culturally bankrupt.

Gordon Thompson and his research colleagues at Bell Northern Research Lab in Ottawa, Canada, have identified three criteria by which to evaluate whether an advance in communications technology is really an advance in human communications terms.[5] First, the new development should make access to *stored human experience easier*. We can easily see how this has been the case from the book to the computer. A second criterion is that the value of the technology can be assessed in terms of *the size of the common information space* shared by communicators using the system. Face-to-face conversation is the standard to be met here—the basic human oral communications space in which I can hear everything you say and you everything I say, where we can talk at the same time, using common language and concepts stemming from common experience. In analysing the characteristics of human communication in its basic mode—face-to-face conversation—Thompson and his colleagues are making more precise some of the qualities that Harold Innis valued in referring to the oral culture. By this criterion modern television, and the uses to which it is put, is not a communications advance at all. It is, in fact, destroying communication at the level where communication and human interchange is still possible. The third criterion identified is the degree to which the technology facilitates *the discovery of concensus*, of shared feelings and attitudes towards a subject. Again, television as we are using it fails completely. No assistance is given to any of us in discovering what our near or distant neighbours feel, think and value. We are all made recipients of what is thought, felt and valued elsewhere.

Implementation of a New International Information Order, that is indeed 'new', will be possible only if its architects start by a careful drafting of the socio-cultural *goals* of such a new order. In the United States, television replaced radio as a mass-marketing device. Centralized production for a one-way transmission system is an efficient means of reaching a mass of consumers. This model has dominated the worldwide extension of communication technologies. But mass marketing is seldom the major goal identified by leaders of Third World countries for their communication systems. The goals are more likely to include, for example, alleviating rural isolation, eradication of illiteracy, adaptation to modern industrialized living, and better assimilation of information about national goals

and policies. Television, with its powerful visual impact, is often identified as the desirable means by which to achieve the goal. Grants and loans are made available and foreign technical and programming expertise is provided—for a time.

Then the nation finds itself equipped with an elaborate communication system that is difficult to maintain and prohibitively expensive to programme. Consequently, there are hours of empty time that need to be filled. The cheapest way to do this turns out to be by buying American programmes. The US producers have characteristically recovered their considerable costs from one domestic showing; all exposures after that are profit, no matter how small. So they can afford to sell a half-hour programme that cost perhaps $100,000 to produce to a small nation for $300. The spiral continues. Audiences become accustomed to the polish and professionalism that $100,000 can produce. Domestically produced shows operating on tight budgets cannot compete for audiences, so more foreign programmes are imported. Domestic capability shrinks as the already limited budget is paid out abroad and the original goals for which the system was introduced are lost from sight.

Television programming and the satellite systems which will transmit it are high communications technology. Given the present economic structure, they can be related only in a token manner to minority cultures within North America. It is even more difficult to harness them to the purposes of other nations which are not rich. The solution for these countries, if they are to avoid becoming little more than marketing targets, may be to look for ways to incorporate simpler communications technologies into their new information orders. For example, in countries where the oral tradition admired by Innis still survives, relatively inexpensive two-way radios have been found useful in achieving national goals of literacy, contact with rural groups, and improvement in health and medical care. Not much thought or experimentation seems to have gone into ways to make these radio exchanges an integral part of national—and international—communication linkages. It cannot be assumed that bigger and better communication systems will contribute towards better cross-cultural understanding. On the contrary, experience has demonstrated that high communications technology, specifically television and satellite transmission, fosters one-way communication patterns with the most powerful nations providing the input, the others receiving the output. It is hard to see how much advance can be made in such a structure towards the understanding of one culture by another. In fact, little progress can be made by a culture towards understanding its own position in the contemporary world. Community and local concerns are lost sight of, as Innis pointed out, in the face of a high communications technology policy like the one we have followed in Western society.

Whatever else a New International Information Order may aim to achieve, it will have to start by emphasizing the need for each nation and each culture to maximize its capacities to generate its own messages and programming. When a nation has provided its inhabitants with the means to communicate among themselves and with one another, it will be in a position to generate information messages to share with its neighbours—wherever they may be. Some efforts, then, are directed to counteracting the considerable forces working towards a high communications policy and to backing up those directed towards the reinforcement of the style and values of surrounding oral cultures. In the continuing discus-

sions over a New International Information Order, including those over spectrum (the WARC conference), Third World nations will be attempting to gain control of a larger share of world communication potential. Let us hope that they are able to devise better ways to use this than we in the West—not just for economic progress and political control but also for socio-cultural enhancement, the maintenance of a sense of community, and the enrichment or preservation of all the variability which constitutes the heritage of modern nation-states and will enrich the world communication environment.

Notes

1. See Carey, James A. 'Canadian Communications Theory: Extensions and Interpretations of Harold Innis' in *Studies in Canadian Communications*, ed. Gertrude Jock Robinson and Donald F. Theall, McGill Programmes in Communications, Montreal 1975. This is an excellent introduction to the work of Innis, a Canadian political economist who worked at the University of Toronto.
2. Innis, Harold A., *Bias of Communication*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1951, pp. 9 and 190.
3. The authors have developed elsewhere the idea of neighbourhoods formed by communications link-ups rather than geographical proximity. See Hindley, M.P. and Martin, Gail M., 'A Radio and Visual Educational Network', *Ekistics*, Vol 30, No. 179, October 1970, p. 309, and Lyman, Vianne and Martin, Gail M., 'Access by Community Groups' in *A Resource for the Active Community*, Canadian Radio-Television Commission, Ottawa, 1974, pp. 13–20.
4. Carey, James A., op.cit., p. 39.
5. Thompson, Gordon, 'Moloch or Aquarius: Strategies for Evaluating Future Communications Needs', in *Studies in Canadian Communications*, ed. Gertrude Jock Robinson and Donald F. Theall, McGill Programmes in Communications, Montreal, 1975, pp. 63–66.

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Development Dialogue 1976:1 and 2

Document

Statement by the Participants in the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Third World Journalists' Seminar

1 The satisfaction of human needs and the creation of a habitable environment on the basis of self-reliance and harmony with the values and aspirations of each society are the main purpose of *another development*, which implies a new world system through the establishment of the New International Economic Order.

2 The New International Economic Order requires a new framework of world information and communications. As the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report on Development and International Cooperation states,

> A near monopoly of international communications —including those among Third World countries —by transnational corporations, linked to their dominance of many and influence in almost all Third-World-country media, is a basic element of the present hierarchical pattern of Centre ideological and cultural domination.

3 This situation cannot continue. True political liberation is endangered and efforts for economic liberation will continue to be strongly handicapped unless steps are taken to break the hold that news agencies reflecting interests which are not those of the Third World have on the information sent to or originating in Third World countries. For the New International Economic Order to emerge, peoples of both industrialized and Third World countries must be given the opportunity of understanding that they share a common interest in creating international conditions that will permit *another development* of societies in all parts of the world. Changes in the present unjust international structures must be seen as a precondition for peace and security tomorrow.

4 This common interest cannot be adequately perceived unless communication patterns are also liberated from the market-oriented sensationalism approach to news. Such reporting will never permit public opinion in the industrialized world to have full information about the Third World, its true reality and its urgent needs.

5 The Third World nations must protect themselves from the distortion of their cultures and ways of life implicit in present communications dependence. Information is a non-material commodity that is bought and sold in a highly oligopolistic market. This must be changed. An end to such a system and thus a widening of the capacity to inform is a fundamental component of the New International Economic Order, permitting a valid interplay of different cultures and national realities.

6 The structural and substantive deficiencies of the United Nations system in general are particularly noticeable in its information/communication sector.

7 To redress the situation, action has to be taken at different levels, including:

National and collective self-reliant action by Third World countries.

Action directed towards the true reflection of the interdependence of nations.

Changes in the policies and structures of the information services of the United Nations system.

I The right to inform and be informed

8 The participants at the seminar endorse Point 6 of the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report on Development and International Cooperation, which reads as follows:

> Citizens have a right to inform and be informed about the facts of development, its inherent conflicts and the changes it will bring about, locally and internationally.
>
> Under present conditions, information and education are only too often monopolized by the power structure, which manipulates public opinion to its own ends and tends to perpetuate preconceived ideas, ignorance and alienation.
>
> A global effort should be made to give the new international relations their human dimension and to promote the establishment of genuine cooperation between peoples on the basis of equality and recognition of their cultural, political, social and economic diversity. The image of the Other should reach each of us, stripped of the prevailing ethnocentric prejudices, which are the characteristic feature of most of the messages currently transmitted.
>
> Such an effort should be concerned both with information and with education in the broadest sense of the word; it should be directed towards 'conscientization' of citizens to ensure their full participation in the decision-making process.

II National and collective self-reliant action by Third World countries

9 On the basis of collective self-reliance, Third World nations as a whole, at the regional and interregional levels, should take steps to ensure that information and communication networks are used to further and promote the establishment of the New International Economic Order and the objectives of *another development*.

10 To facilitate fundamental transformations to this end, governments should take action within their own countries to create, foster and strengthen national structures, based on self-reliance, for information and communication that will enable them to change existing systems in this field.

11 National news agencies of Third World countries should cooperate directly with each other through bilateral arrangements and through multilateral exchanges already in existence or to be set up.

12 National governments should take urgent steps to implement the programme of action agreed upon at the meeting of foreign ministers of the non-aligned countries, held at Lima, in August 1975, in the resolution on cooperation in the field of diffusion of information and mass communication media, particularly in part three of that resolution:

> To revise cable tariffs for the press and to facilitate more economical and faster intercommunication.
>
> To cooperate in the reorganization of communication channels still dependent or which constitute a colonial inheritance and obstruct direct and rapid communication among non-aligned countries.
>
> To exchange and disseminate information on mutual national achievements through newspapers, radio, television and news communication media.
>
> To share experiences in connection with information media.

13 Early steps should be taken to set up a Third World information centre to serve Third World needs and to help in the dissemination of information on the Third World in both industrialized and Third World countries. It should also organize a research and development effort in order to achieve the objectives of the New International Economic Order in the field of information and communication.

14 All these actions indicate the urgent need for a high-level investigation which should be supported by interested organizations. Specifically, the seminar requests the Latin American Institute for Transnational Studies (Mexico City) to initiate a research project covering the principal aspects of information and communication dependence of the Third World and to prepare, in that connection, a set of concrete proposals in order to redress the present situation.* A progress report could be made available to interested countries in the context of the preparations for the meeting of heads of state of non-aligned countries in 1976. The seminar calls on governments of the Third World, the Third World Forum, international institutions and progressive industrialized countries to back and support —on a priority basis—this and other research efforts undertaken in this field.

III Action directed towards the true reflection of the interdependence of nations

15 A massive effort must be made in industrialized countries to explain and make known the legitimate nature of the aspirations of the Third World countries for the establishment of the New International Economic Order. Third World communications networks should be prepared to create direct relationships with any interested group and to supply all data, information and analysis that might be required for their work.

16 Links with institutions established in the industrialized world that promote, in their own public opinion, the ideas and values of *another development* for all societies should be created and their activities supported. Specifically, the International Centre for Development Alternatives should contribute in creating conditions for the understanding of interdepence.

IV Changes in the policies and structures of the information services of the United Nations system

17 The United Nations system's information/communication sectors, concerning both media and non-governmental organizations, should be transformed so as to:

Ensure that its activities are geared to the primary goal of promoting a better mutual understanding among societies and nations in their rich cultural and socio-economic diversity.

Promote a dialogue, beyond purely intergovernmental action, among the peoples of the United Nations.

Promote in particular a real awareness in the industrialized countries of the realities of the development process, including the role of the transnationals, which should be controlled in the interests of the peoples of both industrialized and Third World nations.

Contribute to the attainment of self-reliance in Third World countries, through *inter alia* the promotion and systematic utilization of horizontal links between Third World countries and regions.

Improve drastically the flow of concrete information on the research activities of the many institutions and bodies of the system.

Redirect its financial and staff resources and its productive capacity to serve the above-mentioned objectives.

18 The Ad Hoc Committee on the Reform of the Structure of the United Nations system should give serious attention to the information/communication sectors of the secretariats.

V Acknowledgement

19 The participants in the seminar express their gratitude to the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, to the United Nations Environment Programme and to the Governments of the Netherlands and of Sweden for having sponsored the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report on Development and International Cooperation, and particularly to the Foundation for having organized the seminar, which gave them an unique opportunity to cover directly the proceedings of the Seventh Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly. They also express the hope that the Foundation could continue its useful role as a clearing-house in the immediate follow-up to the seminar.

20 The participants appeal to all journalists, both individually and collectively, to work towards the achievement of these ends.

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Alcino Louis Da Costa (Senegal)
Meena Hussain (Pakistan)
Germán Carnero Roqué (Peru)
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Moving Towards a New International Information Order

Are the Third World nations moving 'towards a more restricted press' as an emerging international campaign would have us believe?

Statements of this effect have been prompted by *inter alia* the conference in New Delhi, in July, of the ministers of information of non-aligned countries, at which agreement was reached on the constitution of a pool of the press agencies of the non-aligned countries.

In fact, this is only one of the recent examples of a reaction to a process which has been noticeable for quite some time at both intergovernmental and non-governmental levels. In the early seventies some Third World countries began to express in Unesco their concern that the principle of the 'free flow of information' was being used as an ideological smokescreen to cover a one-way flow of information, that information was in fact a vehicle to bring about cultural and political dependence on the models prevailing in the centre. 'Free' information, in this sense, it was argued, was not different from other mystifying concepts, such as the 'free market' or 'free enterprise', which signify the freedom of those who are powerful to exploit those who are powerless.

The movement towards a changing concept of information acquired politicai momentum as a result of the September 1973 Algiers Non-aligned Summit, which pointed out that 'developing countries should take concerted action to... reorganize existing communication channels which are a legacy of the colonial past and have hampered free, direct and fast communication between them'. The non-aligned movement followed up this directive at the Lima meeting of foreign ministers (August 1975) and at the Tunis symposium on international information (March 1976), which prepared, at the technical level, the New Delhi conference referred to above. Building on the service organized since early 1975 through Tanjug, the national press agency of Yugoslavia, the New Delhi conference decided on the constitution of the press-agency pool and this decision was endorsed by the Colombo Summit.

At the non-governmental level, and parallel to these intergovernmental actions, the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report (*What Now: Another Development*) devoted one of its ten main points to the need to improve public information:

> Citizens have a right to inform and be informed about the facts of development, its inherent conflicts and the changes it will bring about, locally and internationally.
>
> Under present conditions, information and education are only too often monopolized by the power structure, which manipulates public opinion to its own ends and tends to perpetuate preconceived ideas, ignorance and alienation.
>
> A global effort should be made to give the new international relations their human dimension and to promote the establishment of genuine cooperation between

peoples on the basis of equality and recognition of their cultural, political, social and economic diversity. The image of the Other should reach each of us, stripped of the prevailing ethnocentric prejudices, which are the characteristic feature of most of the messages currently transmitted.

Such an effort should be concerned both with information and with education in the broadest sense of the word; it should be directed towards 'conscientization' of citizens to ensure their full participation in the decision-making process.

The Dag Hammarskjöld Third World Journalists' Seminar which met in New York during the Seventh Special Session of the UN General Assembly (September 1975) in turn insisted that 'for the new international economic order to emerge, peoples of both industrialized and Third World countries must be given the opportunity of understanding that they share a common interest in creating international conditions that will permit *another development* of societies in all parts of the world' (the full text is printed in DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE, 1976:1).

In October, the Centre International pour le Développement held in Nice a meeting of journalists on world public information and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, at which it was agreed that reporting on Third World realities was not adequate and at which were listed a number of obstacles to a 'fuller and more balanced information'.

In the context of these discussions and decisions, the Instituto Latinoamericano de Estudios Transnacionales (ILET), in cooperation with the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and under the auspices of the Third World Forum, organized in Mexico City, from 24 to 28 May, a seminar on 'The Role of Information in the New International Order', whose main objectives were to develop further the conceptual framework within which these questions should be analysed and to examine practical solutions for the improvement of existing information channels and to develop new ones in the spirit of self-reliance. The present issue of DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE carries a number of the papers arising out of the Mexico seminar.

The effects of cultural domination and dependence fostered by most of the prevailing information patterns are much more penetrating than those of purely economic domination and dependence. Many and strong vested interests, those of the transnational power structure and of the local élites—in terms of power, finance and professional complacency—stand in the way. Therefore the battle will be a fierce one. It will be all the harder for those who need and want change in that the chief vehicle for alerting and mobilizing public consciousness to the realities of information subservience

—the press—is itself the tool and the principal exemplification of this subservience. The nascent campaign suggests that mystification and distortion of the facts and positions will be used as weapons in this 'discussion'. It is therefore important, as a preface to the research and political work which has to be pursued—and to which this issue is a contribution—to emphasize three fundamental points:

1. Just as *another development,* centred on the satisfaction of peoples' needs, endogenous, self-reliant and ecologically minded and based on a profound transformation of the social structures at the national level, is the only justification of the New International Order, any new International Information Order will be legitimized only in so far as it contributes to the promotion of *another information,* one which will fight preconceived ideas, ignorance and alienation, and facilitate the 'conscientization' of citizens to ensure their control over decision-making. Change will require major conceptual and practical advances in both the content and methods of information, since the relationship between the 'professionals' of information and the 'public' is also one of subservience.

2. The present situation in the field of information is largely a legacy of the past and of the continued oligopolistic position of four transnational news agencies. The scope for self-reliance in this field is, however, vast. In addition to the creation of the news agency pool and the implementation of a Third World feature service and other indispensable practical measures, it requires a change of mind on the part of many journalists, who do not perceive critically or are unable to resist an information model permeating cultural, political and economic behaviour. Self-reliance in the field of information implies a higher degree of political awareness on the part of those who produce news.

3. *Another information* requires that the principle of free flow of information be given its full, meaningful and democratic content. This means that the domination of the transnational news agencies over the media should be curbed, but this is not conterminous with governmental control over information. While it cannot be said that there is no role for governments in information, a role that is as varied as the circumstances, it should be remembered that societies are permanent, and governments—though they may be devoted to the public good—are transient. Societies and the individ-

uals who constitute them are richer in their diversity, needs and aspirations than the states and their bureaucratic machineries—which should only be their servants. A New Information Order and *another information* are not designed to replace the domination of the transnationals by that of national bureaucracies, however well intentioned; they are not a move towards 'a more restricted press', but towards a freer one, which would really meet the need to inform and to be informed—one of the fundamental human needs.

The Role of Information in the New International Order

Seminar organized by the Instituto Latinoamericano de Estudios Transnacionales, in cooperation with the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation under the auspices of the Third World Forum, Mexico City, 24 to 28 May 1976

The 1976 Mexico Seminar on the Role of Information in the New International Order was held at the Mexican Foreign Trade Institute and attended by a number of leading journalists, specialized researchers, social scientists and government officials in the field of information, predominantly from the Third World (a list of participants and seminar papers is printed below on page 76).

The seminar was organized on the initiative of the Instituto Latinoamericano de Estudios Transnacionales (ILET), in accordance with its mandate to conduct action-oriented research on, inter alia, *the activities of the transnational corporations and on the related questions of information and dependence. In view of the key role played by the transnational news agencies in the relationship of domination and dependence between centre and periphery countries, it was felt that their origins, nature, means of operation and influence should be closely studied.*

For this purpose, two basic documents were prepared by ILET. The first was on the historical evolution of the transnational news agencies. The second, by Juan Somavía, the director of ILET and also the director of the seminar, dealing with the transnational power structure and international information, is published here in a form amplified to take into consideration many of the views expressed in the seminar and also recent developments in the discussion of these issues in the Third World. In addition, an analysis of the international information available in Latin America, on the basis of a sample of Latin American newspapers, was made by Fernando Reyes Matta, the coordinator of activities on information and dependence of ILET, and this is also published here.

The broad agreement of views of three Third World journalists from Asia and Africa is reflected in a further three papers printed here. These papers include a plea for a new international communication and information structure, free of governmental and bureaucratic controls; a proposal for a Third World Feature Service; and an exposé of a centre language as a vehicle of dependence. A final paper in this section of the journal is devoted to an alternative UN information model.

The seminar dealt at length with the issues of information and the transnational power structure, in particular through the role of the international news agencies, and considered the elements involved and specific measures desirable in restructuring links between the centre and the periphery and in establishing alternative channels of information, especially for

the Third World. A number of valuable suggestions were made for future research to be carried out by ILET and other organizations concerned with these matters. Final discussions aiming at elaborating a summary analysis and conclusions are available from the Instituto Latinoamericano de Estudios Transnacionales, Apartado 85–025, Mexico 20, D.F., Mexico.

The seminar was officially inaugurated on behalf of the President of the Republic of Mexico, Luis Echeverría, by the Under-Secretary of the Presidency, Lic. Mauro Jiménez Lazcano. It concluded with a visit to the President, on which occasion he affirmed his belief that the problem of information should constitute a fundamental element in the context of the new international order, as defined by the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, expressed his full support for the seminar initiative, and also underlined the need for practical measures.

The Transnational Power Structure and International Information

Elements of a Third World Policy for Transnational News Agencies

By Juan Somavía

A few transnational news agencies have a de facto *near monopoly of the flow of international information, including information on and between Third World countries. Although most countries in the Third World have achieved their political independence, they are still not economically independent and in the field of information they are almost totally dependent on the news provided by the transnational agencies, which is often of a biased and distorted nature, serving predominantly the interests of the transnational power structure. Juan Somavía in this paper analyses the causes of this continued dependence and outlines the elements of a Third World policy aimed at the establishment of a framework of legal and social accountability for the activities of the agencies. The author, who is director of the Instituto Latinoamericano de Estudios Transnacionales and served as director of the Mexico Seminar, was formerly permanent representative of Chile to the Andean Group, president of the Commission of the Cartagena Agreement and chairman of the board of the Andean Development Corporation. He was the rapporteur for the 'Group of Eminent Persons' appointed by the United Nations to study the transnational corporations.*

The context: world communications control by the transnational power structure

Most Third World countries are inserted in a world system whose rationale has been laid down by the industrialized countries and whose operation inevitably favours the latter. Its origins are to be found in the various forms of colonial domination and exploitation that historically characterized relations between the centre and the periphery. Today the system is operated according to a set of principles and practices that were elaborated after the Second World War, in the global and regional organizations created during that period, with the explicit or tacit approval of the small group of countries that made up the 'world' community at the time. This arrangement has been perfected and adapted over the last thirty years to form a cohesive whole, in which the central instrument of domination emerges clearly, namely, the transnational power structure, which acts internationally and operates internally in nearly every Third World country.

The transnational power structure manifests itself through operational forms with different functions which, taken together, constitute a complex apparatus whose central objective is

to consolidate and expand its capacity to act and exert influence throughout the world. As its letter of introduction it invokes a combination of values and aspirations which it is supposed to stand for: political stability, economic efficiency, technological creativity, the 'logic' of the market, the virtues of consumerism, the defence of freedom, and others.

In practice, the way in which the transnational power structure actually behaves is quite different from what it claims. In the name of political stability, it defends the *status quo* and those régimes, the most conservative, which are most active in thwarting vital structural changes in Third World societies; in the name of efficiency, it promotes the expansion of transnational enterprises, originating in the centre, as the 'technically' ideal solution to the problems of growth and economic development, promoting a 'homogenization' of consumption patterns that often critically disregard both basic needs and local cultural realities; in the name of technological creativity, it concentrates vast resources on research and development related to the requirements of its industrial-military apparatus and the interests of its transnational enterprises, which have little to do with the real needs of the Third World; in the name of the 'logic' of the market, it advocates abdication by governments of their basic responsibility, that of setting the guidelines for and orienting national development in favour of the majorities, implicitly promoting forms of social organization that leave decisions on what, how much, and for whom to produce in the hands of large private enterprises; in the name of the virtues of consumerism, it directs production only towards those who have the income available to consume, thereby consolidating development styles associated with the most privileged sectors of society and relegating the great majorities of the Third World to the margin of the economic and social process; and in the name of freedom, it blocks, intervenes in and destabilizes the actions, policies and programmes of progressive governments, by weakening or supplanting them and by backing régimes based on systematic repression and the violation of human rights.

To attain these objectives it disposes of an arsenal of diverse but converging instruments which reflect the various dimensions of the transnational power structure.

1. The *political-military-intelligence service dimension* (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, South-East Asia Treaty Organization, Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, links between intelligence services, etc.), expressing itself in overt and covert threats, in attempts to promote changes in its interest or prevent changes adverse to its interest in power relations within Third World countries, in different forms of military intervention and political penetration, and in the implementation of policies to ostracize certain progressive governments internationally.
2. The *economic-industrial-trade dimension* (promotion of transnational enterprises, strengthening of structures and agreements favourable to the system, such as GATT, the IMF, the World Bank; efforts to weaken instruments that challenge aspects of the system, such as UNCTAD, producers' associations, measures to con-

trol transnational enterprises, and regional organizations; encouragement of 'mimetic' development models; use of economic instruments to block and weaken policies of progressive governments).

3. It is only recently that the *communications-advertising-culture dimension* has begun to make itself evident as an integral part of the transnational instrumentality. It is becoming increasingly clear that the transnational communications system has developed with the support and at the service of the transnational power structure. It is an integral part of the system which affords the control of that key instrument of contemporary society: information. It is the vehicle for transmitting values and life styles to Third World countries which stimulate the type of consumption and the type of society necessary to the transnational system as a whole.

Politically, it defends the *status quo*, where this is in its own interest; economically, it creates the conditions for the transnational expansion of capital. Loss of control over the communications structure by the transnational system would mean the loss of one of its most powerful weapons; this is why it is so difficult to bring about change in this field.

The transnational communications system is a whole, comprising news agencies, advertising agencies and data banks, and supplying information retrieval services, radio and television programmes, films, radiophotos, magazines, books, novelettes and comic papers with world-wide circulation. The various components, originating mainly in the industrialized countries, reinforce each other, stimulating *in toto* the consumers' desire to attain forms of social organization and life styles imitative of the industrialized capitalist countries, which, experience has shown, can only be applied in the Third World on the basis of high and increasing concentration of income in the hands of a few and of untenable social inequality. At the same time, the 'information pressure' from so many seemingly unrelated yet substantively coherent different sources gradually vitiates the ability to react to the message, slowly converting the individual into a passive receptor without critical judgement. The communications process almost becomes for people something like 'theatre watching'. The public thus becomes convinced that the transnational consumption and development model is historically inevitable. In this manner, the communications system fulfils its main function: the cultural penetration of the human being, to condition him or her to accept the political, economic and cultural values of the transnational power structure.

It is for these reasons that communications policies are an integral part of development policies. If information is communicated in the interest and at the service of the transnational power structure, the sovereign capacity to determine and implement national development policy is shackled, because the international communications structure directly conditions and determines individual and social reactions within a country.

Within the complex ramifications of the transnational communications system, the news agencies of greatest penetration in the Third World play a special role and deserve particular study. Although there is conceptual

awareness of the structural dependence of the Third World in this area, it is important to study quite closely the many expressions and the empirical nature of the phenomenon, in order to draw up counterpart policies to develop alternative and complementary channels of information on the basis of national and collective self-reliance.

Transnational news agencies

The purpose of this paper is to bring together and develop existing analysis on the activities of the large transnational news agencies with major influence in the Third World, for use in drawing up the counterpart policies. The summary of the structural characteristics of the agencies and of their resulting conduct is intended as background material for determining policy.

Structural characteristics

The main agencies of importance in Third World countries, to which we refer, such as United Press International (UPI), Associated Press (AP), Reuters and Agence France-Presse (AFP), are not in any real sense 'international' enterprises; they are transnational enterprises, each operating out of its headquarters in an industrialized capitalist country. By definition their ownership structure is totally vested in their home countries. All the members of the boards of directors of UPI and AP, for example, are nationals of the United States of America, as well as most of the bureau chiefs, at least throughout Latin America. AFP and Reuters have ownership and control structures that link them to their own governments. Their form of organization closely resembles that of commercial enterprises with world-wide interests to prime and defend. The nature of their activities is such that they have to operate outside their own country, with an immense impact and influence on the very many countries in which they operate. Their operations are interlinked with other branches of the transnational production system—advertising, magazine and television-programme production in particular—and also with transnational enterprises. For this reason the conceptual framework developed for analysing and formulating policy towards the operation of transnationals is applicable, with certain changes, to news agencies. They are, however, one of the least-studied features of the transnational phenomenon.

Their structure and links with the rest of the transnational system, their ownership, their private-enterprise rationale of seeking constant expansion and long-term optimization of profits, together with the values that govern the present training of communicators, lead these agencies to treat information as a commodity and to regard their main aim as that of selling their product more successfully than their competitors. The 'logic' of the market becomes the criterion for their conduct.

In order to assure their expansion and growth with absolute freedom of action throughout the world, the United States news agencies, in particular, with the full support of their government, postulated in the late forties the international application of the principle of the 'free flow' of information, for which the approval of the world community was ob-

tained.[1] This concept has been used as the conceptual cornerstone to justify the 'independence' of the news agencies and to enable them to carry on their activities without national or international social accountability of any kind. In this way, the seal of legitimacy has been placed on their right to act exclusively in their own interest, transmitting their particular view of events according to the political and economic determinants of the transnational system of which they form part. As a result of the failure to question in practical and conceptual terms the manner in which the principle of 'free flow' has been applied, the agencies are currently neither socially nor juridically responsible for their acts either to the foreign countries in which they operate or to the international community.

In practice, the principle of 'free flow' means that the agencies can determine what is news. They have been accorded the right to select from among the various national and international events what shall be transmitted for the world to know. They are thus made into arbiters of existing reality.

Because of their background and structure, the criteria they apply to news selection often reflect neither the interests nor the social realities of many Third World countries. This is most strikingly evident in the reporting of events in which progressive governments or movements are seeking to change dominant structures or to question the traditional *status quo*. Compared with other transnational enterprises, the transnational news agencies are small. The UPI operational budget in 1972 was US$55 million and that for AP in 1973 was US$78 million.[2] Their power resides not in their financial capacity but in the way they 'handle' the basic variable, information, in contemporary society. It is for this purpose that they are to be found operating throughout the world. Their role within the transnational system may be compared to that of the headlights on an automobile: to light up the road, pick out the danger signals and changes in the route, inform those steering the system about everything that concerns their interests, and help find a sound and stable road to follow. Like the headlights, they are small but decisive; without their valuable information the system loses operativeness and efficiency and runs the risk of crashing into unforeseen obstacles.

The current situation is such that a few agencies have a *de facto* near monopoly of the flow of international information, including information on and between Third World countries. This has its origin in historical continuities the effects of which, in other related areas, in international trade, development financing, exploitation of raw materials, management of the monetary system, and control of technology, have been denounced internationally by the Third World. However, prior to the recent formal approval of a pool of news agencies of non-aligned countries, there has not been a similar degree of conceptual awareness of or an in-depth political reaction to the phenomenon of information dependence.

Behaviour

As a result of this structural situation the behaviour of the transnational news agencies is characterized by a variety of practices that run

contrary to the needs and interests of Third World countries; in particular, those countries trying to carry out basic structural changes internally. This is equally shown in the nature of the reporting on the activities of national groups that are struggling to change conservative or repressive régimes. Some of the ways in which this is done are described below.

Criteria for selecting the news are consciously or instinctively based on the political and economic interests of the transnational system and the countries in which this system has its roots. They have become a central mechanism of the national and international instruments deployed to maintain the *status quo* and prevent real changes. Politically, information that tends to show that the crucial elements of the system really 'function' is highlighted while that which implies criticism or need for changes in the existing state of affairs is played down. The best recent example of this, at the international level, has been the way in which the actions of the OPEC countries have been presented (as responsible for world inflation, as wrecking the international economic system, as irresponsible in the use of power conferred by the possession of oil) with scarcely any substantive description of the true global dimension and historic implications of the OPEC decisions for the balance of world forces. For anybody relying exclusively on international dispatches, OPEC actions have practically no positive elements in them and much transnational reporting of this theme has the flavour of anti-OPEC propaganda. The same is the case with information about Third World rifts and contradictions, which are played up by the cultivation of minor cultural differences or quarrels that have their origin in the colonialist past. The dissemination of concepts such as the 'fourth' and 'fifth' world goes in the same direction.

The use of 'labels', adjectives and persuasive definitions to stigmatize targets of the system is another political method that is employed. Reference is made to the 'marxist' President, Salvador Allende, without any agency thinking or willing to speak of the 'capitalist' President Richard Nixon or Gerald Ford. Progressive political leaders in the Third World are described as 'extremists' or 'rebels' but conservative or reactionary politicians are unlabelled. The international negotiators of progressive countries are 'rhetorical' while those of the industrialized world are 'pragmatic'. Semantics serve to evoke the image of what is 'normal' from the standpoint of the 'order' the agencies represent. Anything that departs from this normality is treated in such a way that by inference it becomes obvious that it must be rejected. The alleged objectivity of news presentation is belied by an arbitrary use of language.

Distortion of the news has become a regular device of international information. Distortion does not necessarily mean a false presentation of events but rather an arbitrary selection and a slanted evaluation of reality. Such distortion has various forms of expression:

1. *Overemphasizing events that have no real importance*. The anecdotal, the irrelevant and what the centre countries consider picturesque is woven into the transmission, giving it an unwarranted appearance of national significance.

2. ***Putting isolated facts together and presenting them as a whole without this 'whole' ever having existed ('making' news).*** A sum of partial truths is presented in such a way that it appears to constitute an overall truth.

3. *Misrepresentation by 'implication', characterized by the presentation of facts in such a way that the implicit conclusions to be drawn from them are favourable to the interests of the transnational system.* For example, the negative aspects of events in progressive countries are stressed and their achievements are minimized, while at the same time the virtues of the key instruments of the system, such as transnational enterprises, are subtly extolled.

The widespread and repeated dissemination throughout the Andean Group of the negative reaction of the 'Council of the Americas' (an organization of private United States companies with headquarters in New York) to Decision 24, establishing common regulations on foreign investment in the region, resulted in the creation of the implicit image that the Andean governments had made a 'mistake', that the flow of foreign investment would contract 'drastically', and that nationalistic and liberating attitudes in the economic area led to economic stagnation.[3]

4. *Distortion by 'preconditioning' of events.* Facts having a specific dimension are presented in such a way that unfounded fears and misgivings are created, conditioning future action on the part of individuals, companies, social groups and governments. UPI filed the following dispatch on 27 February 1974:

> New York, February 27, (UPI).—A meeting of a number of the main bauxite-producing countries scheduled tentatively for March 5 in Conakry (Guinea) has caused understandable concern in Washington. Some experts feel that the conference could be the first step in the establishment of a series of international cartels for controlling raw materials essential to the industrialized nations *which could set the United States' economy back more than 40 years.*

Cables like this create the image in industrialized countries that the increasing organizational capacity of raw-material-producing countries is a 'threat' to their own development.

It is inferred that it is 'legitimate' for the industrialized countries to defend themselves and to seek by all the means at their disposal to obstruct the organizational capacity of the Third World. At the same time, the cable warns the countries meeting in Conakry that Washington's concern is 'understandable' and that, consequently, if they should come to an agreement on bauxite, it would be logical that reprisals might be forthcoming.

5. *Distortion also by silence, by failure to report on situations that are no longer of interest to the agencies' home countries.* Viet-Nam ceased to be news (except for sporadic articles) after the United States was defeated, despite the fact that its reunification and efforts to develop, following such a devastating war, are of worldwide significance. It cannot even be argued, as is sometimes the case, that this is a little-known country in which there is not much interest; on the contrary—even in purely commercial terms—the years of struggle created a 'market' in an interested public.

Elements for determining policy

The formulation of policy regarding the agencies calls for action at various levels, beginning by a critical examination of the conceptual basis of their activities.

Information is a social good not a commodity

International information today is a commodity sold on the market. The agencies deal in the observation and evaluation of events. In a sense they 'appropriate' reality and its characteristics, simply because only they possess the infrastructure and technical know-how for its publicization. Their 'marketing' modifies the nature and relative importance of events, which do not in fact 'happen' for the wider public unless they are chosen for publication by news outlets. The agency thus takes an event, whose scope and specific meaning are given by its context and the circumstances surrounding it, and converts it into 'news', which to be such requires a presentation that will make it a saleable commodity. There is thus, in the commercial concept of news, a built-in systematic discrimination against those events that cannot be 'sold',which therefore, in accordance with this rationale, are not 'news', because the controlling market has no interest in them. At the same time, there is a tendency to distortion by the projection of those aspects of events that make them more marketable. In this process, the social nature of the occurrence and its proper significance, deriving from its historical and cultural background, are completely lost sight of, giving way to an out-of-context message whose content is determined by the 'logic' of the market.

The selection and adaptation of events for the market means that information is directed to meet the 'demand' of such a market. We need to determine what makes up that demand and who decides what the market wants. The answer directly links the news agencies to the dominant transnational power structure.

The first element is that a large number of 'users' of the agency services are in the industrialized capitalist world, logically requiring information in accordance with the rationale of that system. Second, there are the primary users (newspapers, magazines, television and radio) in the Third World, most of which are connected with the local bourgeoisies which, in turn, are related to the transnational power structure through a variety of links. The third element is advertising. The communication structure in the centre as well as at the periphery is such that the primary users of information depend upon it for their existence. Advertising, in turn, is guided by the values and practices of the large transnational advertising agencies and is subject to their direct influence. Moreover, the advertising placed by the transnational enterprises is an important percentage, often the lion's share, of the income obtained by primary users of information in this area. Therefore, advertising presented as being merely a commercial requirement is, in fact, an instrument of financial and, often, political control of the means of communication. That there is a direct relation between the political orientation of the communication media and the volume of advertising they receive is borne out by the experience of the more progressive television channels, radio stations, newspapers or magazines, which are

usually avoided as outlets by the advertising agencies and transnational enterprises. Fourth, there is the fact that the primary users of international information, in most Third World countries, operate in the context of development policies that follow closely the consumption patterns of the industrialized world. As a result the contents of the 'package' (news, advertising, entertainment, political analysis, cultural aspects) offered by the primary users are, in one way or another, influenced by the consumerist pressures of the model and the needs and opinions of the sectors in which the highest incomes are concentrated.

So the circle is closed. Information originates in a few agencies, all from the industrialized world, is received in the Third World mainly by primary users, who are related to the transnational power structure and is, finally, placed on a market dominated by consumption styles defined by the needs of only a minority of the population. In the process, information as a social good, significant in terms of its roots and framework of origin, is lost and it becomes a commodity stripped of all social value. Even the capacity for 'political participation' is affected because information caters also to a sort of 'entertainment' model by which people are distracted, but not informed. The need to understand events against the background of their own reality is replaced by the need to sell and to ensure that the product is accepted by the market. This situation for the most part prevents the large agencies, those with greatest penetration in the Third World, from satisfactorily fulfilling the social function of providing information.

Framework of responsibility for the activities of the agencies

Providing information is a social function: it should not be a business transaction. Like all other social functions carried out on behalf of and for the service of the community, its exercise should not be left to the exclusive judgement of those involved in the activity in question. For the transmission of information confers power and every society should be organized so that those holding power are socially responsible for its use. Guidelines have been developed for this purpose in other human activities to define the responsibility of those with power. Sufficient justification exists for applying similar social criteria to the transnational news agencies.

Transnational news agencies are foreign organizations to the country they are operating in. Every country has the sovereign right to establish a framework of responsibility for the activities of 'foreign entities' operating on its territory. No foreign institution has the right *per se* to act, work or produce in another country; this right is granted because its presence is thought to be of value to the country and to international understanding. This holds true even for foreign institutions enjoying extraterritoriality, such as embassies, because a service is rendered by them to the international relations of the two countries, but whose rights are automatically abrogated when diplomatic relations are broken off. With respect to the agencies, the nature of the mutual benefits their activity confers should be better defined; this should be understood in the broad sense of creating the conditions for secure and

responsible information to flow both ways, towards and from a given country and not exclusively according to the views of a particular government. The legal framework should recognize the agency's freedom of action but, at the same time, orient the exercise of the freedom of information within a context of standards that will make it possible to eliminate or redress the sort of harmful conduct that has been described.

The right to establish a framework of responsibility for the activities of the agencies, on the basis of the foregoing considerations, has an even broader context; the process of political, economic and cultural liberation in which by varying means and at different rates of progress a large number of Third World countries are currently involved. The process of decolonization which began towards the end of the Second World War has gone through a number of stages, in which the specific content of the struggle has changed as new areas of confrontation have emerged successively in the fight to reduce external dependence and increase self-reliance.

At first, the struggle was a purely political one. In Africa and Asia, it was a struggle for territorial independence. In Latin America, the objective was the establishment of legal structures that would put a stop to the direct military interventions that have characterized the policy of the hegemonic power in the hemisphere. A political framework was created for universal acceptance of the principle of the self-determination of peoples and non-intervention into their affairs; both were consecrated as central guidelines of international relations by the Charter of the United Nations. This was an attempt to establish minimum conditions of political security.

In spite of its evident flaws, this development nevertheless somewhat obliged the European colonial powers and the United States to pursue the exercise of power indirectly through economic levers rather than directly through political and military actions, although there were still many flagrant instances of these (in Algeria, in the Dominican Republic, in Egypt over the Suez Canal, and in Viet-Nam, among others). Progressively this shifted the main confrontation between the centre and the periphery to the economic field. It has ranged from the denunciation of the GATT principles and the Bretton Woods agreements, to a qualitatively different level with the OPEC actions, the approval of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, the declaration on the establishment of a New International Economic Order and the creation of initial mechanisms to negotiate the new economic order (such as the conference on international economic cooperation and UNCTAD IV). This experience has progressively led to the conviction that it is necessary for Third World countries to strengthen their economic security, nationally and collectively, in order to be able to exercise effectively their political sovereignty. This battle for political and economic security is aimed primarily at ensuring conditions that will put an end to situations in which Third World countries are compelled to act according to the will of major powers.

In this context, there is increasing evidence that in addition to force or economic pressure, a supplementary instrument exists which is less contentious and more subtle, but equally

effective. This is the capacity for cultural domination and transfer of consumption and development styles which incorporate the peoples of the Third World, both psychologically and practically, into the value system of the transnational power structure. Without apparent political or economic pressure these countries are made to act in the interest of the transnational system out of 'their own free will' by means of cultural penetration that offers them life styles that will transform them into 'developed peoples', liberated from the stigma of 'underdevelopment'. In this task there is an alliance of interests between Third World internal bourgeoisies and the transnational system. The complicity derives from the fact that both are equally motivated in promoting styles of consumerist development that conform to the transnational model. Minor contradictions arise as to how the market should be divided but not with respect to the need for creating it. For this operation to function efficiently it is essential to control the instruments of social communication, and this has been accomplished. In this framework, the international communications media and their local appendices practically become Trojan horses for the transnational styles of consumption.

Today we find ourselves in the third phase of the struggle for liberation (which is still clearly tied up, however, with the two previous ones): to establish conditions for the cultural security of information. Such security is as yet impossible because of the way transnational news agencies apply and utilize the principle of the free flow of information for their own benefit.

The need to challenge the current application of 'free flow of information'

The need to satisfy the social criteria described above—information considered as a social good, the responsible exercise of social power by the agencies, and the efforts to guarantee security of information—inevitably lead to the question of establishing a framework for the responsible exercise of the activities of news agencies. This will require, in turn, acceptance of the idea that what is needed is an equilibrated free flow of responsible information.

The link between US transnational interests and the heavy pressure brought to bear in the post Second World War years by the United States to have 'free flow' accepted as the guiding principle in world communication have been clearly and precisely delineated by Schiller.[4]

The operational practices of the agencies show that, in the main, they have placed their ability and professional know-how at the service of the transnational power structure and this points to the need to demonstrate conceptually the limitations, implicit discriminations and flaws in the principle of 'free flow' as it is now applied.

As implemented by the transnationals, the principle of 'free flow' is the formal consecration of *laissez-faire* in the information field. Under its cover a news agency can abuse its power to provide information without responsibility to anybody for the excesses, omissions or distortions of which it may have been guilty. 'Free flow' gives *carte-blanche* for information to be slanted in the form most conve-

nient or of most interest for a news agency, with the sole proviso that it should satisfy the demand of the news-agency market. The unilateral vision of the agencies is legitimized as the correct one, since it is the only one that is made known throughout the world. Socially, free flow insures the impunity of misrepresentation and the preponderance of the strong over the weak in the area of international information. The result is patent: the monopolistic concentration and consolidation of four transnational news agencies in control of the flow of information from, to and within the Third World. Acceptance of continued exploitation of the principle of 'free flow' in its present form would be equivalent to acknowledging the free use of economic power to put pressure on Third World countries as a legitimate guiding principle in international relations.

'Free flow' in the cultural and information spheres is the key instrument in the structure of transnational domination in the area of communications and it cannot remain viable if it continues to be put into practice as it has been up to now. We are not advocating its elimination, rather its incorporation into a context in which the information role of the agencies is governed by certain social standards of conduct. In this context the following issues should be given particular consideration:

1. Establishment of a framework of legal and social accountability for the information activities of the agencies.
2. Presentation by agencies of information regarding:
   Their standards of professional conduct, operational practices and journalistic criteria on the basis of which they intend to carry on their work.
   Their central ownership and control structure, and the nature of the operational policy orientation received from the main office.
   Their overall financial and commercial structure, giving sources of income, banking connexions, links with advertising and transnational communications enterprises.
   Their desire to cooperate in a positive way in studies undertaken by official or academic organizations with respect to the content, forms and characteristics of their activities.
3. Recognition of the right of the agencies to a critical analysis—positive or negative—of national events, linked to the establishment of the right to reply similar to that already accepted in national legislation.

Final remarks

The conceptual approach in this paper is focused upon the implications of the activities of the transnational news agencies in the Third World. It should also be pointed out that many of the medium-size and small industrialized countries are in a similar situation of information dependence regarding the large agencies referred to here. This means that in some respects there is no clear-cut North/South or centre/periphery dichotomy in this field but rather, on the contrary, that some areas of common interest exist between the countries of the Third World and a number of industrialized countries. This is a significant political

pointer to innovative forms of cooperation that would be of mutual benefit.

The practical political application of these ideas will not be easy and there are abundant pitfalls ahead. We are not advocating government control over the agencies' news flow. We are against the ethnocentric monopoly of news flows and the lack of social accountability of news agencies for their actions. We believe that between these two extremes policies will emerge in which it is recognized that access to secure and responsible information, together with a substantive participation by the individual receptor in the communication process, are an integral part of the exercise of human rights. If access to information is a human right, then the social function of communicating it must be considered a service to which individuals and the community are entitled, and the function cannot be exercised solely according to the exclusive interests or values of the owners of the media or journalists or governments. In this context, a social function must respond to social criteria. As with development strategies, diversity and pluralism will characterize information models and the manner in which they respond to national needs.

The foregoing analysis is conceived as a contribution to the delineation of a conceptual framework to focus on the activity of transnational news agencies. The general proposals presented—particularly the proposal to establish a structure of legal and social accountability for the information activity of the agencies—should be supplemented by other measures aimed at creating and perfecting complementary alternative information channels and strengthening collective self-reliance in this field among the Third World countries. Actions of this nature were proposed in the declaration of the non-aligned countries at the conference of Heads of State in Algeria (1973), and at the meeting of ministers of foreign affairs in Lima (1975), in the recent symposium on information in Tunis (1976), in the New Delhi meeting of ministers of information (1976), and fundamental decisions were taken at Colombo by the Heads of State of the non-aligned countries (August 1976).

The Colombo summit represents a fundamental, political and conceptual breakthrough in the appreciation of the international communications structure. As in the past with other issues, the non-aligned countries have brought forcefully to the international negotiating tables a subject for too long forgotten: information dependence.

Decisions taken will set the political framework for the work of elaborating further a sound empirical and conceptual basis on which to build future proposals and policy actions. Thus, Colombo will have a fundamental impact on Third World research institutes active in this area. It will serve to highlight the political importance of the issue and spur intellectual analysis in order to develop the conceptual tools to counter, in all its manifestations, present information dependence.

Many concepts will have to be refined and elaborated further, such as: cultural sovereignty, security of information, information as a social good not as a merchandise, new principles to govern international information flows, development of a juridical framework to orient international information, the right to informa-

tion as an exercise of basic human rights, development of different 'information models' (participation, velocity, selection, qualification criteria), the role of information at the service of the transnational power structure, and forms and forums in which to negotiate a new information order.

This is a new area of interaction between political decision-makers and research institutes. As was stated in the analysis and conclusions to the Mexico seminar, 'a key element in achieving a new international order in the field of information is the generation of autonomous thinking. No changes will take place without concepts that will bring about a confrontation with predominant ideas and practices. Methodologically and intellectually innovative formulations are required.'

Colombo has reaffirmed and stimulated the need for such autonomous thinking. It is also a challenge to Third World researchers.

Notes and references

1. Cf. the United Nations conference on freedom of information, held from 25 March to 21 April 1948, in Geneva, under the auspices of Unesco.
2. Al Hester, 'International News Agencies', in Allan Wells (ed.), *Mass Communications: A World View*, p. 208.
3. Decision 24 was approved in December 1970 and has constituted up to now the political backbone of the Andean Group. It is at present under very strong attack by conservative elements linked to the transnational power structure within the Andean region.
4. Herbert Schiller, 'La Libre Circulation de l'Information et la Domination Mondiale', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, September 1975.

The Information Bedazzlement of Latin America

A Study of World News in the Region

*By Fernando Reyes Matta**

Tuesday, 25 November 1975 was the date of birth of a new independent state in Latin America, Surinam. The event went largely unnoticed in the major Latin American newspapers. This, and many other examples in the following study of a representative sample of sixteen Latin American newspapers during part of a week in November 1975, reveal that apart from the domination of the information market by a few transnational news agencies, those who actually make the newspapers are still the prisoners of an alien information model that bears no relationship to the development information needs of the continent and indeed contributes to the persistence of dependence. Political awareness is the beginning of self-reliance in this field. Fernando Reyes Matta, who has been both a journalist and an academic, is coordinator of activities on information and dependence at the Instituto Latinoamericano de Estudios Transnacionales.

In spite of technological advances and research carried out in the theory of communication, Latin America continues to be dependent in the field of international information services. Transnational press agencies—particularly UPI and AP—set the trends of knowledge for public opinion in the region. In addition, there continue to be signs of *information inertia* in the presentation of events. By this we mean that certain regions, countries and personalities assume the dominant role in generating an information framework for reports on international relations that determines which information on foreign affairs shall be made available to the public everywhere.

These conclusions emerge from the analysis of a sample of sixteen Latin American newspapers from fourteen countries published during a four-day period in November 1975. The research results are still substantially the same as those obtained in studies carried out in the 1960s. If some progress has been made in the handling of international information, it has been the result of using a greater variety of sources and of the use of articles from such internationally influential newspapers as the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post.* These are reproduced in either news or editorial pages. In addition, some newspapers have significantly increased the use of their own correspondents.

Two main approaches to the problem of international information may be said to characterize this study. The first is a quantitative and percentile analysis of activity by transnational

* The author is indebted to the sociologists Sra. Alicia Espinosa and Srta. Perla de la Parra for the statistical calculations.

press agencies and international media in Latin America, together with some assessments of the importance in the region of news from the Third World and from industrialized countries. The second is an evaluation of the information, analysing its characteristics and drawing attention to the way in which some of the news is overemphasized while other news is played down or simply not reported at all.

The criteria utilized in this analysis are based on a commitment to the positions of the Third World as developed over the last few years. That is why the conclusions of this paper could not remain exclusively quantitative. The paper also attempts to present a political interpretation of the context in which Latin American newspapers select and present the news. The actual consequences for Latin America of the practical application of the principle of 'free flow of information', for example, has meant that, whereas the region is significantly ignorant of its own realities, it is flooded by information which either is irrelevant or has little bearing on its future. Similarly, there is much ignorance about what is happening in other Third World regions, particularly about events, recorded in the industrialized world, that are of special importance to the struggle for self-reliant development in Third World countries.

The character of the period chosen

The period studied was from 24 to 27 November 1975. Two events in Europe were the most noteworthy news during the week: the funeral of Franco and the accession to the throne and first acts of King Juan Carlos, including the amnesty decree that provoked opposition both inside and outside Spain; and the left-wing military revolt in Portugal which was crushed between Wednesday and Thursday of the week.

Both events can distort the overall analysis since the information, mainly that from Madrid, has an exaggerated importance when compared with the usual international news value of events in Spain. This has been taken into consideration in Table 2, in order to obtain percentages that in content and balance are nearer a normal news week.

In Latin America, the week is noteworthy for the birth of a new republic on the continent, Surinam. In addition, during this week, there was the US decision not to apply to Venezuela and Ecuador the tariff preferences for Third World products. Among other external events were the international coffee agreement, reached in London, which affected Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica and other Latin American countries, and the announcement in Washington of some relaxation in the restrictions on trade with Cuba. In the region a number of events occurred which are reflected in the media in a cursory or minor way. Among them we find the ministerial contacts between Peru and Bolivia, and between Venezuela and Argentina, as well as the strong attitude taken in Panama by the Torrijo government to the negotiations with the USA about the future of the Panama canal.

News of the Third World was mostly about the Angola situation, the conflict over the Western Sahara, the crisis in Lebanon and the Middle East conflict. But apart from these events, which were reported, events of direct

interest to the Third World were recorded in New York, Geneva and other capitals that, though reported, received a *low-profile treatment* hardly matching their importance for the development of Latin American and Third World countries—which will be reverted to later.

Selecting the newspapers

The basis of the study was a representative selection of South and Central American newspapers, along the lines of previous studies, and in the light of the personal experience of the author of the evolution of the Latin American press in its treatment of international news. This meant the inclusion of newspapers that retain a traditional attitude to the treatment of international information, as in the straight reproduction of news cables largely derived from the transnational agencies that have most influence in the region. In addition, newspapers are represented that have developed a more flexible treatment of international news by using a variety of sources, cables from different information agencies, material from various internationally influential newspapers or, more important, by printing the dispatches of their own correspondents. This is the case of newspapers like the *Excelsior* in Mexico, the Brazilian *O Estado* (São Paulo), and to some extent *El Nacional* in Caracas and *Clarín* in Buenos Aires.

To complement these, there are two newspapers whose ideological posture could be expected to reveal a different approach to the treatment of international news, in their sources for it and in the likelihood of a more careful processing of the press material that comes into their offices. These are Lima's *La Prensa*, whose ownership had recently been transferred from the private to the public sector, and *La Crítica* of Panama.

Thus the final list of newspapers for the study was as follows: *La Prensa* and *Clarín*, Buenos Aires (Argentina); *El Diario*, La Paz (Bolivia); *O Estado*, São Paulo (Brazil); *La Nación*, San José (Costa Rica); *El Nacional*, Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic); *El Comercio*, Quito (Ecuador); *El Imparcial*, Guatemala City (Guatemala); *El Tiempo*, Tegucigalpa (Honduras); *Excelsior* and *El Heraldo*, Mexico City (Mexico); *La Prensa*, Managua (Nicaragua); *La Crítica*, Panama City (Panama); *La Prensa*, Lima (Peru); *El Día*, Montevideo (Uruguay); *El Nacional*, Caracas (Venezuela).

Sources of international news

The study shows that the international information available to Latin American newspapers today offers more possibilities of choice than was the case in the 1960s. Nevertheless, the predominance of certain news agencies, particularly of North American origin, is still very clear.

Out of 1,308 news items, we found that 506 came from UPI, 39 per cent of the international news in the study. In second place came AP, with 270 news items, some 21 per cent of the total news quantified. Thus the two agencies supplied 60 per cent of all the world news published in the sixteen Latin American journals during the period studied (see Table 1).

Table 1 Sources of news items studied

Agency, newspaper, etc.	*Number of items*	*Percentage*
UPI	506	39
AP	270	21
AFP	132	10
Reuter-Latin	123	9
EFE (Spain)	111	8
ANSA (Italy)	55	4
LATIN[1]	49	4
New York Times	31	2
Le Monde	12	1
Washington Post	7	0.5
Prensa Latina (Cuba)	4	0.3
Others	8	0.5
Total	1,308	

1. An agency of large Latin American newspapers.

The figures show some progress since the CIESPAL study was made in the 1960s, which revealed a dependence on these agencies of nearly 80 per cent. However, there is no significant shift in the preponderance of foreign criteria, as may be seen from the way in which the UPI and AP operations analyse, rate and quantify the news. Next in order comes Agence France-Presse (AFP) with 132 news items, 10 per cent of the total. Reuter-Latin follows with 123 news items (9 per cent). Irrespective of the events in Spain during the period under study it is worth noting that, compared with previous studies, the Spanish agency EFE has gained some weight in the total information studied. It contributes 8 per cent of the total recorded news items, more than ANSA's 4 per cent and the 4 per cent of LATIN.

Other agencies of more independent character and showing a better understanding of Third World problems are the Cuban agency Prensa Latina and Inter-Press Service of Rome. They have very little significant impact upon total international news in spite of the fact that they have made big efforts, for more than a decade, to enter the Latin American market for information.

A new element on the Latin American international news scene, compared with earlier studies, is the reproduction of material from newspapers that are internationally influential. The *New York Times* in particular has an important role among those newspapers that are qualified as 'big' in Latin America. Although it is true that, of the news studied, the *New York Times* contributed only 31 news items (2 per cent), these were concerned with important events and were given some prominence in newspapers like *Excelsior* (Mexico), *La Prensa* (Managua), *O Estado* (São Paulo) and *El Nacional* (Caracas). For example, the Madrid news concerning the coronation of Juan Carlos and the circumstances of General Pinochet's visit from Chile, with the lack of sympathy that the Spanish monarchy showed for it, were published by the *New York Times* and prominently reproduced in *O Estado* (São Paulo) and *La Prensa* (Managua). In the latter newspaper the news appeared on the first page, supported by a wire-photo and a banner headline.

The number of agency and other news items published on 24 November 1975 on the front page of the newspapers studied was as follows:

UPI	20
AP	14
Reuter-Latin	4
AFP	3
EFE	1
ANSA	1
New York Times	1

Among the variety of sources for international information, *Le Monde* (Paris) should be noted, with 1 per cent of the total news reproduced, and also the *Washington Post*.

It is true, in spite of earlier qualifications, that there has been some progress in the search for greater *diversity* in world news sources. Dailies like *O Estado* (São Paulo), print a note like the following one on their front page: 'The international news service of *O Estado* is produced with cables from AFP, ANSA, AP, DPA, LATIN, Reuter and UPI.' These agency sources are complemented by material from newspapers and magazines of international influence. Mexico City's *Excelsior* also acknowledged seven sources in a rather better balance of news agencies and newspapers for its news, from Madrid, of Wednesday, 26 November: 'Information from the *New York Times, Le Monde, Washington Post,* AFP, AP, ANSA and Reuter-Latin.'

The analysis reveals the existence of certain journalistic methods that provide a more rounded and better balanced picture of the news, drawing on the different perspectives of the various news agencies at work in the region. This seems to be the normal approach of newspapers like the *Excelsior* and *El Heraldo* from Mexico, *Clarín* from Buenos Aires, and occasionally Lima's *La Prensa* and the Caracas daily, *El Nacional*. There are two styles in this approach: (a) the world news is rewritten by the newspaper in its own perspective, drawing on the accounts of earlier events, quotations and figures provided by a variety of news agencies; (b) the dispatches and news bulletins are accumulated in sequence and published without being reworked.

The difference in these two techniques can be appreciated by comparing, for example, the editing of international affairs by *Clarín* and *O Estado*. In the latter all the material is clearly rewritten using a wide range of techniques, giving it a particular editorial and ideological tone; in *Clarín* we find a tendency to accumulate the dispatches, using in most cases two or three international agencies as sources.

In contrast to this picture of new techniques and innovations for a broader view of international events, we find *old shortcomings of dependence* still persisting in the rest of the press. This is almost the general rule throughout Latin America. Newspapers that come into this category are of two types: (a) those that simply reproduce news bulletins from the agencies, selecting from the output of two or more teletype machines; and (b) those that reproduce cables sent by a single agency, thus depending absolutely on that agency's viewpoint on current international situations.

Examples of the first type are newspapers like *El Comercio* (Quito), *El Día* (Montevideo), *La Nación* (San José), *El Diario* (La Paz), *La Prensa* (Lima) and, to a large extent, *El Nacional* (Caracas).

Newspapers of the second, even more dependent type include the long-standing and influential conservative newspaper *La Prensa* of Buenos Aires, whose sole source of foreign news is UPI. (*La Prensa* was the first link in the chain of penetration of UPI in Latin America, when the latter managed to break the monopoly cartel of European agencies in the 1920s, getting its first contract in Buenos Aires.) Guatemala's *El Imparcial* and *El Tiempo* of Honduras are also exclusively de-

pendent on UPI. This sort of information dependence is quite common in the news outlets of small towns and cities in Latin America. There are hundreds of examples of local newspapers that are the prime source of news in their area. They paint a one-sided picture of world affairs and they have a powerful influence on the local community, which they shape into an ideologically conformist mould. It should also be noted that, even after changes in ownership structure, information dependence lingers on. *La Prensa*, the Lima daily, illustrates this. Despite recent changes in control, as mentioned above, and working within the ideological framework developed in Peru, it is strongly dependent on UPI, choosing UPI cables for its main reports and selecting themes that reflect the character that the transnational news agencies give to reality.

Chile's experience during the Unidad Popular period provided further confirmation of this. In spite of the atmosphere of change prevailing in the country and the efforts to break with economic dependence, the old methods were continued. It is surprising, and disappointing, that newspapers which gave militant support to the movement led by President Allende, like *Puro Chile*, *Clarín* and *Ultima Hora*, continued to draw most of their world news material from the transnational agencies, UPI in particular, without any processing or real perspective. Both the choice of important news themes and the focus on the facts have followed the market-inspired criteria laid down by the agencies that for decades have dominated information in the region.

The journalists and cable editors, in spite of their personal ideological commitment to the process under way in the country, were unable to escape from the behavioural inertia generated by the information model imposed by the agencies.

The geographical bedazzlement

Years of news supply from the dominant agencies have created a pattern in which certain place names turn up in the news again and again. What happens in these places determines the importance and choice of news.

In the period studied, examples are provided by New York's financial crisis, a big fire in Los Angeles and the transport strike in Tokyo, which receive considerable attention in the Latin American press. Such is the inertia created by the dominant information system that New York events—the launching of a balloon in a demonstration organized by municipal employees, for example—are prominently featured. This draws the Latin American reader and journalist away from local news, about his own affairs, as well as away from the major trends underlying international events.

The news classified in the study (items running to 10 or more column/centimetres) made reference to eighty-four different geographical locations. Eighty-three per cent of the total news flow concerned twenty-one of these places (see Table 2).

Madrid plays an important part in this week, as mentioned earlier, because of the funeral of Franco and the coronation of Juan Carlos. Table 2 also includes the percentages of news obtained by omitting Madrid, in order to obtain a geographically 'normal' distribution. The first twenty places account for 79 per cent of the total news, in this adjustment.

Table 2 Places receiving most attention in the news studied (including and excluding Madrid)

Place	*Amount of news (in column/ centimetres)*	*Percentage of news*		*Number of news items printed*	*Average length of item (in column/ centimetres)*
		Including Madrid	*Excluding Madrid*		
Madrid	4,182	18		103	40.6
Lisbon	2,538	11	14	54	47.0
Washington	2,462	11	13	89	27.6
New York	1,043	4.5	6	32	32.5
Beirut	1,028	4.5	5.5	34	30.2
London	879	4	5	33	26.6
Buenos Aires	816	3.5	4	29	28.0
Moscow	656	3	3.5	25	26.2
Paramaribo	629	3	3	23	27.3
Rome	505	2	3	19	26.5
Santiago, Chile	500	2	3	21	23.8
UN, Geneva	474	2	2.5	22	21.5
Detroit	472	2	2.5	16	29.5
Jerusalem-Tel Aviv	459	2	2.5	16	28.6
Bogotá	431	2	2	20	21.5
Paris	429	2	2	16	26.8
Lima	369	1.5	2	14	26.3
La Paz	366	1.5	2	8	45.7
California	276	1	1.5	14	19.7
Hong Kong	185	1	1	8	23.1
Dallas	174	1	1	6	29.0
Subtotal	18,873	82.5	79		
Others	3,958	17.5	21		
TOTAL	22,831	100	100		

The figures confirm the pattern of dependence revealed by other studies during the past decade. The importance of Madrid and Lisbon is understandable in view of the news originating there, which was typically good sales material in the information market. But the week in the USA was not any more or less newsworthy than any other. Nevertheless, out of the total news from eighty-four different places, over 20 per cent was from the USA, chiefly from Washington, New York, Detroit, California and Dallas.

The significance of Detroit resulted from the speech there in which the US Secretary of State admonished Cuba and the USSR for their participation in the Angola conflict. Dallas was present because of one saleable news item: it was twelve years since the assassination there of President Kennedy. This was accompanied by long news dispatches assessing the investigation, continuing the debate about the circumstances of the assassination and its authors, following up an affair that continues to be attractive news material for the Latin American press which, because of the influence of the dominant culture/information system continues to be fascinated by the Kennedys.

These main US news centres are representative of others habitually reported, making up

an information whole in which events in the USA take priority, thus distorting what should be a balanced view of world affairs. Such distortion is not only present in the material coming over the teletype, but also in the total volume that the news media supply to their public, with the effect that the persistent journalistic bombardment has had on the behaviour of those in charge of selecting and handling the international news in Latin American newspapers.

This situation is further exemplified by the fact that the 779 items under study, which add up to 22,831 column/centimetres, are geographically distributed as follows:

Region reported	*Column/centimetres of news*	*Percentage of total*
Western Europe	9,264	40.5
USA	4,634	20.2
Latin America	4,479	19.6
Middle East	1,579	6.9
Asia	837	3.6
Africa	806	3.5
Eastern Europe	701	3.0
UNECLA	531	2.3

We need to recall that the news of Western Europe is overweighted by the events of Madrid and Lisbon. The table brings out clearly the weight of news originating in the USA, the total flow of which is even greater than that originating in Latin America. The poor news standing of Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia are equally eloquent. Asia is low down because Viet-Nam is 'no longer news'.

Surinam, a glaring example

During the period under study, there was one episode which dramatically exposed the distorted character of internal information and the lack of political awareness on the part of those in charge of selecting what should be published in the continent's newspapers: the birth of the Surinam Republic on 25 November 1975.

How is it that the declaration of independence of a country as large as Uruguay or Ecuador and the world's third largest producer of bauxite, a neighbour of Brazil and near neighbour of Venezuela, received so little attention in the Latin American press?

Why did none of the newspapers surveyed consider it important enough to send a special correspondent to cover the news and why did they all limit themselves to the news-agency bulletins, mostly UPI, once again?

Underlying such behaviour is an information model that needs to be totally changed. The Surinam case exposes the continent's inability to look at itself, and its failure at self-interpretation. The easy option was taken, to reproduce a version of the news whose political character was obviously different from that which motivates the Third World countries.

On 24 November, some newspapers published cables giving background information on the new country. Most bore the stamp of UPI, as the following figures show:

	Agency used	*Column/centimetres*	*Number of columns*	*Which page*
La Prensa (Argentina)	UPI	56	3	2
El Imparcial (Guatemala)	UPI	38	2	1
La Prensa (Nicaragua)	Reuter-Latin	27	5	3
La Nacion (Costa Rica)	UPI	27	1	25
La Prensa (Peru)	UPI	24	4	15
El Dia (Uruguay)	UPI	20	1	2
La Critica (Panama)	UPI	15	3	2

In the other newspapers studied, there was *no information whatsoever* on the new country about to be born in Latin America. Could this be explained by the fact that according to the

dominant information practice there is little interest in providing 'advance news'? Let us see what the picture was on the day after the event. On Wednesday, 26 November, among the newspapers studied, the picture, as far as Surinam was concerned, was as follows:

Clarín (Argentina): The Surinam news was given relatively moderate importance; the same coverage as the news of cooling relations between Pinochet and Costa Rica.

La Prensa (Argentina): Two columns of UPI news, inside page.

El Diario (Bolivia): AP news, reduced to 6 cm although on the front page (at the bottom). Given the same importance as a disaster in Tijuana, Mexico, in which twenty houses were destroyed by fire.

O Estado (Brazil): Rewritten news but with evident preponderance of Reuter and UPI; three columns on an inside page of minor importance. An item reprinted from the *New York Times* gives much more importance to programmes in the USSR for developing its eastern territories. Similarly, news of a New York jewel robbery is given greater importance, as well as the Western Sahara situation. Yet Brazil is one of the immediate neighbours of Surinam.

La Nación (Costa Rica): AP news on an inside page, over three columns.

El Comercio (Ecuador): UPI news, front page, 45 cm.

El Tiempo (Honduras): News from UPI over five columns, but on page 16, an unimportant page in the newspaper.

El Heraldo (Mexico): AP news cable over 2 columns (15 cm). Obviously a low-tone item. News about the murder of the Oregon chief of police is given more importance. On another page, a wire-photo from The Hague, showing Queen Juliana signing the decree of independence. The same photograph appeared in some of the other newspapers.

Excelsior (Mexico): Publishes an AP wire-photo on page 1. Inside is a good news summary, based on Reuter, AFP and AP. The only newspaper to report the Third World content of Premier Henk Arron's speech.

La Prensa (Peru): UPI and AFP news on inside pages.

El Día (Uruguay): Two columns of UPI material with a picture, but of relatively less importance than e.g. a warning cable from Israel to Syria.

El Nacional (Venezuela): The cable sent by President Carlos Andrés Pérez appears as home information on the first page. Page 2 carries an average piece, with AP news and a UPI wire-photo.

El Nacional (Dominican Republic), *El Imparcial* (Guatemala), *La Prensa* (Nicaragua) and *La Crítica* (Panama): No news.

In these circumstances, we must ask ourselves how long will it take for Latin American public opinion to realize the importance and implications of the existence of another sovereign country on the continent. Worse still, maybe those who have been informed will understand the event in the light of the views transmitted by the agencies.

On the one hand, in the search for conflict as news, the European agencies, especially AFP, stressed a 'racial tension that clouds the future of the new country'. On the other hand, however, an agreement between the govern-

ment and opposition regarding a political and electoral programme apparently did not have the same 'news value' as the theme of racial conflict on the doorstep. This confirms the persistence of colonial stereotypes in the treatment of the news.

For UPI, the racial question was a matter of 'some disquiet', but it put the accent on the country's main natural resource: bauxite. The stress was, of course, put on the interaction of North American interests with the Latin American reality. The result was the following text:

SURINAM'S ECONOMY RELIES MAINLY ON THE EXPORTATION OF 7 MILLION TONS OF BAUXITE A YEAR, WHICH REPRESENTS ONE-TENTH OF WORLD SUPPLIES AND PROVIDES THE GOVERNMENT WITH AN ESTIMATED YEARLY INCOME OF US $30 MILLION IN TAXES PAID BY ALCOA ALUMINUM COMPANY AND OTHER PRODUCERS. ARRON'S GOVERNMENT HAS ADOPTED A LIBERAL ATTITUDE TOWARD FOREIGN INVESTMENTS IN SURINAM, MAINLY NORTH AMERICAN, WHICH TOTAL SOME US$300 MILLION. NEVERTHELESS ARRON HAS INSISTED THAT ALL NEW ENTERPRISES MUST OBTAIN PARTICIPATION AGREEMENTS.*

Again the classical stereotypes are reiterated. The activities of the North American company—not the work of the people of Surinam—constitute the basis of the economy because they 'provide the government' with a large income. The government's attitude towards foreign investments is described as 'liberal'.

This use of language is now so common that it is not rejected by the reader. It is taken as normal. But UPI, in its main bulletin, which is the most important, did not record the new premier's statement that the new state would adopt a Third World policy with more direct consequences for Latin America and the Caribbean. Similarly, the following declaration was not recorded:

> We shall not let the riches of our land serve to confer greater benefits on others and leave us poor. Our natural resources and our human energy, the capital we dispose of, will be used exclusively for the economic growth of the whole of the nation.

Paramaribo's place in the international geographical list with 629 column/centimetres of news (3 per cent of the total—see Table 2) should be seen in this light and also in terms of the content and form of its news, not merely the figures. Furthermore, since then Paramaribo has not appeared much in the international news.

This example serves to underline two elements in the present analysis: (a) the preponderance of the interpretation given by the transnational news agencies, particularly from North America, to current events; (b) a receptive and unreflecting attitude by the media, in general, towards the flow of news that the teletype pours out as international truth.

Ignorance of the Third World

In the circumstances, it is easy to understand why little or nothing is known about the various events, occurring during the four days, that were the expression of the dominant themes and preoccupations of the Third World.

Thus, for example, during the four days, the following news was released from UN headquarters in Europe:

* It should be noted that all quotations from news agencies have been retranslated from Spanish.

GENEVA (AFP).—THE MAJORITY OF PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS ON SALE IN THE WORLD ARE USELESS OR THEY IMITATE ONE ANOTHER. ACCORDING TO A REPORT PUBLISHED HERE BY THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD), THE REPORT, DRAWN UP AT THE REQUEST OF THE UNCTAD SECRETARY-GENERAL, WAS MADE BY DOCTOR SANJAYA LALL OF THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS.

This cable goes on to reveal that, although medical needs in India can be met by 116 medicines, as many as 15,000 are on sale there. It went on to report that in Brazil, a basic list of 116 products was made, of which only 52 were considered essential, whereas 14,000 were on sale.

The information is important. Besides AFP, Prensa Latina and AP take up the data from the document. AP presents the facts this way:

GENEVA (AP).—DEVELOPING COUNTRIES SHOULD COMBINE THEIR RESOURCES IN ORDER TO SET UP A PHARMACEUTICAL TRADE OF THEIR OWN THAT CAN ADJUST TO THE HEALTH NEEDS—AND PURCHASING POWER—OF THE THIRD WORLD, PROPOSES A REPORT PUBLISHED BY THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT.

Using the same basic document, the Cuban agency Prensa Latina transmits this:

GENEVA (PL).—TRANSNATIONAL MANUFACTURERS OF PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS INUNDATE CAPITALIST MARKETS WITH 25,000 MEDICAL PRODUCTS OF WHICH ONLY ONE PER CENT IS REALLY USEFUL.

In different ways, the three news dispatches bring out the essential elements characterizing the market approach to health of the transnational laboratories. This is a subject of growing disquiet in the Third World; scientific and technical dependence is here coupled with a cultural dependence through which consumption is stimulated by a strong advertising system.

What happened to this news in Latin American newspapers?

Except in Mexico, the statement went practically unnoticed. In Quito (Ecuador), *El Comercio* printed it over two columns which reproduce part of the AFP cable. In Lima, *La Prensa* gave it only a modest 14-cm column, printing the Prensa Latina cable in part.

In this case, the news agencies covered the story. The act of rejection came from the media, from those in charge of selecting international news. Possibly the story touched internal interests very strongly and they preferred to ignore it. This may explain why *O Estado* (São Paulo) did not report it, although this journal does use the AFP and AP services and the story referred directly to Brazil. In the other cases, the explanation can be commonplace: development themes are not 'news' and, therefore, they are not interesting. Because of this stereotype, however, stories that are directly linked to the situation of domination and dependence of centre and periphery are rejected for lack of 'colour'.

There were other cases of this type during the week in question.

The agency EFE transmitted on 23 November a cable, also from Geneva, about the negotiations between oil-producing and Third World countries. *La Prensa* (Nicaragua) published it on Monday the 24th. The text was as follows:

GENEVA (EFE).—THE REPRESENTATIVES OF 48 THIRD WORLD NATIONS ARE CARRYING OUT FRUITFUL NEGO-

TIATIONS WITH OIL-PRODUCING COUNTRIES AT THE UNITED NATIONS PALACE IN GENEVA. FIRST, THEY HAVE LAID DOWN THE FUNDAMENTAL TERMS OF COOPERATION WITH THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES WHICH DO NOT HAVE OIL RESOURCES, BY WHICH THEY WILL MAKE INTEREST-FREE LOANS FOR THE ACQUISITION OF CRUDE OIL, TO INSURE THEM FROM LACK OF SUPPLIES. IN ADDITION, DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WILL BE HELPED TO INTENSIFY THEIR EXPLORATIONS IN SEARCH OF OIL, AND ALSO IN THE REFINERY AND FUEL TRANSPORTATION SECTORS.

None of the other fifteen newspapers refers to this event. Possibly no other agency transmitted it—which is doubtful. Even if this were so, there are six newspapers in the study which make considerable use of EFE for their international pages. Once more, we have to blame traditional news criteria for this lack of information. With such criteria, the agency and media wire-men do not hesitate to give greater importance to the New York opening of an exhibition of eighty photographs by Caroline Kennedy than to the oil agreement.

The same news treatment is given to the meeting of the Group of 77 at the United Nations, organized as part of the preparations for UNCTAD IV. Among other things, it is at this meeting of the Group of 77 that the idea is put forward, by Mexico, of creating a Third World Economic System.

This is news of which Latin America remains ignorant.

The news about the International Coffee Agreement, signed in London during the week, finds some echo in the newspapers of the coffee-producing countries.

The news does not reach countries like Peru, Bolivia or Argentina, however, although the agreement is in harmony with the efforts made by other groups of raw-material-exporting countries to define a common stand in the international market. Because this dimension to the story is not understood, the news is not published; such is the effect of engrained attitudes.

The same thing happens upon the announcement and signature of the general system of tariff preferences made by the US President on 24 November. This excludes Ecuador and Venezuela, countries which, naturally, obtain a version of the fact through a news decision of the agencies, chiefly AP and UPI in New York. However, except for *Excelsior,* not a single newspaper in the study has its own correspondent's account of the matter.

Ignorance of Latin America

Examples of news dependence, like those illustrated above, are innumerable. Latin American countries, although territorial neighbours, communicate the news between themselves according to decisions made by international agencies outside the region.

The uneasiness expressed in 1972 by the Andean Pact countries, when pointing out their concern because the greater volume of international information circulating in their countries was processed outside the region, is still felt.

This is a problem which cannot be dealt with at the level of action and decision of the agencies that operate in Latin America. It has to be faced at a political level, with a serious attempt to break the atomization and dependence. For this reason, the start that has been made within the framework of the Latin American Common Market is important, as a point of

departure towards setting up an information system that will provide the content of 'another news', in harmony with what has been called 'another development', independent of the model that is imposed by the centre on the periphery.

To the examples given earlier, we may add some more events of the week that were disregarded in Latin America, receiving little or no coverage in the newspapers studied:

Costa Rica (San José). Meeting and expert seminar on problems of human rights, organized by the United Nations, attended by high-level judges, prosecutors and magistrates from the Third World and the USA.

Ecuador (Quito). Andean Group meeting on the protection of the artistic heritage, under the auspices of UNDP and Unesco, attended by officials and experts concerned.

Guatemala. Fifth conference of ministers of labour. On the agenda, a round table entitled: 'Transnational Enterprises and Their Impact on Labour Relations and the Role of Ministries of Labour.'

Panama. General Torrijo's declaration, telling US negotiator E. Bunker to bring a serious proposal 'or don't come back'. This news figured prominently in the Panamanian press.

Why was this news not reported in the Latin American press? Wasn't it transmitted by the agencies? This is doubtful, since much of it was newsworthy and of more than limited interest.

Two interpretations are possible:

1. The agency transmissions—especially those from the major transnationals—do not give this sort of news the status or coverage that automatically indicates its importance to those who choose the cables: it has a 'low profile'; it doesn't figure in the headline statements periodically transmitted by teletype.
2. To those who are responsible for deciding what is to be printed, this sort of information is not 'news', as they know it, or else it contains material that they think they had better not make known, to avoid complications.

The conclusion is that there is an obvious manipulation of the international news made available throughout the continent, that serves only to perpetuate the dominant structure.

Professional shortcomings and distortions persist in this area of journalism more than in others, in spite of the importance that international news has for political attitudes which are necessary to the search for a more independent development. This external news domination is the common experience of Latin American countries.

In all but a few newspapers there is no capacity for an independent interpretation of world or regional affairs.

Few newspapers have correspondents of their own in key capitals or send reporters to cover important events.

There is no capacity for relating the many regional or international events. The atomization of information that the agencies have instituted is not questioned.

There is subjection to dominant models in the overemphasis of events of little or no importance to Latin America.

In short, if we consider the extent to which

the front page is dominated by agency material (see Table 1), or the monopoly of photographic news material by AP and UPI wirephotos, we must conclude that the pattern of information has changed very little.

There is a bedazzlement which conditions the practice of editors and wire-men. The old inertia makes them follow certain editorial patterns. The persistence of this stereotyped behaviour confirms the news agencies in their belief that 'this is what the media want'. So the vicious circle of domination perpetuates itself, condemning Latin America to ignorance of its own affairs and cutting it off from the profound changes that are unfolding in the Third World.

[*Translated from Spanish*]

A New World Communication and Information Structure

By Chakravarti Raghavan

The importance and need for a new international communication and information structure transcends the needs of the new international economic order, writes Chakravarti Raghavan, the distinguished Indian journalist. The transnational news agencies and some of the leading organs of public opinion of the transnational power structure have misused their 'freedom of information' in the Third World to present a distorted picture of the Third World both to the industrialized countries and also to the Third World itself. The temptation will be for Third World governments to use the arguments against he abuse of the 'free flow of information' for their own ends. But the operation of providing 'another news' as the essential prerequisite to 'an other development' will need to be completely professional and not politicized and bureaucratized. The author is a past president of the United Nations Correspondents' Association in New York and the former chief editor of the Press Trust of India, recently merged with Samachar. This paper was prepared for the Mexico Seminar on the Role of Information in the New International Order, wich the author was unable to attend.

A new international economic order requires and entails a new world communication and information structure. The *raison d'être* for this is not argued at length here, as it has by now been generally accepted, at least among the Third World countries. However, there is no clear conceptualization and formulation of what is meant by a new communication and information structure and what its implications are. It is obviously intended that such a new structure should represent an improvement on the existing state of affairs in which the mass media are dominated by a few transnationals belonging to the western industrialized countries.

Basic to the present structure is the role of the mass media in a modern industrialized nation. Unprecedented in scope and power, because of technological advances, in their main function the mass media are the central channel through which we learn about what exists, what is important and what is right with the world.[1] They are part of our culture, and reflect and propagate it. And the basic culture of today's prevailing economic order is the emphasis on the individual as a distinct entity and repository of human values. However, and paradoxically, the mass media have created a false consciousness of this through a diminished view of human potential and worth in

general, while seeming to insist on the intrinsic value of each separate human being.

It has been pointed out that US television, for example,

> is directed at a large but well-defined audience, and its symbolic function is the reinforcement of the conviction that the United States is a democracy (the leaders act in accordance with the wishes of the people), its economy is based on free market competition (governed by the laws of supply and demand), and most likely God is alive, White, Male and pro-American. The middle class is the message. The reality that these truths are (with the exception of the existence of God) demonstrably false is the reality which will not appear in the world of television. The reality of the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a white and male but very small élite; the reality of the vacuous irrelevance of the 'democratic' process in the determination of the most important political issues; the control and manipulation of consumption by the imperatives of endlessly expanding production; these are the realities which are not conveyed by the Communications Media.[2]

What is true of US television is even more true of the image that is created by the flow of information from the centre to the periphery. Within the industrialized world, North American society is depicted as the end objective and the most desirable; in the periphery the attainment of the state of western industrial society is the end objective to be achieved, through an imitative development process, and everything in the periphery that is different from that in the centre is a matter for ridicule.

This springs from the value system of that society and its yardsticks to judge merit and achievement.

In addition, the survival of the present order—the consumer society and an expanding industrial system—depends upon the cultivation of a false consciousness of social, economic and political realities. This falsehood is essential if the present order is to remain stable with constantly expanding production and consumption. Expectations must be held at a reasonable level and demand must be directed into appropriate channels. The *sine qua non* of such a system is an economically, socially and politically pliable population; the function of education and information within it is the creation and maintenance of such a population.

Complementary to the emphasis on the individual in the modern industrialized society is the concept of scarcity. What is scarce has a higher market value, is saleable and gives more profits. The individual or group that is able to control it is more successful and ultimately has more power. This concept applies to natural resources, goods and services, and even information and knowledge.

These concepts and modes of the industrialized society are also propagated in the periphery, through the present international communication and information structure. Within the nation, and among nations too, the emphasis is on individual ability. A skill that everyone possesses would not qualify as a measure of the individual's ability. The value system of the industrial society promotes those skills that differentiate rather than those that unite.

This is why, nationally and internationally, the present concept of information puts a premium not on what unites or is common but on what deviates or is scarce. Whence the belief

that men biting dogs are news but not dogs biting men.

This is so for a monocultural nation, and more so for the pluralistic cultures prevalent in the Third World nations.

The present structures of international communication and information, all controlled by the centre, perform two jobs. First, they propagate within the periphery the false consciousness or image of the centre. The fact that those who propagate it have themselves been brought up on it and therefore believe it does not make it any the less false. Second, they look for what is deviant in the cultures of the Third World—for that alone is saleable—and spread it to other parts of the Third World and to the centre.

There is also a third function that is performed; that of 'feedback' from the periphery to the centre. Modern power structures do not only channel a flow of information from the centre to the periphery, they also provide for the centre a flow of information on the reactions and changes or new situations in the periphery. This is a kind of 'surveillance of the environment' in the Third World—monitoring the various changes in conditions taking place that would have an impact on the power of the centre. This feedback is for the benefit of the governments and managements in the centre. A similar service from the centre to the periphery is not, however, available.

All this is conducted under the umbrella of 'freedom of information'.

In this context, the importance and need for a new international communication and information structure transcends the needs of the new international economic order. The new structure is fundamental to the preservation of the pluralistic cultures of the world and to sustain and foster them rather than destroy and remould them in the monoculture of the western (industrialized) world.

The new international communication and information structure must perform several functions:

1. *The information function.* Individuals and groups of individuals, whatever their social unit, all require in today's interdependent world a constant flow of information, giving warning of imminent dangers and indications of rewarding opportunities, to enable them to take meaningful decisions in their everyday life.

   The basic task of the new structure is to provide this information, and to recognize the importance of providing specialized or technical information in a language that is understandable to those who need it.

   Such purveying of information must therefore be free from the temptations and opportunities of manipulation by an élite, whether governmental or non-governmental.
2. *The social function.* The primary emphasis here has to be on the promotion of basic common norms and values, to be understood and adopted. These have to be the concepts and norms of the new international economic order, which has both national and international dimensions.

   This necessarily means that there are social responsibilities, and social norms and codes, to be observed by those in the communication and information structure.
3. *The cultural function.* The new structure

must help to preserve and foster traditions and cultures and recall the accomplishments of the past, and thus enhance national identity and social confidence. At the same time it must promote innovation.

It must foster international understanding by transmission of information on other cultural forms and styles, linking the national with the worldwide dimensions of the culture of man.

The new international communication and information structure also has other functions, such as that of encouraging governments to inform administrators and the public about policies and decisions and to provide for feedback to ensure public participation in government itself, and of promoting the supply of information to management (in administration, industry, trade and elsewhere), for economic affairs, in education and so on.

The first and foremost task of the new structure is to generate among those who function in and shape the mass media—and among policy-makers in general—the will to use the media to these ends.

There will undoubtedly be an outcry that all this would be management or control of news. There will be arguments that it will take away freedom of information—a shibboleth that was made part of global thinking in the immediate post-war era, when the dominant influence was that of the USA.

It may be pointed out to those who would raise such an outcry that even in the western industrialized societies, with their flaunted 'freedoms', the social mores of modern industrial culture have already brought about a (western) management and control of news by the emphasis (from the cradle) on western values and norms.

At the same time, there would of course be a temptation, among Third World government leaders and élites, to use the arguments for a new structure to justify the much narrower objective of control, for the purpose of maintaining and exercising power for its own sake. This has to be resisted. Between a new communication and information structure—to bring about a new national and international egalitarian order—and control of communications to manipulate and hold power in an elitist order, the dividing line is thin but nevertheless sharp.

What is needed is a definition of the broad social and cultural milieu and its norms, and the creation of legal, administrative, political and economic instruments towards these ends. But within these norms, the widest freedom must be given to the practitioners. Attempts to control or manipulate the media, outside these norms and for extraneous purposes, whether overtly or covertly, are ultimately self-defeating and in the long run cause harm even to those wielding power. While broad social constraints for social purposes are justifiable, they cannot be the excuse for separating the media from the masses. 'In reality, whatever the excuse for the attacks made upon them, the amount of freedom which the media enjoy and manage to defend is a yardstick of the amount of genuine democracy which the people enjoy.'[3] It is clear that without the willing participation, at every level, of the vast majority, no new economic order, whether nationally or internationally, can be established. Such participation is surely fundamental to the whole

concept of national and collective self-reliance.

The freedom of information and right to information have to be balanced with the right to communicate and the right of privacy. These individual rights are recognized within most societies, though there may be differences over where the balance should be struck. But what is true of individuals is equally true of societies and cultures and nations. Egalitarianism of the new international economic order is inseparable from egalitarianism nationally. Similarly, concepts applicable within countries in the field of communication and information also have validity internationally.

What does all this mean in practice? We may draw the following conclusions:

Both within and among nations, the present concepts and value systems in which the deviant is the news have to be changed. This goes beyond merely the communication and information structure and calls for changes to be brought about through the educational system, and, of course, by the mass media too, in so far as they also serve as a source of information, knowledge and continuing education.

For this, high professional skills, higher than ever before, will be needed to make this 'other news' interesting and not dull, and credible to the public.

In the Third World, because of massive illiteracy and semi-literacy, audio-visual media play a very important role. But the press and the other printed media, too, have an important role to play that should not be underrated. For they alone reach the middle classes and the ruling élite structures, who too have to be converted. Moreover, the effect of the printed word is less ephemeral than are the effects of radio and television. And to the illiterate and the semi-literate, the literate is something better; what is printed and can be read by the literate has more value and authenticity than the audio-visual, that everyone can see, hear and, we hope, understand.

This need for education and reorientation for another news, true within the national scene, is equally true in the international sphere.

Changes must not only be made in the value system to bring about the presentation of such Other News, but this news must also be available internationally.

The existing channels for the flow of news across national frontiers do not serve these purposes.

It is now generally accepted that transnational economic enterprises have obligations not only to their countries of origin, but also to host countries; they are subject to the laws of host countries and must subserve the interests of those countries.

Since transnationals in the field of news deal with it like any other commodity in trade, surely the transnationals in this field, too, owe obligations to host countries.

The freedom of information has to be balanced with the right to communicate and the right of privacy. Like individuals, societies, nations and cultures too have a right of privacy. While a balance should be struck, internationally as well as within nations, the right of

freedom of information cannot overstep the obligations flowing from other people's right to privacy or right to communicate. Host governments are thus entitled to impose binding obligations on such transnationals.

The non-aligned countries at their meetings in Algiers and Lima have envisaged the creation of a non-aligned news pool to serve the purpose of an alternative channel for the flow of news across international frontiers. However, such a channel should not be an imitation or duplicate of the five major existing western agencies.

Thus the new international channel envisaged should provide the conceptually different type of news or, rather, the various national structures should provide this other news for exchange with or supply to the others and also foster and publish within their country such 'other news' about other countries. The new channel can only be a vehicle for the bilateral and multilateral exchange of this news.

The new international channel must of course have the support, both political and financial, of the Third World countries. But if it is to be effective, it must be freed from the governmental or bureaucratic controls, direct or indirect, that have come to characterize the intergovernmental institutions and structures of the UN system.

It must be run by professional men and women of competence, professional integrity and dedication. Only then will it be credible.

Apart from the conceptual impediments to the flow of 'other news', there are various impediments in the technical and technological communication facilities and the present colonial dependency structures. These should be carefully studied and remedied to facilitate flow of information between the Third World countries and even from the Third World to the industrialized countries of the centre.

One of the characteristics of the present situation is that, even within the industrialized world, a number of countries have been as much at the mercy of the transnationals as the Third World, and have been equally ill served.

The naive idea in the past that understanding will be certain to follow better communication facilities is no longer accepted or prevalent. But while better communication may not necessarily lead to better understanding, there can be no understanding at all without communication. The structuring of the communication channels among Third World countries, and of the Third World with the centre, must be looked at from this viewpoint.

At present, as in trade in commodities, services and goods, flow of communication from the metropolitan centre to each of the periphery countries is cheaper and easier than *inter se* in the periphery or from the periphery to the other industrialized countries of the centre.

Cable costs, and particularly press cable costs between the Third World countries, inter- and intra-regionally, need to be brought down. Third World countries may even consider the introduction of some kind of mutually cheap cable-rate system like the former British Commonwealth penny-rate system.

However, as in the case of preferential

trading systems, such concessions should be available only to genuine Third World national and multinational outlets and not to developed transnationals or their regional subsidiaries. Alternatively, such concessions should be available to transnationals only in so far as they introduce qualitative changes in their coverage of the news of the Third World countries to the Third World and of the Third World to the centre.

For this purpose, regional communication channels linking each of the countries of the region to the others have to be organized and nationally or regionally owned and controlled. They have to be better than the existing situation in which country A is linked with country B in the same region only via a metropolitan centre. In the long run the creation of these new regional infrastructures will stimulate their own traffic to make them economic.

Similarly, the Third World can also provide direct intra-regional links for itself. No doubt in the long run the possibility of the Third World or of the non-aligned group having their own communication satellite or satellites could be envisaged and achieved, though existing Intelsat agreements may prove to be an obstacle.

However the adoption of such high-cost technologies has its own drawbacks.

Apart from communication channels, national structures (national news agencies, etc.) must be evolved in each country where there are none existing now or where the existing ones are really controlled by transnationals. Such structures should become the vehicles for the flow of information into and out of the country. Such structures should be free of governmental and bureaucratic controls and run professionally in such a manner that they evoke respect for their professional competence, integrity and credibility. They should not be vehicles of propaganda.

The present informal non-aligned news pool, run by Tanjug, would have to be considerably enlarged and changed, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

The quality can be improved only when the participating national news agencies provide a meaningful contribution of 'other news' for the pool, without looking upon it as merely a vehicle to propagandize their leaders' speeches and statements. For example, in spite of the known handicaps, the pool could have done a much better job recently of covering the news from the Third World viewpoint, whether, for example, at the seventh special session of the United Nations or the Paris negotiations.

To be effective, there must be more diffusion points than there are now. A regional and intra-regional approach would perhaps better subserve the needs.

The whole operation should be professionalized and not politicized or bureaucratized. Perhaps an element of participatory financing, and the aid of a broad editorial advisory group drawn from various participating agencies, would make the project more useful and fruitful.

But the area where the 'other news' can make a real impact would be through its supply of

features and news 'situationers' rather than of the hitherto customary type of news. It might thereby also be possible to reach the industrialized world through selected media units of centre countries.

The operation would perhaps function more effectively with one or two regional centres (acting both as clearing house and translation centre) and also as intraregional centres.

Notes

1. G. Gerbner, 'Communication and Social Environment', *Scientific American*, Vol. 227, No. 3, 1972, pp. 153–60.
2. L. P. Gross and P. Messaris, 'The Reality of Television Fiction' (paper presented at a meeting of the International Communication Association, Montreal, April 1973) quoted by Gross in *Getting the Message Across*, Paris, Unesco, 1975, pp. 32–3.
3. John A. R. Lee, *Towards Realistic Communication Policies: Recent Trends and Ideas Compiled and Analysed*, Paris, Unesco, 1976, p. 13.

A Third World Feature Service

By Alcino Louis Da Costa

The institutionalization of the non-aligned news pool represents a new hope, writes Alcino Louis Da Costa. However, he continues, let us beware of believing that with this the battle is over. The need is to diversify the means of action to achieve 'another information'. The author suggests one alternative, that of a Third World Feature Service, to supply regular, original material to news agencies, newspapers and radio and TV stations in the Third World and also in the industrialized countries. For the sake of efficiency this would not be a governmental venture. Alcino Louis Da Costa, who was a participant at the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Third World Journalists' Seminar (New York) and at the Mexico seminar, is a member of the executive committee of the Union Catholique Internationale de la Presse and the director of the West African weekly Afrique Nouvelle, *published in Dakar.*

Information, as we know, is part of development policy. By its very nature, it constitutes a powerful instrument for education and public awareness. However, in many Third World countries, there is as yet no general awareness of this role of information.

When imperialism is under discussion, the debate is too often restricted to the political and economic aspects of the phenomenon, overlooking the impact of the information system of the centre, on which we depend. This system belongs to the transnational power structure and the consequences of this are serious.

Thus, converting the Third World countries into consumers, this structure decides the news which are to be delivered to us; it chooses what needs to be transmitted; it fixes the priorities. In the name of the free flow of information, we are inundated with news; the Third World is overwhelmed with it. Yet this quantitative wealth of information that reaches us conceals a qualitative poverty. A study of the impact of the transnational press agencies on the Third World information system leads to one conclusion: politico-cultural drugging. An imperative for liberation presents itself immediately: we need to envisage *another information* in seeking for *alternatives*. There are those who think that this struggle is utopian. It is true, as Armand Mattelart has emphasized, that the transnational enterprises assume a number of economic and ideological functions, that there is a network of political, military and geographical interests that has given birth to new alliances.

Nevertheless, the Third World countries can bring pressure to bear on the content of the message. They are able to exploit the competition between the agencies in order to

achieve some possibility of action. It is a matter of developing the political will to release the process of giving content to a new conception of information.

But the denunciation of the drugging effects of the transnational press agencies has alerted their attention and the struggle will be harsh. Harsh because this is a sensitive area of the transnational power structure and because each time that attempts have been made to bring about change they have struck against a wall. Very powerful interests are involved: yet we must of necessity manage to set up a new international order for information.

This transformation can only come from the Third World, which suffers most from the present situation; moreover it would be useless to seek a new international economic order if we do not manage to elaborate and gain acceptance for *another information*.

In reflecting on what needs to be done, we realize the importance of communal and concerted actions. Technological difficulties are often evoked as an insurmountable barrier. And yet, even in the Third World, there are examples of the mastery and utilization of advanced technology. These are the exceptions that confirm the rule of poverty. The aim therefore remains, as Fernando Reyes Matta has put it, 'to seek the technological level that will enable us to find at the horizontal level the means of developing an autonomous information'.

There are an increasing number of examples of efforts being made, with varying degrees of success. The Union of Arab Agencies and the Union of African News Agencies have not been models of regularity or efficiency. Contrariwise, the results achieved by Tunis Afrique Presse, of Algérie Presse Service, of Prensa Latina, of Interpress Service and of Maghreb Arabe Presse have been more striking, because these agencies have attempted, at the technical level, to set up a framework from which they may all benefit.

In spite of everything, the circulation of information among Third World countries is poor; interregional cooperation is lacking dynamism in this area. It does not go very far. If only the governments were to make it a point of honour to ensure the practical application of the bilateral information agreements, the situation would rapidly evolve.

The institutionalization of the non-aligned news pool represents a new hope. The fact that it has received approbation at a high level of decision-making suggests that a certain collective consciousness is being forged. It is an initiative that is going to accelerate the development of the concept of *another information*. However, let us beware of believing that with this the battle is over. The pool will not be able to exclude the transnational agencies. Many people tend to look upon imperialism in a simplified way, but imperialism is increasingly penetrating Third World institutions indirectly, through its accomplices.

Let us then diversify our means of action in trying to respond to certain elementary objectives, for the great misery of the Third World is that its members know so little about each other. To reinforce our solidarity, it is necessary to undertake a systematic campaign of reciprocal information. One means of choice is through *features*.

Unlike the pool or plans to set up regional or

continental agencies, the establishment of a Third World Feature Service does not require any major investment, nor does it depend on technology.

What does it consist of? Quite simply, it would be to supply regularly to the agencies, newspapers and radio and TV stations material that was immediately utilizable. This material would be, for the most part, original, because the information transnationals are not able to compete successfully in this field.

The creation of a feature service presupposes certain requirements. First, it calls for committed journalists. Those who are called to collaborate in this plan would thus be the militants of a *new information*, because they will have understood the breadth of the struggle and of the effort needed for a new international order in every sphere. This faith in action will be accompanied by a competence of almost scientific rigour so that the service will acquire its capital of *credibility*.

Then it will be necessary to give the service such scope that the whole of the Third World feels concerned. The common denominator is *objectivity*. Much can be done through vigilance.

The service should not give privileged treatment to certain sectors; it should embrace all areas of activity. Some examples may be given. Algeria will be the host for the third African Games during the summer of 1978. The service ought to be able to provide features on the history of the games, on the great athletes that have distinguished themselves in them, on the preparations made by Algeria, on the participating countries and the regulations foreseen. The International Coffee Organization is organizing a high-level conference. The reaction of the service could be to prepare articles on the market situation, on the point of view of the producers and with analyses of earlier negotiations. A group of Third World states decides to create an economic union—the service would immediately prepare a background feature stressing the aspects that justify a close cooperation.

The examples that might be cited are endless and it should not be forgotten that the feature service would have a role to play in explaining the positions of the Third World in the major economic and political negotiations.

At the practical level, certain structures are necessary. First there would be need for a *coordinating centre*, directed by experienced and politically mature journalists. They would have the task of planning the articles to be written, in the light of the news as it breaks and also of the activities that are planned in the world. Translators would be employed at the centre. It would be necessary to envisage five languages: English, French, Arabic, Spanish and Portuguese. The distribution sector would have the function of supplying all clients according to demand.

Then there would be need for a *network of correspondents*. At the beginning, it would be difficult to cover systematically all the countries of the Third World, but priority would be given to certain capitals housing the headquarters of subregional, regional or continental institutions, and also to those capitals that play a major political role.

The setting up of the service would be preceded by an information campaign so that the press organs of the periphery would be aware

that they had at their disposal the means of publishing news about states on the periphery and that this news was coming from a source different from that of the transnational press agencies.

For the sake of efficiency, the Third World feature service would not be governmental, from fear that it would relapse into bureaucratic lethargy or suffer from political pressures. The idea will make its way among people of good will who are conscious of the extent to which the impact of the transnational agencies is injurious to our self-respect and our development.

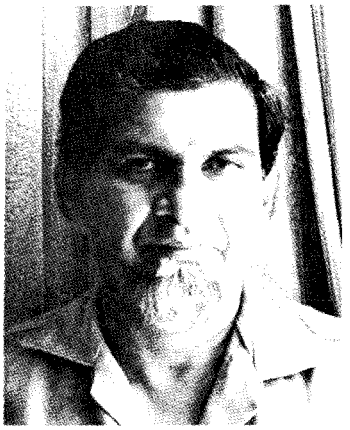
This enterprise is so simple that it could be launched quickly enough already, on a small scale, in order to test the different mechanisms involved. We have a place to take here, for, after all, the press in the Third World is developing; the service will even help in this expansion in providing the material that readers, listeners and TV viewers have for so long been waiting for. Better still, the organs of the industrialized countries will also be interested, because their clients would like to know more about the Third World.

[*Translated from French*]

The Language of the Oracle: English as a Vehicle of Dependence

By Fred de Silva

This journal is published in English. A significant part of the international dialogue and discussion for another development is also conducted in this language, in the Third World as elsewhere. In a Third World country English is also, as Fred de Silva points out, the instrument used to maintain dominating positions. 'The internal communication gap in the country is likely to be further widened by the threat of modern satellite communications to transform the world into a single global village', he adds. It will be necessary, even if English, and other languages of the centre, are to continue to be used as an international communications bridge, to give more serious consideration to the translation into and from the languages of the world's many minorities of all those linguistic expressions that are the index to the cultural inheritance and vitality of dominated peoples everywhere. The Mexico seminar, for which this paper was prepared, was unfortunately unable to benefit from the presence of Fred de Silva, whose sudden death shocked all his many friends. Fred de Silva, who was a participant at the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Third World Journalists' Seminar, was editor of the Ceylon Daily News.



'Fleet Street was the model on which Sri Lanka journalism came to be based in the formative years. It was unfortunate but it was inevitable since it was from the early British owners of the press in this country that the national-minded leaders of opinion in their day had to wrest control of the newspapers against prohibitive odds. The part that this newspaper [the *Ceylon Daily News*] played in the ultimate liberation of the printed media from London's commercial apron strings will not be news to readers of an older generation but it is worth recalling today in the context of an even more crucial liberation movement that is now afoot in the Third World.

'This movement is towards the decolonisation of information. We take pride that the *Daily News* is once again in the forefront in the long and ardous campaign to gain control of the means to inform our own people of what is happening in the world around us, without falling prey to the insidious and insistent brainwashing to which a handful of monopolistic, western-based news sources daily subject us, of the Third World, by virtue of their immense technological and organisational superiority. It is pertinent to remind ourselves that this information dependence is also part of the linguistic hegemony which our erstwhile rulers established, and which unfortunately few

ex-colonial territories have been wholly able or willing to eradicate.

'The mythology of Fleet Street is one of the most colourful and durable remnants of that hegemony. Our pathetic eagerness to invest anything emanating from that inky incunabula with the virtues of free expression, objective reporting and even ultimate truth is a measure of our naivety in these matters. Not even a decade and more of inspired misinformation about what has been going on in Vietnam, Africa, China—to name only a few of the most exasperating examples—and even what is happening just across the Palk Strait in neighbouring India seems to have dented our faith in the infallibility of Reuter and the *Time* magazine.

'In recent months the newspaper you are reading has tried to wean its readers away from the habit of a lifetime by presenting other views than those emanating from these familiar sources, and giving utterance to authoritative voices of the Third World or to those of equally authoritative sympathisers with the aspirations of that neglected world. We believe that the cause of the developing countries which constitute that world will best be served by helping them to understand their present predicament and obtain control of their resources and eventually their own destiny. This we have been trying hard to do, because the trials and tribulations of development do not make the kind of exciting reading that Fleet Street standards have imposed on us.

'How refreshing, therefore, to come across the supporting views of a young Fleet Street aspirant like Michael Dobbs whose indictment of those self-same standards we reproduced on this page yesterday. A Reuter man himself, he recounts the depressing experience of hawking around an award he won for a proposal to report on development in villages in Africa and Asia. His mission in that so-called Mecca of investigative journalism took him from one editorial door to another without finding a single taker. The general attitude seems to have been: "Yes, we know it affects the lives of millions of our fellow human beings—but it does not sell newspapers." The principal London *Times* wet blanket in the form of a Deputy Editor told him bluntly: "I think you will be wasting your time."

'If it is any consolation to defenders of the Fleet Street style of development coverage, it is worth recording that attitudes were no different in India in Gandhiji's time. Even some readers of his journal *Harijan* took exception to the way in which its columns were occupied with the development of village industries schemes and even accused it of dullness and monotony in presentation. The Mahatma replied: "The removal of untouchability is not a popular cause.... It is a mighty social reform. But it cannot furnish sensations. It is a plodder's work. And record of the work of plodders requires editorial gifts of a high order to make it interesting. Therefore the only way before those who are intimately connected with the Harijan movement is to continue to work with an ever increasing faith in the cause and leave the result to take care of itself.

'Michael Dobbs comes to much the same conclusion after his tour of Fleet Street which "has made me more conscious of the responsibility that falls on newspapers and journalists in creating interest. Development is thought to

be dull ... in fact it is about people and conflict—two prime ingredients, I would have thought, for good journalism. Who knows? It might even sell a few newspapers.'' '

(*Ceylon Daily News* editorial, 16 March 1976)

This editorial is a good take-off point for any discussion of the situation about information in Sri Lanka, and particularly the aspect of the larger discussion which is the subject of this paper.

Since one of the principal aims of this seminar is to promote studies and discussions that will eventually extend the process of decolonization now taking place in the Third World to the totally neglected field of information, the editorial serves the dual purpose of showing that process in actual action, as well as of providing a rationale, as far as Sri Lanka is concerned, for such action.

Twenty-eight years after Sri Lanka achieved political independence from Britain and presumably started on a path of decolonization, our progress towards the liberation of information has been practically non-existent. The rapid development of modern communication media, culminating in the achievement of instant global coverage via the satellite network, threatens to entrench the old monopolistic information agencies more firmly than ever before in their almost unchallenged position. A recent Unesco survey of mass media in 200 countries (including Sri Lanka) revealed that there are five giant news agencies, which are no more than transnationals, dominating the world's information grid.

Sri Lanka's Press Trust (in collaboration with Reuters) is among ninety national agencies which are ill-disguised branch offices linked in a subservient and colonial relationship to their dominant partner in the former imperial headquarters. Reuter of London still dictates the shape, substance and stress bestowed on every item of news flowing both inwards and outwards from Sri Lanka. Many studies could be devoted to examining the daily distortions of the information and comment that is supplied to our readers about events in the world for over half a century.

It is useful to recall briefly here why the process of brain-washing has been endured without resistance or protest for so long. Even today, it is surprising to note how passive and indifferent are our rulers to the need for decolonizing information services. By rulers, I mean both the political leadership (which has regularly changed hands between right- and left-wing parties) and the English-educated minority who inherited the infrastructure of power from the former British rulers, and now inherit it from each other.

The dominance of the English-educated community was due to the confidence which was placed in it by the few British administrators, the many British entrepreneurs in the country's biggest export industry, tea, and the British bank managers engaged in keeping a lucrative plantation economy in good order. Missionary schools (where even the use of the national language in conversation was taboo) produced over the years no more than the clerical help needed to run the government and mercantile services, watched over of course by British officials.

It is true that in recent years the Sinhala language, which is the repository of a cultural

tradition over 2000 years old and is spoken by the vast majority of the people, has been enthroned as the country's official language. Twenty years after the Sinhala-speaking masses elected a government, which for the first time (in 1956) rallied the progressive forces of the country, it is equally true that the English language and the English-speaking class have in each case suffered only token losses, without losing any ground as far as their true influence is concerned.

In a country whose population now approaches 14 millions, not even 5 per cent can be identified as English-educated or English-speaking. The numbers involved are small enough for every member of this exclusive 'club' to have heard of, if not to have actually met, a large cross section of these 'club' members in the country. The more senior members now in the public services, the professions and in top mercantile positions are the surviving members of the original clique which took over from the departing British rulers.

For the last two decades secondary education has been conducted in the national language. For a decade, university education too has followed suit. But the domination of the English language has continued as before, despite this change. The English-educated class has retained till very recently the advantage it always had in finding jobs for its youthful aspirants, especially outside the state sector. There are simply not enough books available in the Sinhala language for the needs of secondary education, not to speak of university and professional studies, so that it is still the trick of using the English language freely that counts.

The microscopic minority that speaks English swears by English-language textbooks, especially if they are of Anglo-Saxon origin. As long as it does so in the present context, it drags the entire national community into the same blind alley. Especially at the university, there is still the sorry spectacle of the new generations of Sinhala educated youth who are forced to learn by rote from well-thumbed translations of outdated British textbooks which are among the prized collections of every campus library. Nearly thirty years after the British went away and twenty years after Sinhala was restored as the medium of instruction, the English language therefore retains a grip on the higher-education system. The end products can be expected sooner or later to want to acquire some passing skill in the English language and to seek to 'complete' their education by reading the newspapers and magazines of Anglo-Saxon and United States origin.

The new literati thus find themselves in a subservient relationship not only to their former masters but to their present masters, who are able by virtue of their skill in the English language to retain every advantage. While it has remained tied to the apron strings of foreign information media, the English-speaking class has also failed to communicate meaningfully with the masses. The economic rewards which accrued to this class were so great that it lived a life totally alienated from the impoverished peasantry. The overwhelming majority of the big taxpayers were from this exclusive club and collectively wielded enormous power in the country, then as now.

The taxes have grown heavier and inflation

has pushed the cost of living to levels which could not have been imagined a few years ago. It is the English-educated class which has to take most of the blame for the ill-conceived and tremendously wasteful development adventures of the post-independence era. But this same class continues to be the least affected by the tragic present sequel of large-scale educated unemployment, the frightening backlog in housing, school equipment, transport and communication facilities and so on. A substantial boom in the country's earnings from the export of rubber, tea and coconut during the Korean war was frittered away in a spending spree which allowed the English-educated class to live it up in the style of their erstwhile colonial masters. The millions which could have been used to develop the infrastructure necessary for the 'big leap' towards national self-reliance went down the drain. If the language barrier had not acted as a communication gap between the microscopic minority and the majority of the people, the story might have been different in some degree.

It is worth quoting at some length from an article I wrote several years ago, in 1967, when I examined the crisis in communication which keeps our English-educated apart from the masses:

'It is the crisis in communications, the fact that English is the language of the Oracle, which makes them a race apart, the master-race, for ever destined to take the head of the table, enjoy the fat of the land. By a process of mystification, they have been able to persuade the slaves that now the White Man has gone, they are their own masters, they own the country, and they alone have the right to choose who shall run it for them.

'In the belief that they must choose wisely—and wisdom still being the monopoly of those who can read impressive foreign books on law, medicine, accounts, administration, engineering and a hundred other abstruse subjects which cannot be found in Sinhala—they return the élite to power. Nobody can deny that the English-educated class has indeed acquired the knowledge and techniques that are needed to manage the affairs of a modern country.

'But what they cannot do is to communicate this expertise, relate their knowledge to our backward country or tell the people precisely what they are doing. It is this failure to communicate which builds tensions, doubts and misgivings among the under-privileged. That, and the huge income gap between the Top People and the rest. Only some 125,000 persons are in the tax-paying class, and the overwhelming majority of returns are made in English by the English-educated élite.

'Then, there is the staggering disparity in salaries, the yawning gap between 6,000 rupees and 60. Economists will talk of wage rates and prices, the brain drain and all that, collective bargainers will retain highly paid lawyers to negotiate a settlement, labour will band itself into unions to fight for its rights, but how can such a staggering social chasm be bridged? It is the kind of social tension and dissatisfaction which led to 1956 and the formation of the so-called Pancha Maha Balavegaya, the joint front of Ceylon's under-privileged, representing the forces of Sangha, Veda, Guru, Govi

and Kamkaru (that is, the Buddhist clergy, the Ayurvedics, the village teachers, the peasants and of course the workers).

'Since 1956, the impact of those forces, sometimes in unison but more often each in its respective sector, has been pushing successive governments, now this way, now that, in search of palliatives to redress the balance. Can the balance ever be restored whilst knowledge remains the monopoly of so few, as long as English remains the language of the rulers?

'There has lately been a lot of airy talk about laying the foundations of national unity: is it possible to preach sermons on brotherhood in the very language that the colonialists used to divide and subjugate the people, and which, anyway, only the 5 per cent who are already converted are able to understand? Is it possible to set our people free with (instead of from) the shackles of the past?

'Think for a moment: how can the co-operation of the people be enlisted in the erstwhile language of command and coercion? Will it not be indiscipline and sabotage that such stupid tactics conjure up: a disobedient genie who will not do its master's bidding?'

All that is now part of the history of the colonies. I say history, because the colonial world had already moved on to another phase of its evolution: the phase of 'decolonization'. Everywhere in Africa and Asia where European expansion has been halted and wherever a simulacrum of independence has been achieved, the reaction is setting in, the colonizing process is being put into reverse gear.

The tactics of colonialism have been fully exposed as a conscious policy of multiplying enmities and divisions, of creating new classes and fostering racial and other prejudices, of intensifying moral and spiritual fragmentation of the subjugated societies.

So-called tribal frictions and rivalries that are now being spotlighted in the world's headlines are a legacy of this policy in Africa. In its own way, Sri Lanka too is a classic example of this technique of national demoralization. Here as in colonial countries elsewhere, the art of 'divide and rule' which the colonialists practised so skilfully culminated in the creation of the English-speaking élite.

In a memorable diatribe he penned as an introduction to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, Jean-Paul Sartre has described the process of 'manufacture' of the native élite. He writes:

> They picked out promising adolescents; they branded them, as with a red-hot iron, with the principles of western culture; they stuffed their mouths full of high-sounding phrases, grand glutinous words that stuck to their teeth. After a short stay in the mother country they were sent home, white-washed. These walking lies had nothing to say to their brothers; they only echoed. From Paris, from London, from Amsterdam we would utter the words 'Parthenon! Brotherhood!' and somewhere in Asia or Africa lips would open '. . .thenon! . . .therhood!'. It was the golden age.

It was indeed the golden age of our middle class, of apeing the west. It was the age of phoney accents and borrowed feathers. What a devastatingly candid picture of our proselytization. It was the age when Commercialism replaced Buddhism as the single biggest influence in our lives.

In many Asian and African countries, this golden age of mimicry is giving place to upheavals and violence. We pride ourselves that we are different. Perhaps we are: we make excellent clubmen, we know how to play the game. We can be relied on to make smooth transitions even in the most trying situations: a little ho-ha perhaps, nothing to write home about—but definitely no blood and only distant thunder.

'We' in the foregoing paragraph, needless to say, refers to the English-educated élite. The rest don't matter! This is a dangerous type of complacency. It leads to all kinds of stupid errors and omissions and takings for granted. It leads to double standards, imperceptible to those who apply them, of course, but likely to become intolerable if applied too blatantly.

A comparison of our legal procedure with the English system should suffice to make my meaning clear. The English have a strong sense of law and order. In a recent case which came up before a London judge, the defendant was a deaf person. In order that his disability might not handicap his defence, a hearing device was fitted up in the court room.

When in the course of the trial a technical hitch put the device out of action, the judge ordered that they adjourn to another court where the hearing aid would function normally again, remarking that 'justice must not only be seen to be done but also be heard to be done'.

Our admiration for the stout common sense and essential humanism of this ruling must, however, be tempered by nagging afterthoughts about the kind of facilities which colonial law-givers left as their legacy in some colonial countries. I refer to the fact that non-English-educated offenders continue even to this day to be tried in these countries and sentenced—not merely without hearing very much of what is being said, but worse, without being able to understand even if they heard!

Perhaps it is time to adapt the learned English judge's obiter dictum with the final admonition that, above all, justice must be 'understood' to be done.

Few persons who think and work in English are in a position to notice these obvious discrepancies. Yet nothing underscores the privileges attached to a knowledge of English more ostentatiously than income differentials. An English education is looked upon as an investment, and it is certainly no less when it comes to the pay-off.

In a telling analysis of his problem which he made in Parliament in 1960 the late Philip Gunawardona put it this way:

> The fact that new ideas and learning mostly come to our country through a foreign language creates new barriers between the educated élite and the unsophisticated people. The new ideas and learning do not naturally seep down; they fail to become part of the heritage and consciousness of the people, and they remain a monopoly of the few from which they draw 'rent'.

In Sri Lanka no less than in the African territories, the aftermath of colonialism has left a widening gap between the educated élite and the common people, which is certainly at its widest in respect of earning capacity. Brown Sahibs, trained and ready to replace the white man when he relinquishes his self-styled burden, do not directly inherit the commercial legacy which their old masters leave behind.

They are only trained to act as caretakers, middlemen and honest brokers. They do not initiate business, become captains of commerce in their turn.

They are happy—and indeed consider it a privilege—just to draw 'rent' from their intellectual and technical capital, which is the knowledge they acquired while going through college and university. They become lawyers, doctors, planters, engineers, agents for this, that and the other foreign product, accountants and administrators of one kind or another.

In these professional fields it would be no exaggeration to say that they collectively share up to 80 per cent of our earned income. In their new-found self-esteem, these representatives of the national élite are all too ready to be convinced that they have only to step into the boots of the repatriated rulers to draw the same dividends, enjoy equal privileges. Do they in fact? Or do they merely fulfil their historical function as the former Bossman's business agent, the manager of his enterprises?

The dominance of the English language cannot be more complete. It must be said that, in the years since these words were written, the situation has not changed in essence. The ruling class in Sri Lanka and for that matter even the masses in the country have still to awaken to the crisis of intra-national communication and the language barrier which is at the bottom of the failure to decolonize our society. Meanwhile the internal communication gap in the country is likely to be further widened by the threat of modern satellite communications to transform the world into a single global village. In 1970, I wrote in the *Ceylon Daily News* about 'the threat they forgot' at the Non-aligned Summit Conference in Lusaka as follows:

'Soon—unless the seriousness of the threat is recognised and met in time—communications satellites will be dictating the pattern of the world's culture, if not its thought. This is not a fanciful figure of speech or a deliberate over-exaggeration. Look what happened when the United States first landed men on the moon. Even the tremendous feat of computerisation which brought these modern heroes safely back to earth cannot quite match the terrifying implications of the kind of mass communications which brought every laboured step of their lunar explorations to hundreds of millions of earth watchers (and listeners) on five continents.

'Thinking back soberly on this second feat—which has scarcely been paralleled in the history of human communication—one is struck at once by the extraordinary impact that such a mass concentration of human attention can have for good or ill. Glued to their television and other receiving sets for the duration of the Apollo 11 flight, men became part of a willingly captive audience.

'Imagine the same resources for holding the world's attention—or conversely, for diverting it from what is inconvenient—being used on the same mass scale to sell a particular political idea or, for that matter, branded consumer goods—Coca Cola for example! And believe me, the ubiquitous stuff is selling pretty well without it.'