

# Need for the Institute shown by its growth

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THE REPORTING PERIOD to this Assembly covers only six months instead of twelve because of the exceptionally brief interval between the 1966 Assembly in New Delhi and this year's meeting in Geneva.

However, during this short period, IPI membership has grown at a fulltime rate: 128 new members joined the Institute from November 1, 1966 to May 1, 1967. Membership is divided as follows: Europe 622, North America 476, Asia 362, Australasia 45, Latin America 29 and Africa 22. After subtracting wastage, total membership has thus increased from 1522 to 1556.

This is an encouraging rate of growth for an organisation with personal membership, at a time when the number of newspapers in many countries is decreasing. It demonstrates that newspapermen all over the world feel that there is a need for an organisation such as IPI to hold newspapermen together and to strive to defend press freedom.

This need was most dramatically underlined in Greece but is also illustrated by events in other countries where the press is free. Legislation is pending or proposed which will directly limit what the press



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may publish. This calls for careful study and the experience of other countries, made available through an organisation such as ours, can be a powerful weapon with which newspapermen may fight for their legitimate interests.

Such worries come on top of technological problems and economic pressures. Increasing concentration in the newspaper industry poses a threat to the existence of newspapers representing important sectors in the cultural and political life of their nations.

This crisis, which has today become acute in several countries in Western Europe, has provoked a public debate on press concentration and press freedom. The question is raised whether the press can, if concentration is carried further, fulfil its important function as a main instrument of the free exchange of ideas and opinions in a democratic society. Concern has been expressed both by governments and by the press itself, and in several European countries steps have been taken to have the position of the press investigated in order to get the facts clear and suggest possible remedies.

The Institute is watching and documenting this debate closely as well as following developments in individual countries. A survey of the position in one country, Britain, is ready for publication and will be presented to the Assembly. It is hoped that similar surveys will be made for other countries or groups of countries where material on the press is being collected.

The veiled threat to press freedom in Brazil and the total suppression of a free press in Greece have been matters of major concern in the past months. In both cases, the Institute issued sharp protests. According to reports from Brazilian journalists the strong international repercussions were among the factors which influenced the government to modify its press bill, but it remains to be seen how the stringent security laws which were introduced later will be enforced. In Greece, the press is under complete military control and the military government seems to spurn reactions from the outside. However, it has been learned from Greek IPI members that the Institute's unhesitating response in its protest to the government (it was one of the first voicing international opinion) was of great value to the country's journalists as a demonstration of solidarity and a stimulus at a time of brutal suppression and arbitrary arrests when they felt very isolated.

## Wide acclaim

In Europe, a start of new activity has been made with the organising of a Franco-American meeting to take place in Paris. The French edition of Dr. Urs Schwarz's study, "Press Law for our Times", and the second volume of the French manual "Le Reportage" have been sent out to members. Judging from reviews, both publications have been very well received and orders for copies, which have been coming in regularly, confirmed this. It has been a matter of great satisfaction to note the wide acclaim which Dr. Schwarz's study has received in many countries outside Europe where press legislation is being discussed.

A growing interest in the problems and the working of the press has been reflected by an increased use of the IPI library and press information centre. Queries have been more frequent and there has been a number of visitors who have made use of the centre's material on press subjects for research studies, articles and lectures. It is expected that the interest in the problems of press will continue to grow. To meet this demand, a special effort is now being made to update and expand certain sections of the library. The strengthening of this part of the Institute's work should be given high priority. It provides a useful service to members and the press as a whole and it can be improved and enlarged at a reasonable cost.

## IPI IN SPAIN

At the Fifth International Study Week for journalists in Pamplona, Spain, arranged by the Institute of Journalism at the University of Navarra in April, the Director of IPI, Per Monsen, held a lecture on "A free and responsible press", explaining the work and the aims of the International Press Institute.

Other lecturers were IPI Board member Dr. Urs Schwarz on "The legal position of information work", IPI member Hubert Beuve-Méry of "Le Monde" on "Responsibility and the freedom of information in western societies" and IPI member John Dodge of the National Council for the Training of Journalists, London, on "The relationship between information media and the administration".

The University of Navarra is run by the Opus Dei Society and has the only independent journalism school in Spain, with more than 300 students.