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NATIONAL COMMUNICATION POLICIES IN LATIN AMERICA:
A GLANCE AT THE FIRST STEPS

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Within the past twenty years, there has developed a field called policy sciences. And just recently, there emerges a focus on communication policy sciences. By policy we mean both the development of rules, regulations and guidelines that direct human communication behavior and the directives that determine the development and distribution of technology.

L. S. Harms

As communication have gradually occupied an ever more vital role in society it has been an objective necessity to adopt a policy orientation in this field just as similar development has caused policy orientation towards several other aspects of the socio-economic system.

K. Nordenstreng

Since the effectiveness and efficiency of development programs depend upon a balanced application of communication, material, and energy inputs, communication policy and planning is essential in development planning.

S. A. Rahim

A communications-cultural policy which does not include practice --and practice in the act of establishing the policy to begin with -- cannot be considered as a policy for developing countries.

P. Freire

INTRODUCTION

THE NATURE OF NATIONAL COMMUNICATION POLICIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

This essay is a summary account of the initial phase of the process through which the existence of National Communication Policies is being fostered in Latin America. It is a description and an analysis of the chief steps taken so far in that direction as well as of the immediate outlook on the matter.

The first section deals with the concept of overall national communication policies and with the importance of these instruments for the less developed countries. The second enumerates some policy decisions taken so far to bring about inter-American coordination of communication activities, mostly among countries in the Andean sub-region of Latin America. The third consists of an overview of the experiences of three countries -- Perú, Venezuela and Brazil -- which have spontaneously made significant advancements towards the formulation and implementation of national communication policies. The fourth reviews the international promotion of the initiative, following its evolution across several recent meetings of experts -- mostly sponsored by Unesco -- who provided some theoretical basis for the movement. The fifth shows the opposition to the pro-policy movement on the part of international media owner organizations. And the sixth and last section depicts the confrontation of philosophies about the role of mass communication between status quo oriented and reform minded sectors, relating this to the historical next steps in the process: the June 1976 Intergovernmental Conference on National Communication Policies for Latin America and the Caribbean to be held in Ecuador under Unesco's auspices.

THE NATURE OF NATIONAL COMMUNICATION POLICIES FOR

DEVELOPMENT .

A National Communication Policy is an integrated, explicit and durable set of partial communication policies harmonized into a consistent body of principles and norms addressed to guiding the behavior of the institutions specialized in handling the overall communication process in a country.

Partial communication policies are sets of isolated behavioral prescriptions concerned only with given parts or aspects of the system and process of social communication. These policies are formulated, fragmentarily and independently by owners of communication media, by communication professionals and by government authorities, each naturally responding to their respective interests. As such, they often come in conflict with one another.

A democratic National Communication Policy makes the partial policies necessarily explicit, seeks to integrate them by reaching consensus or conciliation, and aims at having a reasonably sustained duration, subject however to continuous evaluation and adjustment.

The State's Leading Role

Understandably, the leading role in the formulation of a National Communication Policy is to be played by the State. For the democratic State, representative of the nation's community, is the public institution endowed with legitimate and appropriate power to formulate the policy and implement it on behalf of said national collectivity and for the benefit of each and everyone of its components. As such, the State is to perform the roles of stimulator, inhibitor, articulator and arbiter, just as it already uncontestedly does in other policy domains. It has the right and the duty to do so.

National Communication Policies constitute an innovation which is a newcomer in the in itself young art of formal planning for national development. All over the world, the State --capitalist, communist, or other-- already presides over broad policy making in numerous areas of economic, cultural and political activity. But still just a few countries in the world, and only very recently, seem to have come to grips with the need for National Communication Policies.

The Latin American countries themselves have evidently had for many years national policies on imports and exports, credit, foreign relations and national defense, to name but a few. More recently, they have built policies on health,

taxation and land reform, among others. And it is only in the last few years that several of them have started to formulate national policies for science and technology, education, and culture.

The Need for Communication Policies in the Underdeveloped World

These countries are now beginning to think about having overall National Communication Policies. It is logical that they do so, for --contrary to the situation of the world's industrial powers-- the less developed lands demand policy making on communication as a tool to attain development. This has been clearly perceived, for instance, by West Germany's Minister of Economic Cooperation, Egon Bahr:

> For the development of the Third World, media policy is a
> task which stands immediately after that of securing food
> and has, at least, the same importance as economic, mone-
> tary and demographic policy /_6_, p. 20.

Wilbur Schramm, an internationally known development communication specialist, agrees: "... after the basic economic and political questions are decided ---after a country decides how fast it wants to move, and what kind of national pattern it wants to develop towards --then it faces a series of ongoing strategic decisions directly on communication use (Schramm /87, p. 31). Schramm further feels that "the really basic strategies of developmental communication are not merely communication strategies but are economic and political, and grounded deep in the nature of society" (Schramm /87, p. 27). This is why the national development policies and plans must have derivative and directly concomitant national communication policies since "in the absence of a clear national policy on any given issue, the communicator is in the position of a swimmer treading water just to keep from going under; he is unable to strike out in any direction" (Davison and George /25, pp. 437-438)

Pool has underlined four central policy issues which, in his view, most developing countries must make major decisions on. First, how much of their scarce resources ought to be invested in building the country's mass media system. Second, what roles must be assigned to the public sector and which to the private. Third, how much freedom is to be allowed or how much control is to be exerted on the performance of the communication system. And fourth, how much uniformity is to be required and how much diversity is to be permitted (Pool/75, 234)

The very success or failure of development policies, plans and actions can be seen in these countries as considerably dependent upon communication policies, plans and actions. Indeed, as has been stressed by, inter alia, Dube:

> A series of costly and avoidable failures has shown the plan-
> ner that even well-drawn projects of modernization fail to
> register with the people and to produce the desired results
> unless they are supported by an imaginative, adequate, and
> effective communication program......./28 , p. 93.

Just as no society can exist without communication, national development
based upon social change cannot take place without communication being organ-
ized in the service of the nation's goals. And organization, the rational and or-
derly investment of energy and resources, begins with policy --the polar opposite
to improvisation and anarchy.

The Opposition to Policies and Plans

However, until recently, and up to a point still today in some places, the
very organization of national development by the State, through national policies
and plans is objected to by tradition-bent circles --conservative and liberal-- in
Latin America. They claim that this is an undesirable and undemocratic inter-
vention of the government in the domain of private interests and into what is
taken to be the natural and free evolution or progress of a country. Relatedly
--and this is another indicator of the inseparability of society and communication--
those circles are already objecting the initial step,taking place in these lands to
formulate national communication policies and plans for development. A pertinent
testimony by Brazil's Minister of Communication, Euclides Quandt de Oliveira, is
telling:

> It can be said that only recently, with the enormous mass
> of knowledge accumulated and the social duty conscious-
> ness of the State before the Nation, it became a govern-
> ment principle to endeavor for organized development or,
> better, for a planned development adequate to everything
> and to all in the interest of the common good (Oliveira
> /57 p. 5)

The Minister added: "However, among us, Brazilians, efforts are already
being done, and some with success, in the direction of designing convenient global
and sectorial policies coherently envolving the whole system and the diverse phases
of the economic and social processes" (Oliveira /57 , p. 9). By contrast, Minis-
ter Oliveira deplored that:

> ...in what refers to mass communication, measures to
> rationalize their utilization are not felt yet. Media con-
> trolled by the Government, in different organs, although
> in a small number, still are not being employed coordinatedly.

On the other hand, absolute liberalism, which is the
predominant note in the private area of mass communi-
cation, determines that this media primordially take care
of singular objectives, making difficult their utilization
in the service of the broader objection of social develop-
ment /57, p. 9.

To be sure, a society which does not want to change in general will pre-
vent changes from occurring in the extant communication system and process. In-
versely, a society seeking generalized change should necessarily include in that
process substantial changes in communication. According to joint Latin American
presidential level statements, all countries in the region want social change as a
pre-requisite for attaining general national development. Nevertheless, as Dube
observed of the underdeveloped nations in general:

Little effort appears to have been made so far in these
countries to formulate a long-term image and value-
oriented policy aimed at building certain positive and
forward-looking images and at inculcating attitudes con-
ducive to modernization. In other words, the importance
of communication as valuable social overhead is as yet
not sufficiently recognized /28, p. 93.

This essay is a succint account of that "little effort" in Latin America "so
far".

COMMUNICATION POLICIES FOR LATIN AMERICAN INTEGRATION

Perhaps slightly before the preocupation with national communication policies
reached a noticeable point in Latin America at the country-level, the preocupa-
tion with the roles of communication in fostering integration among the States of
this region was already in the scene. For instance, in 1967 the Institute for the
Integration of Latin America (INTAL), a branch of the Inter-American Develop-
ment Bank, held a seminar in Buenos Aireas on Latin American integration spe-
cifically addressed to communication experts specialized in public relations. *

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*A precursor conceptual study derived from this event is that of Santa Maria /81 ;
another is that of Teran /98, p.p. 62-64. A number of more recent studies on
this theme have been edited by Mexico's Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara
(Ferrer /32) as a product of another seminar on this subject. See also Lavin/45 .

The efforts towards integration, however, remained for a while considerably centered on economic activities through the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA) and, later, through the Central American Common Market, the Andean Promotion Corporation (CAF), and the "Pact of Cartagena" --the organization evolved out of a sub-regional agreement for the economic integration of the Andean countries (Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile).

The "Pact of Cartagena" was later accompanied by an understanding for cultural, educational and scientific integration known as the "Andres Bello Agreement", an instrument including communication concerns in its scope.

The "Andres Bello" Andean Agreement

From its very inception in 1970, the Andres Bello Agreement established as one of its chief obligations that of "devoting preferential attention to the use of social communication media given their educational influence and to promoting the joint production of audio-visual programs aimed at securing a healthy formation and recreation of the people and at preserving the ethical and cultural values" /42 , p. 60. Concomitantly, the institution obliged itself to foster, within the legal order of each country, measures to neutralize "the negative action that may be exerted over the formation of youth, the public morals and the mental health by certain contents of some means of social communication, principally, television, motion pictures, radio and printed matter" (Arizmendi Posada / 3 , p. 53).

These policy interests of the agreement have come together with the promotion of information exchange among the Andean countries and the idea of establishing an Andean News Agency (3 , p. 53). More recently, the institution has requested from UNDP, with the approval of its Member States, supplementary financial support for the establishment of a Latin American Graduate School of Communication at CIESPAL, in Ecuador (SECAB /88).

The Andres Bello Agreement also committed itself to cooperating with other international organizations --such as OAS, UNESCO and UNDP --in feasibility studies for a Sub-Regional System of Education via Satellite . These are finished and have been presented to the consideration of the governments. Some of the recommendations included in them were incorporated to a resolution of the Fifth Meeting of Ministers of Education held in 1974 in La Paz, Bolivia (Agudo Freites /1 , p. 2) However, the Secretary General of the Andres Bello Agreement reported as follows his perception of a key policy position which transpired from this meeting:

> In general, the impression which the Ministers of Education have had in this meeting is that it is necessary first to strengthen the experience and the mechanisms working

in the design, production and distribution of educa-
tional messages (such as teleducation, education by
correspondence, utilization of the press for education
al goals, etc.) before really being able to think about
setting up a subregional system of education which
employs the most modern means, among them the side-
ral antenna or the communications satellite (Arizmendi
Posada /3 , p. 54).

The Declaration of Cali

Equally significant, if not more, have been some agreements arrived at by
the Ministers of Communication in their first meeting held in May of 1974 in Cali,
Colombia. Going beyond the hardware considerations that normally constitute the
axis of their concerns, these Ministers approved a Declaration, supplemented by 22
specific resolutions, that has much to do with multi-country Latin American commu
nication policies both in terms of hardware and software concerns.

One of the propositions to the Andean Pact of Cartagena refers to the esta-
blishment of a Council of Social Communication. Another is to stimulate the forma
tion of associations of State telecommunication and television enterprises, along
with establishing a coordinated and joint postal and telecommunication policy.
Other of the resolutions involve exchanging training facilities for radio and tele-
vision production as well as for telecommunication and postal services. A fourth
refers to adopting compatible black and white and, if deemed eventually conve-
nient, color television systems. And, to name just one more, a recommendation
pertains to information exchange for the rational utilization of the radio-electric
spectrum.

Integrative Efforts in Tele-Education

Along with official multi-country policy-oriented activities, some professional
coordination efforts are also touching upon questions of communication policy at
the regional level. This seems to be the case of the Latin American Association
of Tele-Education (ALTE)* sponsored by the Germany's Konrad Adenauer Founda-
tion through its Lima-based Institute for International Solidarity (ISI). In some
seminars, the Latin American tele-education specialists have made pronouncements
not very different from some of those recorded at the Bogota and San Jose meet-
ings of experts or too far apart from the preoccupations voiced by the Andean

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* There also exists, with headquarters in Buenos Aires, the Latin American Asso
ciation of Radiophonic Schools (ALER). For a description of it, see Qué es
ALER? / 4 .

government officials. For instance, in Lima in 1969, they signed a Declaration which included statements such as the following:

> We, the Latin Americans, live in a developing society
> whose present structures oppress and limit man. It is
> our challenge, as educators, to respond to this reality.
> Faced with the prevailing social injustice, education
> must struggle for a just society, in which man can fully
> and harmoniously develop as a human person /89 , p.191.

Stressing the decisive importance of radio and television for people's educa
tion, the participants in the Lima seminar proposed that these media should be
put to the service of the collective effort and used to create mystic and vocation
for development. They also manifested their will to help devise a socially sensi-
tive tele-education methodology in substitution of the traditional educational sys-
tems. And they subscribed to the notion that modern mass media ought to be ra-
tionalized so as to help reaffirm man's superior values /89 , p. 191.

Coinciding with such purposes, the President of Venezuela, Carlos Andrés
Perez, deplored before a meeting of the Inter-American Association of Broadcas-
ters (AIR)* that the audiovisual media are not serving education, culture and de
velopment. Thus he proposed "the creation of a Latin American network of radio
and television which, both in its purposes and its implementation and dynamics,
be at the service of the spiritual, economic and social integration of the conti-
nent" (Agudo Freites / 1 , p. 7).

SPONTANEOUS INITIATIVES: PERU, VENEZUELA AND BRAZIL

Each and every Latin American country has had a few partial communica-
tion policies of one kind or another since long ago. Characteristically, anywhere
from articles in Constitutions down to specific norms operationalizing general laws,
press freedom and the granting of licenses to use the radio-electric spectrum have
been the most frequently regulated areas throughout the region. More recently,
policy decisions were made on television ownership, with the private sector be-
ing the winner in all but a few countries: Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba and Chile.

However, no country in this region has yet built a kind of master instrument
that could truly be regarded as an overall National Communication Policy in the

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* The regional association of radio station owners.

sense of being an all enhacing, articulated, explicit and durable set of coherent rules for the behavior of the totality of the communication system.

The Three Known Exceptions

If Cuba has been able to do something of this nature, information about it is not readily available.* There is, however, one country which has come closest to the ideal portrayed in this definition which, with give or take a few words, is that produced at July 1974 meeting of Latin American experts in communication policies held in Bogota under UNESCO sponsorship /52 . That country is Peru.

Next in importance is Venezuela, where a recently passed law establishing a National Council of Culture involves significant policy prospects but mostly in reference to radio and television.

A third country quite active also in radio and television policy, and apparently beginning to lean towards an overall national communication policy is Brasil.**

These three countries, with appreciable differences among them in their approach to the question, have entered the long and complex road leading towards overall national communication policies. And they did so on their own, that is, before international promotion of the idea acted as a mover.

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* Major communication policy variations took place in Chile in the last deca de when the government passed from Christian Democratic hands to Socialist ones and from them, through a coup, to the present conservative military regime. (See on these experiences: Mattelart (48), Mattelart, Biedma and Funes (49), Schiller and Smythe (83), Rodriguez (80) Fagen(31) and Villamandos (104). Nothing in these transitions, however, indicated clearly a resolution in any of the successive power-holders involved to actually come to contructing an overall national communication policy.

** According to official Venezuelan information (CONAC /103, pp. 54-60), Mexico and Argentina have also recently become very dynamic in the regulation of radio and television. However this does not seem to be a part of an intention to reach the higher stage of an overall national communica tion policy. Colombia was one of the precursors in the concern with these latter and in conducting research leading to it. But the concern has not so far reached the government decision level, at all (See Fox de Cardona /33 and Ramírez Restrepo /76).

The cases of Peru and Venezuela have been more extensively treated elsewhere by the present author. Therefore, in spite of its importance, their experiences will be mentioned in this overview only in a very brief manner. More attention, instead, will go to the case of Brazil.

Before doing so, however, it must be noted that these initial attempts approximating the ideal of overall policies are taking place in very different political settings. While both Peru and Brazil are under military regimes, they are evidently polarized in ideological terms. Venezuela is under civilian rule but shares with Brazil a capitalist economy and yet, different from Brazil, is run by reform-minded rulers seeking socio-structural change but not as swiftly and radically as in Peru. The significant thing about this diversity is that, regardless of it, the three countries appear to be among the few in the region having perceived the importance of counting on a communication system presided by a policy addressed to serve development.

The Case of Peru

On October of 1968, after a life-time of conservative rule of one kind or another, Peru was awaken by a military coup to what proved to be the most profound revolutionary transformation in its history. Rejecting both capitalism and communism, the government of the Armed Forces defined itself as social-democratic, nationalist and humanist, and pledged to liberate Peruvians from internal domination by the oligarchy and external domination exerted by foreign interests, mostly those of the United States of America /72 .

Since then, with considerable popular backing, the government has, radically but peacefully, acted to change the entire economic, social, cultural and political structure of the country in the direction of full and just social participation. In doing so, it did not permit activity of political parties or re-established electoral procedures. Instead it promoted wide spread and intense popular participation by facilitating the association of the population mostly around occupational groupings, in themselves different than those which existed until then. With their support, the government nationalized oil and mining companies, carried out a sweeping land reform, modified substantially the fishing industry, commerce and cooperatives, and introduced a thorough democratization of education.

Prior to the revolution, the mass communication system of the country was almost exclusively in the hands of private enterprises; as a rule most of the big ones were directly vinculated with firms which concentrated economic power. Oligopolic media ownership, alienatory, conformist and mercantilistic mass media messages, indiference to national development needs and penetration by U.S. interests, mostly through advertising, were the characteristics of such a communication system (See, inter-alia, Neira (55), Textual (99), and Gargurevich (38)

The revolution acted resolutely to correct this too. It adopted a series of concatenated policy decisions seeking to transform the system so that it would get to serve the change-seeking majorities rather than the pro status quo elites*.

These measures, as a whole, diminished and controlled private power of communication and bolstered that of the State. But full nationalization of mass media was avoided in favor of mixed enterprises, in the cases of radio and tele-vision, and of "social property enterprises" in the case of the large dailies of na tional circulation. These dailies (located in the capital city) were expropria-ted and transferred to "national labor communities" of peasants, workers, profes-sionals, educators and intellectuals. A new Press Statute was implemented.

This was not done without strife as the affected interests fought against the reforms firmly and loudly. Affiliates as the expropriated dailies were to the Inter-American Press Association (SIP), this organization condemned the measures as undemocratic and totalitarian and declared the country delinquent in terms of press freedom. But the reforms went ahead and were consolidated all the same.

In fact, a law of telecommunications completely reorganized and reoriented the respective services, including those of radio and television. These were to have at least 60% of their programming produced in the country and were to grant the State one hour daily for educational, civic and cultural programs. Abuses in advertising, in orientation, length and frequency, were curtailed through a set of norms. No foreign ownership was to be permitted.

To give the State strength and coherence in matters of communication, a National Information System was created at the ministerial level. Under it, a series of decentralized agencies were established to take care of specialized acti vities. For instance, a government publishing house, a government institute for radio and television, a national telecommunications agency, a State advertising agency, and a telecommunications training and research institute. Basis for an overall National Communication Policy were established as a part of the National Development Plan.

The Case of Venezuela

In August 1975, the Congress of Venezuela passed a law creating the Na-tional Council for Culture . This broad policy instrument includes provision which should enable the State to reorient, reorganize and substantially bolster the govern ment's radio, television, and film producing facilities by establishing a State Radio and Television Corporation. This, in turn, should result in the implementa-

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* See, inter-alia, Ortega and Romero (60) and the following documents: /66 , /67 , /68 , /69 , /70 , /71 .

tion of a National Radio and Television Policy, now formulated in a basic draft form /103.

Bent on gradual socio-structural reform as the present social democratic government of the country is, the measures about communication were concomitant and coincident with the nationalization of the huge oil industry from which the country obtains most of its now enormous foreign revenue.*

If fully implemented, the communication measures should put the State on a parity power base with private communication interests which had so far domi nated the mass communication situation. In fact, under the law approved, the decentralized radio and television corporation, "Ratelve", could come to be of such a technical and financial nature and magnitude that it should be able to do what private enterprise does not: to use communication in the service of national development in general and, in particular, for promoting culture and education for the benefit of the masses. And this will not involve nationalization of the private media although it should facilitate their control in terms of them becoming persuaded to behave differently and modify the quality and intent of their messa ges.**

As in Peru, but more vehemently, the private interests affected have attack ed the government for these measures, labeling them undemocratic, totalitariam and antagonistic to information freedom and human rights. As different from Peru, where communication change readily took place within a situation of general so- cial transformation, the Venezuelan government will have to fight almost daily a slow battle to be able to implement its new policies. And the private interests, appreciably penetrated by foreign investors, are already being aided in the con- frontation by the Inter-American Press Association (SIP), as in the case of Peru. In fact, the project for the law of culture was the object of a massive concerted attack. The campaign was mounted by a number of private entities presided by the national associations of advertising companies and advertising firms which, according to Pasquali (61), happen to be foreign in a 65% and 76%, respecti- vely. This time the campaign failed.

President Perez and his Minister of Information have taken an open stand in favor of these and other reforms in the country's communication system. However, in spite of the extraordinary economic power the Venezuelan State wields today,

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* The steel industry had already been nationalized in 1974.

** For full information on the law and on "Project Ratelve", see the Venezuelan o fficial document (103), along with the broader framework described by Agudo Freites, Gómez and Pasquali (2). For information on native and foreign domination of the communication system, see Diaz Rangel /26, /27.

the possibilities for effective generalized changes in that system do not appear to the eyes of some observers*to be very high yet. In support of their scepticism, they refer to these recent discouraging experiences:

1. The President announced in Congress that his government was studying the possibility of effectively applying income tax to advertising revenues. Claiming that they would loose 30 million dollars and threatening to contribute to unemployment, advertisers and advertising firms were able to freeze the intention. The Minister of Information had to call it just a "vague" plan in order to appease the protesters.

2. The Ministry of Information announced a decision to establish a State corporation to provide provincial newspapers with credit and facilities for equipment renewal and newsprint acquisition. Again, under attack —including that of the SIP —the measures do not seem to have been implemented yet.

3. The Minister of Information announced the government's intention to set controls on the behaviors of the advertising business so that it would cease to alienate and mercantilize the audience and would, instead, contribute to the creation of a "new Venezuelan man". Once again, charges of authoritarianism were made against the idea, the fate of which is yet to be seen .

4. An officer of the Central Office of Information announced that the government was considering the establishment of a National News Agency. And President Perez, when visiting the President of Mexico, joined him declaring that Latin America ought to establish its own regional news agency. Regression occurred about the intent expressed in the former statement and nothing has happened about that in the latter.

The Case of Brazil

Brazil, the largest country in the South American continent, has over 110 million inhabitants dispersed in an area of 8.5 million square kilometers, and living under very different economic, social and cultural conditions. This population is 60% urban, and 50% are under 20 years of age. The Brazilian GNP has more than doubled in the last ten years, allowing average per capita income to reach US$800 in 1974. However, great disparities exist. In the North Eastern region, per capita income is roughly 50% of the national average. The South Eastern region is by far the economic leader of the country with 70% of the Brazilian labor force, and 75% of its industrial production concentrated around the large metropolis of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (Camargo and Pinto /20).

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* For instance, Gomez (39) and Eliaschev (29)

Mass media is basically a private enterprise in Brazil. The main activity of the government is media supervision. The basic legislation regulating the media is, according to Camargo and Pinto (20) the following:

The Brazilian Law on Information ("Press Law"). This insures the traditional right of thought, expression and response for the Brazilian population, regulates the private media, and prevents abuses of freedom of expression, in addition to establishing criminal procedures, civil responsibility and general operational provisions of the media, such as the limitation of media ownership to Brazilians.

The National Council of Telecommunications. Law 4117 of 1962 sets up a National Council of Telecommunications as a regulatory body: to supervise the activities of government granted concessions, to issue authorization and permits for the use of telecommunication services, and to apply penalties.

The National Institute of Cinema. This is a federal organism set up under the Ministry of Education and Culture in 1966 to formulate and implement the government policy related to the development, improvement, and promotion of the Brazilian film industry.

The Brazilian Telecommunications Enterprise. This was established to set up the basic operational network of the national system of telecommunications, for telephone, telex, data, radio, and international television, in addition to relations with international systems of communication such as satellite.

Censorship. Based on the National Constitution, it is present in all Brazilian media in regard to the protection of ethical values and the dignified and healthy formation of youth.

Researchers Camargo and Pinto conclude in their study Communication Policies in Brazil, that:

> Today, circumstances have imposed a balance between free
> dom of communication and national order and security. Le-
> gislation tries to reconcile these exigences... Many juridi-
> cal formulas which are valid for a balanced and developed
> country demonstrate their insufficiency or even worthlessness
> in the developing ones. The difficulty of matching ideals,
> interests and proper policies remains considerable /20 , p.
> 62.

The actual communication policies of Brazil, which have been briefly reviewed above have been evaluated in a recent study by Shinar and Dias (93), who put special emphasis on the issue of a National Communication Policy in that

country. The authors concluded that, in spite of ample legislation in the country in almost all areas of broadcasting and other fields of communication, a systematic approach has not yet been developed, nor found expression in the structure, operations, and output of communication in Brazil. In an analysis of the goals of the communication policies, they found the following to predominate; (1) national integration; (2) socio-economic development; (3) promotion of cultural and educational values; and (4) financial profit for the private enterprises.

The study identified various problem areas for achieving each of these goals. In regard to that of integration, they found that the coverage policy of private radio and television was directed by commercial criteria rather than that of national coverage. This produced undue concentration of the media in the chief urban centers. Cultural goals have also suffered because of the commercial orientation. Only a small part of the television programs are locally produced, and local and regional content do not correspond to the cultural varieties of the country. News was also found to be lacking for national development purposes. The authors assessed the national development role of the media to be the weakest point of Brazilian broadcasting, both commercial and non-commercial. Commercial goals were the only with a significant degree of achievement. However, this was found to be unevenly distributed throughout even the commercial system, with the O Globo interests to be the real beneficiaries of the growth of commercial broadcasting.

In summarizing their findings, Shinar and Dias noted that the "short-comings of Brazilian broadcasting --partial achievement of integrative goals, poor cultural perfomance, insignificant contribution to processes of development and uneven distribution of commercial profits-- point out the basic problem areas related to broadcasting policy in the country"/93 , p. 18). The Brazilian Minister of Communication, Euclides Quandt de Oliveira, stressed a more specific one: "Massively importing 'canned' programs", Brazilian TV assumes a 'character of privileged vehicle for cultural importation, a basic factor in the desnaturalization of our creativity' ... Commercial TV is imposing on youth and children a culture which has nothing to do with the Brazilian one"/56 , p. 46. The Minister added:

> The figures are overwhelming, in this ideological political
> invasion, the weight of which is absolute on an every day
> more acute process of massification of the instrument of
> social communication/56 , p. 46.

Shinar and Dias concluded their study with the hope for the "establishment of a national communication policy, that would be global, whole and coherent ... and would also create mechanisms that would allow the use of communication media instruments for the participation of the population in the definition, goals and results of the development process"/93 , p. 26.

Minister Oliveira himself, keenly perceiving the inconveniences of fragmentary and isolated policy-making, asserted:

> Mass communication is a key factor in the process of
> general conscientization in a developing country. It,
> therefore, is necessary and urgent that systematic,
> adequate and organized efforts be added to the formu
> lation of communication policies/57, p. 10.

One step in the direction of the formulation and implementation of such a national communication policy is the project Radiobras (18), submitted to the Brazilian Congress in October 1975. The objective of this project is to set up a national telecommunications company which will administer all public radio and television stations, including the radio station of the Ministry of Education, in addition to the training of technicians in the field and special services to the State.

In the document presenting the new law, the Minister of Communication explained that one of the motives of this project was to bring the services of ra- dio and television to those areas of the country currently ignored by these media/18,

Another effort for the implantation of national communication policies is from the Ministry of Education, which proposes the social use of communication media through the interlacing of the communication goals to those of the social and glo- bal development (Shinar and Dias/93 , p. 27).

These two efforts represent a clear tendency to increase the control and influence of the State on the mass communication system of the country so that it serves development. In addition, both of these policy efforts contain a certain degree of centralization of the communication systems as a solution to the use of the media for national development ends. The question that remains to be answered --according to Shinar and Dias (93 , p. 27)-- is to what extent the continued concentration of the media system in that country, be that in public or private hands, is in itself beneficial to national development and the better distribution of wealth among the population, stated to be one of the premises of the Second National Development Plan for 1975-1979.

THE INTERNATIONAL PROMOTION OF NATIONAL POLICY-MAKING

Responding to the manifested will of the Member States, Unesco has been fostering the existence of educational, scientific and cultural policies for some fifteen years now. It has in that respect provided technical assistance to interested governments, held meetings, and promoted research and literature useful for the countries to formulate, establish and implement said national policies.

In 1971 Unesco began to do a comparable promotion job for national commu-nication policies, in fulfillment of the express mandate it had received for it from the Member States. In fact, at its sixteenth session, Unesco's General Conference authorized in 1970 the Director General "to help Member States in the formulation of their 'mass communication policies"/51, p. 1. In presenting Unesco's Draft Programme and Budget for 1973-74 to the General Conference, René Maheu, the Director General of the agency, stressed that:

> The espousal of the idea of a national communication policy ...
> completes the process which, beginning with educational planning
> twelve years ago, has progressively geared the various parts of
> the programme to the task of systematically directing national
> efforts in the fields of Unesco's competence in pursuit of specific
> objectives, in a word, in furtherance of a policy which is itself
> an integral part of comprehensive planning for total development/51,
> p. 1.

Acting to fulfill the mandate, Unesco's Director General told the General Conference: "The present Draft Programme assuredly constitutes no more than a first step in this direction and progress will be slow and difficult. But the very fact that this first step has been taken deserves mention because it represents an innovation which may have far-reaching consequences"/51, p. 1.

Paris, 1972: The First Consultation to Experts

As it is costumary for international public organizations to do, Unesco re-coursed to consulting independent experts to begin exploring the conceptual avenues of communication policy-making with which the agency have had until then no full familiarity. Unesco's Assistant Director General for Communication, Argentina's Alberto Obligado, invited 21 experts from 20 countries of different parts of the world to meet in Paris on July 17-28, 1972. The meeting of experts "was convened so that the Organization and its Member States may gain a clearer understanding of what national communication policies and planning imply"/51, p. 1.

As noted by Unesco (51, p. 2), those experts "represented a wide range of specialties: broadcasting (executives, producers, trainers, working in both public and private enterprises); press and news agencies, application of communication to rural development: educational technology, government administration with special reference to communication planning; mass communication research; economics, data processing, etc." In any case, these professionals were invited in a personal capacity and not as representatives of the institutions for which they were working. This was so in order to secure a fertile dialogue stemming from the uninhibited exchange of out-standing experiences.

Specifically, the Paris meeting was aimed at establishing the considerations which prompt public concern about communication, at defining the scope and limitations of communication policies and planning, and at suggesting manners in which these policies could be implemented at the national level/51, p. 2, "Recognizing the great differences in social and economic conditions as well as political systems throughout the world, the meeting did not seek to propose a single approach, but to indicate the key factors which may have to be considered within the specific context of each individual country"/51, p. 2.

That was, then, what the experts convened set to do as a group. The product of their effort was recorded in a report (51) which Unesco put in world-wide open circulation at the outset of 1973, constituting a composite of the knowledge and opinions of the experts and certainly not an official multi-governmental mandate. It was just a set of initial technical bases suggested as general guidelines for voluntary national government action.

Bogota, 1974: The Second Consultation, Latin American Expertise

Just as it had done with other areas of promotion of national policy formulation --for instance, culture-- Unesco decided to convene in 1975 an Inter-governmental Conference on Communication Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean. It thus made this region the first of those in the less developed world which will take up the matter at the highest political international level of decision-making. Latin America was selected because it had demonstrated an outstanding preoccupation with the communication situation as related to development efforts. Also because it had already gained a significant accumulation of scientific research on communication problems.* And, finally, because it had shown on its own an active concern with communication policies and plans greater than that apparent in other comparable regions.

Much had to be done to properly plan and organize this high level official international conference.

Understandably then, Unesco decided that a first step was to move from the world-wide level of the first meeting of experts down to a comparable gathering of Latin American and Caribbean experts, from which would emerge more concrete proposals, directly pertinent to the situation in this particular region of the world. Thus, the Bogota meeting's goal were stated by Unesco as being: "Firstly, to

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* Ciespal, a Quito-based regional communication center, has recorded and abstracted already some 1.000 studies and expects this figure to raise considerably when the processing of all acquired materials is finished. For a preliminary overview, see Beltran (12). Ciespal was one of the organizers of a meeting on communication research which reflected on policies / 92 .

translate the findings of the previous expert meeting into terms realistic and applicable in the countries of Latin America, and secondly, looking forward to the meeting of ministers in 1975, to assist Unesco in defining the preparatory work which has to be done between now and 1975, in order that the policy-makers can have at their disposal valid information on which to make their policy decisions"/52 , p. 4.

Once again, this was a consultation to independent experts not invited as government representatives or delegates of national of international, private or public institutions. They were 17, coming from 14 countries who attended the meeting. " ... as specialists in some particular aspects of communication such as economics, sociology, communication law. Professional journalists and broad-caster and managers of communication systems, the print media, the broadcast media, tele-communication systems, data-processing, rural communication problems, international relationships involving communication, community development and educational use of the media were also represented within the composition of the expert team" (52, p. 4). Observers of 7 international public organizations, both world-wide and inter-American, were also present.

As stressed by Unesco (52, p. 8):

> The function of this meeting was defined as that of showing governments and those responsible for mass communication media the urgent need to devise a coherent policy and to give the various national mass communication systems the best possible organization and structure having regard to national development goals.

Nine central themes were discussed by the experts in plenaries:

- Concept and definition of a communication policy: policy or strategy?
- The ideological context of a communication policy: role of the State in the formulation of a national, coherent and corrective policy.
- Communication as an area of development policy.
- The situation of the mass media of communication in Latin America.
- The access to information and participation in communication.
- The difficulty of applying a national communication policy without the participation of the government and institutions: creation of "National Communication Councils".
- The impact of the accelared development of communication technology and the priority of communication policy.
- The role of Unesco in the communication sector and the objectives of national and international co-operation.
- The need for research in the field of communication to make it possible to direct, formulate and apply a communication policy /52 , p. 6.

In the first round of small groups sessions, the experts dealt with problems of defining, justifying and establishing national communication policies, including aspects of formulation, implementation, evaluation and adjustment of these. They did so seeking to blend the different specialty viewpoints and the varying conditions of the Latin American countries. They also concerned themselves with the promotion of the policies and with the organic structures for implementation, such as National Communication Policy Councils, which would include representatives of all private and public sectors involved in communication activities.

In the second round of small group sessions, the participants tackled these areas of concern: (1) regional and international cooperation in relation to communication policies; (2) access to and participation in the mass communication media; (3) translation of communication policies into communication plans; (4) mass communication technology and policy; and (5) communication research related to communication policies.

In closing, the meeting recommended to Unesco that it performs a number of specific tasks geared to properly documenting the deliberations of the Intergovernmental Conference. The recommendations proposed summary descriptions of existing communication policies in six countries of the region, an inventory of communication resources in all countries of the region and a document on the relationship between communication systems. They also proposed an experimental laboratory on development communication planning and the appointment for Latin America of a Unesco Regional Adviser on Communication Policies and Plans, who would secure coordination of the field studies and promote, with the governments, attendance to and preparation for the 1975 Intergovernmental Conference,* which will eventually take place in 1976.

It is beyond the possibilities of the present overview to summarize and assess in detail the discussions and conclusions of the Bogota meeting **. But the point

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* Most of the suggested documents have indeed been prepared and some have already been published; see, for instance; Camargo and Pinto (20) and Sommerlad (96). On the other hand, recommendations about the planning laboratory and the appointment of the regional adviser have not as yet been fulfilled.

** Detailed information about it is found in two Unesco documents (Beltrán / 11), Unesco Meeting 1974 /52 and in an un-official summary written by Fox de Cardona (34) for the International Center of Higher Learning in Communication for Latin America, CIESPAL.

must be made that the gathering was characterized not only by a diversity of
skills, types of experiences, nationalities and cultural backgrounds. It was also
tipified by a variety of political backgrounds and a plurality of ideological stands.
And it can be said that, in spite of those differences, the meeting apparently
achieved appreciable consensus in:

1. Perceiving the communication situation of Latin America as characterized, in-
   ternally, by an acute concentration of message emitting and receiving options
   in the hands of private minority interests, as a rule unfavorable to social chan-
   ges required to attain widespread national development.*

2. Perceiving that situation, externally, as unduly subdued to the dominant in-
   fluence of extra-regional economic and political interests, mostly those of the
   United States of America.**

3. Believing that national communication policies are to be a paramount instrument
   to help overcome such situation unfair to most of the people and not conducive
   to democratic involvement in the development task.

4. Believing that those policies should be democratically and pluralisticaly formu-
   lated with the full participation of all sectors concerned; i. e., media owners,
   communication professionals and government officers, probably represented on
   National Councils on Communication Policy.

5. Believing that, regardless of its orientation and structure, each State has to
   perform, as a right and as a duty, the leading role in the establishment of the
   National Communication Policies, seeking to conciliate the interest of all seg-
   ments of society and to serve the communal aims of national development, with-
   in each country's characteristics and possibilities.

6. Believing that all Latin American countries must also have joint policies rela-
   tive to the behavior of international communication forces affecting their ter-
   ritories.

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* For analytical summaries of many studies documenting this reality, see Beltrán
(/ 8 ; /10 ; /13); and Beltrán and Fox de Cardona / 15 .

** Venezuelan illustrations were contributed by Diaz Rangel (/26 , /27), Agudo
Freites (/ 50), Gómez (/39)and Pasquali (/61). Wells (106) and
Mattelart (50) have dealt in detail with certain aspects of the problem. At a
broader level, Schiller(/82 and / 84) has concerned himself extensively with it.
A recent overview of evidence of the situation is that of Beltrán and Fox de Car-
dona (15).

San José, 1975: Convalidation and Advancement

The report of the Unesco-sponsored Bogota meeting circulated freely among interested institutions and persons in the region and steered the already significant preocupation prevailing in it about the need for National Communication Policies.

In April 12-19 of 1975 another meeting of experts took place on the matter in San José, Costa Rica /92 . Unrelated to Unesco, it was organized by CIESPAL, the International Center for Higher Learning in Communication in Latin America, with the support of CEDAL, the Latin American Center for Democratic Studies located in Costa Rica, and Germany's Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Once again, it convened experts on a purely personal basis and confronted them with a three section agenda: tentative communication policies in the region (experiences and projections), communication planning in dependent societies, and methodologies for the diagnosis of communication institutions addressed to providing fundaments to national communication policy formulations. *

Although only two of its participants also had attended the Bogota gathering, the San José meeting showed a clear coincidence with this former in perspectives and propositions. The discussions culminated in a large number of specific recommendations to the Latin American governments and to pertinent region-wide organizations. **

In recommending the former to establish National Communication Policies, the San José meeting invited their attention within this to:

1. The creation of State media as alternative to private ones.

2. Consideration of the social function of all communication media.

3. Consideration of the informative, educational, cultural and recreational roles of the media.

4. Regulation of the activities of national and international news agencies.

5. Regulation of commercial advertising through the media.

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* Discussions on this latter section were to be based on an experience conducted in Venezuela shortly before the meeting by Fox de Cardona and Beltrán /35 .

** The meeting's report is contained in CIESPAL /92 .

6. Definition of the roles of telecommunications.

7. Definition of the contribution of teleducation to national development.

The meeting also suggested that the governments include measures of control of the participation of foreign capitals in the media and of the importation of communication materials in their policies, along with stimulation of the national production of such materials. Furthermore, it recommended them:

- That their policies be formulated and implemented in the service of development programs and plans pursuing social change.

- That their policies include among their specific aims that of contributing to the elimination of the relatioships of dependence which affect life in the majority of the countries of the region.

- That State action be geared toward the elimination of mass media concentration, in terms of private ownership and of geographical location.

- That State action also be addressed to attaining a readjustment of the functions of the mass media to fitting the aims of integral development.

Among many other resolutions, the meeting proposed measures to increase and improve communication research and training, along with asking the governments to build "an adequate infrastructure for the coherent and coordinated implementation of all the measures involved in National Communication Policies" /92 , p. 5.

Quito, 1975: Towards Policies for News Traffic

In June 1975, the capital city of Ecuador was the seat of a Unesco-sponsored Meeting of Experts on the Promotion and Exchange of News. This was another step in the preparation of the Intergovernmental Conference on Communication Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean to take place in mid 1976.

It was high time for such a gathering in Latin America, which was hosted by the International Center for Higher Learning in Communication in Latin America (CIESPAL). In fact, CIESPAL itself had found that 93% of foreign news in 29 of the main dailies of the region were provided by United Press International (50%), Associated Press (30%) and France Press (13%).

McNelly observed that "Latin America has seen less development of national news agencies than have Asia or Africa...." /47 , p. 3. "The Latin American countries are covered by agencies that are foreign to them in the same way that Reuters was foreign to the U. S. ... ", addes Barnes (/·7 , p. 4).

Thus this region "is left largely dependent on the big global news agencies"
/47/, p. 3. A Latin American researcher coincided with these appraisals by U.S.
analysts and pointed to the roots and consequences of such situation:

> Wire information depends on the United States as our econo-
> mies depend upon it. AP and UPI have the decisive weight
> in opinion formation in the average Latin American country
> about the most important world events (Diaz Rangel /26 pp.
> 43-44)

"The past decade has seen mounting criticism of the flow of news in and
out of Latin America and between countries in the region", acknowledged McNelly,
/47/, p. 12. Indeed all news traffic from the world to this region, from it to
the world, and even among the countries in it, is chiefly handled by UPI and
AP. And, in all directions, Latin America seems to be a looser since, as noted
by another U. S. analyst, "the two American agencies which report Latin Ameri-
ca.... have their own interests to defend" (Barnes, /7/, p. 4)

As a consequence of this situation, on the one hand, the vision that the
region has of world events is conditioned by the optics of the two agencies. On
the other hand, the image portrayed of the region, in the United States of Ameri-
ca and in other parts of the world, is one that many claim that has little to do
with the fundamental realities of life in these countries. Natural catastrophes and
political instability are played up as a rule, whereas significant economic and
cultural events get little coverage. Picturesque or bizarre phenomena are preferred
over events reflecting the struggle for social change. These are often down-played,
ignored or grossly distorted. Information about highly developed regions of the
world prevails over that relative to the less developed ones. Even within the re-
gion, news traffic is higher about three or four big countries to the neglect of the
rest.

There are a few small news agencies native to countries of the region and
with a vocation to serve them. Some, however, are actually government publicity
services and others are modest firms devoted to background or feature information.
None of them have had so far a significant impact in the general system of news
traffic. There is virtually only one agency resembling, in miniature, the structure
of the large international ones: Latin, a creation of 13 of the big dailies of the
region, which struggles since 1970, dependent essentially upon the infrastructure
of Reuters, the British agency. Evidently, to enter successfully such a heavily
dominated market requires expertise, capital and facilities which Latin apparently
cannot easily put together. An it also requires to gain clients from among those
accostumed to the U. S. agencies. Moreover, there is no clear indication either
that Latin itself may have a news policy substantially different than that set by

the international agencies leading the trade. *

In inaugurating the Quito Meeting of experts, Ecuador's Minister of Education, General Gustavo Vasconez, advocated for remedial action as follows:

> Latin American cannot allow the continued distortion of its reality and the distortion of its true socio-economic and cultural essence. The historic moment we live demands an objectivity that will not be possible while the information that we receive from the rest of the world, as well as that which comes from our countries, continues to be handled with colonialistic ideological overtones of diverse tendencies /101   , pp. 1-2 .

This meeting, again composed of independent experts representing diverse countries, disciplines and viewpoints, arrived at several consensual recommendations. The main ones can be summarized as follow: * *

1. Recommend to the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean to establish overall national communication policies "in as short a term as possible, under the pluralistic and democratic framework with which such policies were conceived in the Meeting that took place in Bogotá, upon Unesco's convocation in July of last year".

2. Recommend to the coming Intergovernmental Conference on Communication Policies "to give the highest priority to the need for making explicit the national communication policies in what refers to the international flow of information in their respective countries...."

3. "Reiterate the need for creating ....a Latin American and Caribbean news agency.... suggesting the coming Intergovernmental Conference on Communication Policies to proceed to constitute a Multinational Preparatory Commission which takes into consideration what is expressed in the present Document".

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* Two comprehensive and up to date summary of these problems have recently been contributed by McNelly (47) and by Ordoñez and Encalada (59   ). A previous one, which stressed a number of pertinent studies by U. S. researchers, is that of Beltran (9 ·   ). A pioneer in demonstrating questionable news flow behaviors of the international news agencies in relation to Latin American was Diaz Rangel / 2 6   .

**The final and official Unesco report of the meeting is not yet in circulation. What is presented here was taken from the preliminary report in Spanish / 77   .

4. Underline the need for the participating governments to protect said regional agency and to support it against the competition from extra-regional agencies by means such as preferential tariffs and the establishment of percentages of utilization of it by the region's media.

5. Recommend to the governments to promote, within their national communication policies, the most expeditious establishment of national, mostly public, news agencies, which, federated, could come to constitute the region-wide agency envisioned.

Initiatives such as that of establishing a regional news agency have been voiced since at least the 1950's in several parts of Latin America and in different circles. Political leaders, such as the Prime Minister of Cuba and the Presidents of Venezuela and Mexico have echoed this more recently (Mora / 5 4). As a rule, such manifestations have been met with censure from U. S.-based international communication groups such as the Inter-American Press Association (SIP). According to Mora (5 4 , p. 6), the Associated Press reported in March 1975 from El Salvador that the president of the SIP's Commission on Press Freedom, German Ornes, alerted the members about the possible creation of two agencies in the region subsidized by public funds. And, still according to these sources, Ornes said: "I believe we must condemn the idea and agree that all members of the IAPA (SIP) should not contract the services of those agencies" /5 4 , p. 6.

Such agencies, however, do not seem in existence at all yet and whether or not the Quito recommendation to establish a multi-government one becomes viable is something which remains to be seen rather in the long run. Nevertheless, if such an agency is to in fact exist one day, it will be necessarily the product of concerted Latin American action. Something of this nature is what the new Director General of Unesco, Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, stressed before the experts who met in Ecuador in the message he sent to the closing of their deliberations:

> ....It is ilogical that such an important phenomenon as the flow of information passes to a large extent through a limited number of channels which moreover are determined by an ideology and a technology which do not necessarily correspond.to those of the region.... In our judgement, joint actions at the regional and international levels are, for the moment, the only answer to aleviate dependence of the information flow from technology and the status quo it tends to preserve / 4 6 , p. 2.

At the same time "---reported Pasquali (6 1 ,p .19) -- "the Interamerican Press Society (I.P.S.) protested against a preliminary UNESCO meeting - Quito in July of this year - in which the need to create national and regional news agencies for Latin America was discussed."

THE INTERNATIONAL OPPOSITION TO CHANGES IN COMMUNICATION

In the preceding sections, very brief mention was made of instances in which international private communication organizations had objected to State actions and expert meeting's recommendations proposing changes in the communication structures of some Latin American countries. This section intends to see in somewhat more detail a couple of major and recent cases.

The Associated Inter-American Media Owners-Managers

There are two large organizations of this type: The Inter-American Press Association (SIP) * and the Inter-American Association of Broadcasters (AIR). **.

The former has more North American than Latin American members and is head-quartered in Miami. Both are federations of media managers, editors and owners and operate in conjunction by virtue of a mutual defense agreement. "The Panama Doctrine, adopted by the organizations in 1952, provides that any aggression against either radio or the press will be considered an attack against both and will be resisted by all means possible (Gardner / 3 6). Between the two, the SIP and the AIR constitute a powerful international pressure group expressing the positions of the private print and electronic communication industry of the region and that of the newspaper industry of the United States of America.

The SIP provides several technical services to its affiliates, grants the Mergenthaler Journalism Prize to outstanding Latin American newsmen, and has a yearly convention in the region. Its most noticeable activity, however, is the public presentation of the annual report of its Commission on Press Freedom. It is also its most controversial activity.

For over 25 years now, the Commission has diligently scanned the mass communication horizon of Latin America, identifying and denouncing cases in which, to its judgment, press freedom was being curtailed or suppressed by governments. Subsequently, through its network of affiliated dailies, it has launched individual attack or full campaign against such situations, having varying degrees of success and cropping praise as well as condemnation. In the most recent general assembly of SIP --Sao Paulo, Brazil, October 1975-- the Commission summarized its perception of the situation as follows:

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* For Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa.

** For Asociación Interamericana de Radiodifusión.

> In what refers to freedom - and, very particularly, to
> press freedom in the American Continent, it is nowadays
> a dearth of islands of freedom surrounded by a roaring
> sea of oppression and dictatorships (SIP / 94)

The SIP and "Socialization" of the Big Press in Peru

One of the most recent and paramount cases with which the SIP was strong-
ly concerned was the expropriation of the main dailies of Lima, Peru, in 1974.
A year after, these dailies were transferred by the government to "organized com-
munities" of peasants, workers, cooperativists, teachers and intellectuals. A U.S.
publication saw this a a "drastic measure... the most striking act of the 'Peruvian
Revolution' since the take over of the International Petroleum Company..."
(Latin America /65 , p. 233). And the same publication reported that within
Peru "the expropriation of the conservative newspapers had become like the defen-
se of the 200-mile (maritime jurisdiction) limit, an issue that all progressive sectors,
including those generally opposed to the government, were bound to support".

Some applause came also from outside sources such as the Latin American
Encounter of Journalists, which stressed that "in Peru, for the first time in the
world, an experiment is being tried with the regime of press ownership that is dif-
ferent from those known up to now as it is a case of social ownership" (3 0, p.
23). Indeed, Peru's President General Velasco Alvarado, stressed on the occasion
the view that:

> In expropriating the immense power of a press monopolized
> by small pressure groups, we do not transfer this power to
> the State... Loyal to our democratic and participatory vo-
> cation, the Revolution transfers it to the social organizations
> of the nation. Thus, we reject both the single model of
> private ownership of the press and the single model of State
> ownership. We defend pluralism...with a clear preference
> for those modalities of social ownership...../102 , p. 2.

Criticism was far more frequent and noticeable than praise. When the expro-
priation occurred, the voice of SIP came in loudly in the words of its vicepresident,
Chile's Rene Silva, who called the measure a "farse" (2 3, pp. 12-13) apparent-
ly implying that the announced ulterior transfer to the labor communities was no
more than a subterfuge towards final State ownership. This proved so far not to be
the case at all. Nevertheless, from mid 1974 and almost until the end of 1975,
the SIP affiliates in Latin America and in the U. S. heavily discharged their in-
fluential batteries against the Peruvian Government. Reacting to their criticism,
President Velasco Alvarado said:

There is an intense international campaign against Peru.
Those promoting it are those who have seen their inte-
rests affected by the Revolution. Apparently the cam-
paign is directed by the Inter-American Press Society,
the organization which joins not journalists but the
owners of the printed Press of the Continent....The
Inter-American Press Society is simply the spokesman
for not confesed economic interests which remain in tne
shadow. It is only the puppet moved by invisible hands...
Behind the SIP are those who had run away from Peru
to escape justice. But there are also the foreign con-
sortia affected by the revolution /21 , p. 126.

"Few organizations have been so vilified and few have received such an un-
qualified praise as the Inter-American Press Association", observed in 1965 Mary
Gardner, a U. S. journalist and researcher /36 , p. 1. And she added in 1967:

On the basis of the evidence available, there seems
to be no doubt that the Inter-American Press Association
has proved to be an effective instrument in maintaining
and perpetuating freedom of the press in the Western
Hemisphere (Gardner /37 , p. 143)

Another U. S. researcher, Jerry Knudson, disagrees pointing out, for in-
stance, that since 1952 the IAPA has censured Bolivia for throttling freedom of
the press under every progressive government but never under any repressive mili-
tary government which protects property and investment but not human life and
civil liberties (43a, pp. 12-13). Concluded Knudson:

In short, the IAPA seems to be using its arrogated power
of censure -- if the Bolivian experience is representative--
to foster its own political ends. The IAPA judgments on
freedom of the press in the hemisphere should not, there-
fore, be accepted without question /43a , p. 15.

The AIR and the Bogota Report of Communication Policy Experts

The other major case requiring attention here is that of the public object-
ions raised by the Inter-American Association of Broadcasters (AIR) to the report
produced at the Unesco-sponsored Meeting of Latin American Experts in National
Communication Policies held in Bogotá in 1974.

The AIR's Commission on Cultural Action met in Argentina on September 12-14 (5 , p.2) with the specific mandate of examining said report. In closing its sessions, the Commission evacuated an extensive evaluative document which was subsequently released to all mass media in the region and to the international news agencies.

The document starts by expressing AIR's feeling that none of the 16 experts convened in Bogotá represented any of the large private communication organizations of the region and that, with the exception of those of Cuba, Peru and Trinidad, they were not even representative of State communication organizations. The document then stressed that the Bogota report cannot be taken as expressive of either the thought of Unesco or of that of governments and suggest that, due to lack of information, Unesco might have attributed the title of "expert" to persons which are not.

Having derogated the source of the report, the document moves on to criticizing the style in which it was written. It labels it "exuberant", "conventional", full of adjectives, not objective and intentionally obscure but not sufficiently so to hide the central thought which inspires it. The Commission asserts then:

> If we had to define this tought in a few words, we would say that the document in question identifies itself with a political line which, because it makes an extremely danger-ous overestimation of the power of the State, it tends to build "a man for development" instead of building the basis for a "development policy for free men" / 5 , p.2.

The document then claims to reveal the "deepest intention" of the report locating it in the experts' proposal for the formulation of a "totalizing view of culture", from which the AIR Commission infers that these experts were virtual-ly recommending "to set the basis for a Ministry of Propaganda, as those the western world knew in our century, to eliminate any possible free development of the communication media, and to anticipate that popular control over them be exerted not through democratic mechanisms, free from official pressure, but through 'regulatory mechanisms' created by the State itself".

This theme --the condemnation of the suggestion for having private communi-cation activity be submitted to State control-- is carried on by the AIR document through several sections with slightly differente arguments. Then, it rejects the ex-perts' notion that private mass media, by being such, are inept to serve the goals of development. Subsequently, it emphasizes again that: "The unequivocal con-clusion is that everything must be 'totalized', everything must be state owned, so that the myth of 'integral development' and that 'social change', which is not

defined, could fully take place". The next step in the line of analysis is to claim that the report is "destined to serve the aspirations of fascists and marxists" and that the 'experts', on the excuse of proposing communication policies, "pretend to impose a specific ideological content to communication". It is added that the proposed policies are "openly contrary to the best traditions of our continent and, fundamentally, to the objectives permanently recommended by the Organization of American States...."

The Bogota report had mentioned alternative ownership policies in the case of radio, including the solely private format, the exclusively governmental format, and two formats mixing them. The AIR document appraises those as "modalities radically opposed to the American tradition, which made of radio an instrument destined to the exercise of freedom of expression" and as "four different manners for radio to become the new weapon of governing groups".

On that, the Commission lays out its position in the following basic points:

1. The international community granted the States the administration of certain frequencies in the radioelectric spectrum.

2. However, the power of the State over those frequencies is not unlimited and thus it should reserve for itself only the frequencies indispensable to fulfill tasks pertinent to public service.

3. Consequently, "it is incorrect to affirm that private radio broadcasting constitutes a 'public service'. It is a private activity of public interest".

4. "Conceiving radiotelevision as a mean for the free expression of thought, its utilization must naturally remain submitted to the same rules as any other medium addressed to the same end".

The Commission then stipulated the roles of private broadcasting in this manner and order: "to entertain, to inform, to educate, and to contribute to vitalizing the economic process". In the exercise of them, the document claims, broadcasters "have an undisputable right to freedom of programming".

The AIR document ends in recommending remedial actions:

> The positions of that Meeting of Experts appear to us so grave for the survival, in Latin America, of all free media of social communication, that, in the Minutes of our deliberations, we proposed a series of actions which must be counterposed to its influence in the Intergovermental Conference on Communication Policies in Latin America summoned for the present year / 5 , p. 2.

Apparently, one of these actions has been to contact Unesco's Paris head-quarters and attempt to influence its behavior relative to communication policy promotion in Latin America. But the most noticeable action was the highly fequent press and radio attacks on the expert meeting's recommendations seeking to influ-ence public opinion in relation to the coming Intergovernmental Meeting. The ex-perts' report, a Uruguayan daily suggested, should be rejected by all those who still believe that the fate of freedom of expression...."still depends, as in the past, on the existence of free enterprise in the domain of the informa-tion and opinion media" / 74.

The experts who attended the Bogota Meeting could not react as a group to the criticisms of their report as they disbanded on adjournment of this. If Unesco has had any official reaction, this is not publicly known.

Instead, SIP has reacted by joining AIR in the attack. The October 1973 report of the Commission on Press Freedom included statements as the following: "Under the auspices of Unesco... a series of studies and meetings of alleged social communication "experts" have been taking place, whose conclusion, of an eminent-ly totalitarian fashion, wil have to be very carefully analyzed by the SIP /94 .

To do so, the 1975 Sau Paulo's general assembly of the SIP instructed the president of it to appoint a commission in charge of studying the Bogota report and present its verdict within sixty days. At the same time, it recommended consulta-tions with executives of the AIR about joint and separate action appropriate "to impede the approval of agreements harmful to the freedom of information and opinion" (SIP / 95)

This endorsement should help the AIR tu push ahead some principles in the region, accorded at its 12th general assembly held in Uruguay in March of 1975. For instance:

> ....."that broadcasting... can only continue to be useful and benefitial to the people while dependent upon private entities, spontaneous representatives of popular opinion... and ...."that imposition by the State of programs of a nationalist sort, besides implying dangerous limitations, is against 'desirable competition in the media and constitutes an attempt against culture which must be universal...."
> (Pasquali /61 , p. 18)

THE ISSUES AT STAKE AND THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE

The divergence between the AIR and SIP officers and the Latin American communication experts is not a mere conflict of immediate and limited interests between mass communication media owners, managers and editors, on the one hand, and communication researchers, critics and planners, on the other. As two U.S. scholars recently observed: "Increasingly it is obvious that a Right to Communicate is deeply involved with present and future communication policies around the world ..." (Harms and Richstad /40, p. 1)

Indeed the attempts at formulating national communication policies in Latin America will have a growing and direct bearing on communication rights. For what these policies are seeking in the end is a redistribution of communication power so that opportunities for enjoying communication rights achieve an equalitarian level, benefiting all people rather than only a few.

In turn, pursuing such a democratization of rights is a movement which stems from a broader disparity between two increasingly opposite visions of society, conceptions of democracy and definitions of development.

Furthermore, the divergence is deeply rooted in the very nature of the general structure of economic, political and cultural relationships characterizing most of the Latin American societies. These basic organizational arrangements favor the predominance of conservative minority interests, as a rule related to comparable extra-regional interests, over the interests of the national majorities. Communication is an inextricable component of such an archaic and unfair social structure, being determined by it and acting so far to consolidate it. Thus, as has been underlined by Ortega and Romero (60, p. 2), it is not possible for realistic policies to approach the communication phenomenon by severing it "from the social process as a whole, from the conflict of interests which takes place in the heart of society and, more particularly, from the existing relationships of production". In fact, as several studies have demonstrated, quite often those who own the means of production are also owners of the means of communication.

Another U.S. scholar, Herbert Schiller, summarizes this situation as follows:

> The struggle to overcome domination --external, where the power resides outside the national community; internal, where the power is exercised by a domestic ruling stratum --is the central, if not always recognized, issue in contemporary communications policy-making. Internationally, nationally and individually, the struggle, though often obscured, is between the forces of domination and those which resist and challenge it. All basic issues in communications today relate to this fundamental and increasingly intense confrontation. /86, p. 3.

The Philosophy Behind the Mass Communication System

Because of its high frequency and consistency, the general creed inspiring the private mass communication system of Latin America is not difficult to synthesize. It can be said that, in essence, its basic principles are the following:

1. Freedom of information is the fundament of democracy. It is inseparable from freedom of enterprise and both involve, necessarily and preferentially, if not exclusively, private initiative. Any attack on freedom of information is an attack on freedom of enterprise, and viceversa. And attacks on either or both are, ultimately, attacks on democracy, of which private initiative is the guardian.

2. Private mass communication enterprises are not public services. They are private businesses with public interests. As such, however, they are the spontaneous and legitimate representatives of said public interests and not solely of profit-oriented concerns.

3. Private mass communication enterprises have as their primary responsibilities those of securing the free flow of information and opinion and of promoting economic activities and growth. Thus, they are under no obligation to perform other communication tasks which are the responsibility of the State; i.e., mass education.

4. Private mass communication enterprises contribute to national development not only in terms of providing information, opinion and entertainment but also in fostering the increase and improvement of the production and consumption of goods and services.

5. In free-market, and thus democratic, societies, information is a merchandise like others, with the only difference that it is a cultural product. This difference, however, in no way justifies that the communication business be placed under any non-ordinary legal regime that may harm it.

6. In order to preserve democracy, mass media ownership must be essentially private. The State should have only few and modest mass media of its own, strictly to serve government objectives not serviceable by private enterprise, such as the text-long publication of legislative and executive dispositions. In addition, no State media, in general, should compete with private media and, in particular, the former must not be financed by commercial advertising which should only finance the latter. Likewise, State advertising itself should chiefly be channeled through the private media.

7. Furthermore, the State should not intervene in the activities of private communication institutions except in a very light and restricted regulatory manner

that does not interfere with the uncurtailed exercise of the freedoms of information and enterprise. Any intervention beyond such minimal levels is to be regarded as authoritarian and totalitarian as it identifies itself with the undemocratic behavior of fascism or communism and conspires against communica - tion rights.

8. Consequently, national communication policies are to be regarded as dangerous to democracy if they come to propose both increasing the communication power of the State and decreasing that of private enterprise through stronger government mechanisms of control of this latter, which would render information free dom inexistent.

9. In fact, even without such overall policies, communication rights are already gravely threatened, curtailed or eliminated by the majority of the Latin American governments who, in doing so, become themselves enemies of information freedom and, thus, of democracy.

10. Given such a situation, it is the right and the duty of the organizations grouping the major mass media enterprises of the Americas, to struggle, frontally and relentlessly, in defense of information freedom, communication rights, free enterprise and, ultimately, democracy in general. In doing so, these organizations represent the broad interest of the national communities as a whole and protect the universal principles of civilization.

The Philosophy Challenging the Status Quo in Communication

No one contends the notion that information freedom is the fundament of democracy. However, what increasingly more people are coming to realize in Latin America is that the existence of information freedom is today defended only as a privilege of powerful conservative minorities and that this, in itself, renders democracy largely mythical. Thus, everyone of the principles in the creed so actively promoted by organizations such as the SIP and the AIR is today being qualified, questioned or rejected. This critical stand is not at all the exclusivity of isolated agitators and undemocratic extremists and it certainly does not propose that governments suffocate or eliminate all private mass communication activity. In fact, as the SIP itself has acknowledged, only one of the region's more than 20 governments (Cuba) has a system of total State media ownership (SIP /94). The rest have a mixed but uneven (private and public) system. All the governments essentially would consider is to legally attempt to bring it to a balance that should secure fairness, rationality, and true service to the national community development aims.

The challenge to the traditional creed began, as is natural to expect, among professionals of communication themselves, as a number of them feel that they cannot indefinitely be utilized to blindly operate the media. The voices of scientists

and intellectuals soon echoed them. Moreover, democratic political leaders --
some performing as Chiefs of State -- have joined the criticisms and manifested a
will to amend the situation.

The position of those who run the only regional center of social communica-
tion in this region, CIESPAL, can be taken as representative of that of many com
munication professionals.

Indeed, Ordoñez and Encalada noted that: "The old concepts of the freedom
of expression of thought, of economic liberalism and the first attempts of an indus-
trial revolution, weigh heavily in the role that communications have in society.
But today, under the new circumstances of society, these concepts are obsolete and
completely incompatible with the needs and attitudes which we must assume when
facing new political, economic and social events. Secularism brought about angry
discussions during the past century. Conservatives defended the thesis that educa-
tion was a patrimony of God, which must be given by the Church or family at the
most. Liberals proposed that the State assume the responsibility of all educational
processes. Today, no one would doubt the right and obligation that the State has
to clearly define its educational policies. Nevertheless, the discussion of the
rights and duties that the State has to rule upon the use of communications conti-
nues to prevail" /59, p. 4 . The same analysts add:

> The right to the freedom of expression of thought is an
> unquestionable and consacrated right. However, we
> should question the present communications system that
> allows groups closely linked with the centers of politi-
> cal and economic decision-taking to manage communi-
> cation so as to derive profits from their investments, to
> strengthen the domination ideology that induces social
> groups to continue their consuming actions, turning them
> into mere masses of people who can buy the industrial
> production that these elite groups favor or endorse, with
> out considering the cultural needs of those social groups
> /59, p. 5.

The President of a democratic socialist State (as several of the Western Euro-
pean countries are), Finland's Urho Kekkonen, expressed a perception not different
from that of the just mentioned Latin American communication specialists. Said the
President: "The traditional Western concept of freedom, which states that the State's
only obligation is to guaranty laissez-faire, has meant that society has allowed free
dom of speech to be realized with the means at the disposal of each individual. In
this way freedom of speech has in practice become the freedom of the well-to-do...
At an international level are to be found the ideals of free communication and their
actual distorted execution for the rich on the one hand and the poor on the other.
Globally, the flow of information between States --not least the material pumped

out by television --is to a very great extent a one-way, unbalanced traffic, and in no way possesses the depth and range which the principles of freedom require" /43 .

Venezuelan communication scholar, Antonio Pasquali, agrees: "All the 'freedom of information' is concentrated in the oligarchic elites of information, contrasting with the social right to be informed; there is 'free flow' only in the non-reversible vector going from the informer to the receptor; democracy as the free interplay of public opinion is reduced to a mass opinion authoritarily manipulated with the help of imported engineering" /61, p. 20. "A free flow of information is desirable, of course, but providing that Latin American nations have had an opportunity to determine its content and participated in its preparation, and that they have available the necessary institutionalized instruments for a feedback process, through which a clear balance of information can be achieved" (Ordoñez and Encalada /59, p. 6)

A U.S. analyst has pointed out to the habit of those who dominate the communication systems of identifying those opposing them as a threat to democracy. "If, for example, the 'free flow of information', processed and transmitted by a score of cultural corporations of a few Western states, is challenged, freedom itself is claimed to be imperilled" /86, p. 25. The same analyst has detected another of such tactics: Arbitrarily equating property rights with personal rights and thus making the freedoms of communication businessmen synonyms with constitutionally guaranteed freedoms of individuals /85, p. 113. Both tactics have frequently been used in Latin America and, concomitantly, a third has been applied: presenting the interests of private mass media owners as necessarily equivalent to those of the broader national community. Thus when the former feel attacked in their communication rights they defend themselves by claiming that it is the nation as a whole, along with democracy, which is being attacked.* Juan Liscano, a foremost democratic** leader of Venezuela, objected to this tactic as being fallacious. In defending the

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* Brunner (19) has carefully and insightfully documented a case of this nature in Chile.

** This virtue of his has been acknowledged even by people who opposed the recently approved Venezuelan law creating the National Council of Culture (CONAC), which has as one of its duties the State radio and television policy. For instance, Sofía Imber de Rangel, who criticized the project in the magazine Vision, acknowledged that: "Most of the members who wrote the first project of law for CONAC are proven democrats, starting with their president, Juan Liscano /41, p. 40.

director of the government's institute for cultural promotion from attacks launched on him by advertiser bacause he had strongly criticized commercial television, Liscano said:

> The insensitivity of the advertising world towards culture is really astonishing... It is not true that a TV Law means an attempt against free competition or the democratic system. Countries of a democratic structure far firmer than ours, such as France, England, Italy, have nationalized televisions (not just regulated as is intended here), and which are among the best in the world... /103, pp. 277-278.

Earl Vance in an article entitled "Freedom of the Press for Whom?" (100), had long ago already asked in the U.S.: "Is the freedom of the press to be conceived as a personal right appertaining to all citizens, as the Founding Fathers conceived it, or as a property right appertaining to the ownership of newspapers and other publications, as we have come to think of it largely today?*

Recently, the question was made again in Latin America by Ordoñez:

> It is possible to ask, in any of our countries, for whom there is freedom of expression? For the marginated groups; for the political parties; for the journalists; or simply and exclusively for the groups which own the means of communication? /58, p. 5.

As a Mexican scholar put it, this region has not lacked "in those who believe that, in order to attain a true democratic freedom, mass media ought to be exclusively private. This is not defensible because it would be equivalent to the famous laissez-faire, laissez-passer of the obsolete Liberal State, the failure of which has been blatant. In this manner only anarchy or totalitarianism could be established ...** Within a more full and complete liberty, official means of communication must exist, as well as private, granted that adequate equilibrium does not disappear ..." (Perez Vizcaino /64, p. 23)

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* Questions of this nature were dealt with at a Unesco sponsored meeting in Montreal in 1969 (53). The participants' recommendations were rated as offensive to liberty of mind and speech by the Columbia Broadcasting System and the New York Times. See Stanton (97) and The New York Times (105).

** Emphasis is of the present author.

The Position of Reform-Minded Democratic Leaders

Carlos Andrés Perez, the President of Venezuela, notes that neither freedom of consciousness nor freedom of expression are limited only by governmental measures "but also by the prevalence of interests over the essential context of the rights to information that a country has..." /62, p. 7. Affirms the President: "Liberty of information exists in our country in what refers to the behavior and attitude of the government which in no way interfers or meddles with it. But we could not deny that this liberty of information does get meddled with by partial interests in society..." /62, p. 5.* President Perez, addressing a SIP general assembly, stressed these notions as follows:

> In the democratic regime, which accepts and fosters freedom of the press, liberty of information faces dangers, and graves ones, if information is in the service of certain interests. This endangers the very freedom that it defends, or that it pretends to defend, breaks the rules of the democratic game and threatens the legitimacy of the institution on which is founded...**
> /63, pp. 7-8.

"We believe that the State" --asserts, furthermore, the President of Venezuela -- "must have its own information media ... but of course not to subdue the people to a given ideological trend or to serve the party in turn but to become an organ of free, open, information that serves the integral interests of the community" /___, p. 5. The President also said:

> The newspaper, the media of social communication of our days establish themselves as an enterprising organization, meets the needs of given interests and, in many opportunities, may be contrary to the interests of the community that they serve. That is why we cannot define the media of social communication as enterprises, but as a public service *** /63, p. 5.

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* Several cases illustrating this latter have been reported by Diaz Rangel /27.

** Emphasis is of the present author.

*** Emphasis is of the present author.

Quito, June 14-23, 1976: The Decisive Step

As it is self-evident from the statements heretofore presented, significant opinion nuclei of Latin America are far from sharing the conceptual framework built and sustained by the SIP, the AIR and their affiliates. So it would seem that what some experts had recommended in the Unesco consultation meetings, and in other seminars, cannot be rated as a case of isolated and exotic thinking alient to genuine democratic principles, and fully coincides with positions already manifested by some no less democratic government leaders in the region. What they all seem to be saying is what Ecuador's Ordoñez had expressed as follows:

> What we are interested in is the definition of a global
> policy, of a policy that equally reaches the state, the
> institutions, the persons and the special groups of profes-
> sionals, a policy that seeks to integrate communication
> to the countries' general planning and that, in addition,
> links the problems of communication with the processes
> of development and social change... Then we would
> understand policy in its integral meaning and its global
> character /58, p. 11.

This is precisely what the coming Unesco sponsored ministerial-level conference of Latin American governments should be all about. When the pertinent Ministers, and their technical aids, meet in Ecuador by the middle of June of this year they will be faced with a complex agenda, abundant documentation, and a task as delicate as all historical undertakings are. Open to all viewpoints, they will have to make decisions crucial to the nature of the communication systems and processes in their countries as these exist today and as their sovereign States would want them to become from then on. If the decisions are going to be applicable, they will have to represent an agreement on all those basic policy criterion desirable for all countries of the region, without disregarding the pecularities of each. The decision will also have to seek for an agreement around universal policy questions which should be embraced at the joint Latin American level vis-a-vis the problems of inter national communication that so negatively affect life and development in this part of the world.

In both areas of the discussion what is to be seen in Quito, ultimately, is whether a majority of countries wish to have overall national and region-wide communication policies useful to perpetuate the prevailing communication situation or, on the contrary, to substantially change it within, legality and truly democratic behavior, so that it may no longer represent another privilege of the few.

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