

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

SUB-COMMISSION ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND OF THE PRESS

SECOND SESSION

Submitted by the Representative of UNESCO

DESCRIPTION OF THE MAIN OBSTACLES TO THE INTERNATIONAL  
DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

I. ACCESS TO SOURCES

A. Political Obstacles\*

1. State monopolies or de facto privileges reserved for the benefit of the national agency or agencies with regard to official or semi-official information.
2. Favoured treatment extended by official public relations bodies to the national press at the expense of the foreign press in general.
3. Discriminatory measures\*\* in regard to certain classes of journalists.
4. Prohibitions or restrictions upon the entry, stay, or free movement of foreign journalists in the country, for reasons connected with the political opinions expressed by their paper or by themselves in the exercise of their profession.
5. Arbitrary expulsions of foreign journalists for reasons connected with the race, nationality or political tendencies of these journalists or of the directors of their papers.
6. Prohibitions or restrictions upon the assistance given by national collaborators to foreign journalists in the exercise of their profession.

\* The distinction here drawn between political and non-political obstacles is not an absolute one. In actual fact, economic and even technical obstacles are often a result or an instrument of political action by governments or private groups, whether national or international. Conversely, certain regulations or practices having a political effect arise from economic or technical necessities.

\*\* By discriminatory measures we mean those based on non-professional considerations connected with the race, nationality, religion or political tendencies of journalists, or of the directors of the papers which they represent.

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/B. Financial Obstacles

B. Financial Obstacles

1. Exchange difficulties in the way of the maintenance of special reporters or correspondents sent abroad.
2. Increase of the financial burdens involved by the maintenance of special reporters or correspondents sent abroad, by reasons of the double taxation of their salaries.
3. Increase in the financial burdens borne by foreign news agencies or newspapers, by reasons of discriminatory taxation.

C. Technical and Professional Obstacles

1. Administrative difficulties and delays in regard to formalities at the frontier.
2. Shortcomings as regards the recruitment or professional training of special reporters or correspondents sent abroad.

II. PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION OF FOREIGN ORIGIN OR AFFECTING  
FOREIGN COUNTRIES

A. Political Obstacles

1. Prohibitions or restrictions imposed by the government on certain classes of informatory organs by means of discriminatory measures involving or tending towards:

- (a) the system of prior authorization;
- (b) legislation for the protection of public morals;
- (c) political censorship a priori or a posteriori;
- (d) the rationing of newsprint;
- (e) interference of a financial character;
- (f) political pressure.

2. ~~Prohibitions or restrictions imposed by the Government upon certain types of information, by discriminatory measures taking the form of those enumerated above.~~

3. The interference by political groups or movements by means of intimidation or reprisal.

4. ~~Direct or indirect influence exercised by the owners of informatory organs over the choice, tendency, and presentation of, and the commentary on, news to be published.~~

5. ~~Direct or indirect influence exercised by the newsprint trade.~~

6. Direct or indirect influence exercised by advertisers and publicity agents.

7. Obstacles raised by trade union organizations connected with the printing industry.

8. Censorship exercised a priori or a posteriori by religious authorities with regard

/(a) to certain

- (a) to certain classes of papers,
- (b) to certain classes of journalists or writers,
- (c) to certain classes of information.

B. Economic Obstacles

- 1. Restrictions on the number and variety of papers owing to the economic centralization of the industries connected with news and the press.
- 2. Shortage of newsprint.

C. Technical and Professional Obstacles

- 1. Shortcomings in technical equipment.
- 2. Shortcomings in recruitment and deficiencies\* in the professional training of administrative and technical as well as of editorial staff.

III. TRANSMISSION OF INFORMATION FROM ONE COUNTRY TO ANOTHER

1. Non-Published Information

A. Political Obstacles

- 1. Moral or political censorship of outgoing or incoming information.
- 2. State monopolies of the dissemination of news by foreign agencies for the benefit and at the discretion of the national news agencies.
- 3. Interference, direct or indirect, open or concealed, by the authorities in the work of national communication agencies which are materially or morally dependent upon the public administration.
- 4. Discriminatory measures applied to foreign agencies and newspapers in regard to the use of the technical means of transmission in the possession of, or controlled by, the administration.
- 5. Restrictive influence or discriminatory interference on the part of the private owners of the technical means of transmission used by the national or foreign press.

B. Economical and Financial Obstacles

- 1. High telecommunication charges.
- 2. International cartels of owners of the means of transmitting news, having as their result the reservation for each of them of regional monopolies of exploitation.
- 3. De Facto commercial monopolies, reserving for one particular national agency and the dissemination of news from foreign agencies.

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\* These deficiencies are often to a great extent due to the financial difficulties which hamper the organization, on a proper scale, of journeys abroad for the purpose of completing studies or attending courses.

C. Technical and Professional Obstacles

1. Delays in the transmission of press messages.
2. Shortcomings in mechanical equipment.
3. Professional shortcomings in the operating staff.

20. Published Information

A. Political Obstacles

1. Export or import prohibitions or restrictions imposed for moral or political reasons.
2. Discriminatory measures against the foreign press, in favour of a State monopoly or a governmental control of carrier services.

B. Economic Obstacles

1. Customs prohibitions or restrictions with regard to importation.
2. Import restrictions due to private commercial monopolies.
3. Discriminatory measures with regard to distribution within the country at the expense of the foreign press, and in favour of the control of carrier services by a private trust.

C. Technical or Professional Obstacles

1. Inconsistencies, inadequacies or exaggerations in copyright legislation.
2. Shortcomings in the national or international information apparatus.
3. Shortcomings in the national or international apparatus for the commercial exploitation of copyright.
4. High air transport charges.
5. Shortcomings in the training and professional experience of specialists in the national or international dissemination of information.
6. Shortcomings in the organization, equipment or use of national carrier agencies.

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