

# CJFE reporter

Newsletter of Canadian Journalists for Free Expression

1999 – Issue 1

## Harsh decree

# Yugoslav media: rising cost of freedom

by Isabelle Patenaude

What does it mean to be an independent media outlet in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia currently? Lauded abroad, but despised and struggling at home – a reality evident as the two-day *Media for a Democratic Europe* conference opened on 4 December 1998 in Belgrade.

Organized by the Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM, a network which brings together over 50 private radio and television stations across Serbia and Montenegro) and Belgrade's Radio B92, the conference's international showing sent a strong message of support for the beleaguered independent press.

However, as the event opened, Drazen Pantic, director of OpenNet.Org, the Internet service provider operated by B92, announced that overnight, access to OpenNet had been blocked for users of the Serbian academic Internet network. Beyond students and academics, the measure affected several independent media and NGOs who reach OpenNet, a major source of independent news

— continues on 6

### NEW NAME!

**Announced at the press freedom awards dinner: the Canadian Committee to Protect Journalists is now Canadian Journalists for Free Expression. See page 7.**



ISABELLE PATENAUDE / CJFE

**WALL OF TRUTH:** Posters put up at the University of Belgrade in December to protest a crackdown on Serbia's universities display a photo of Radio B92 receiving MTV-Europe's Free Your Mind award and the logo of student group Otpor ("Resistance").

**NEW LIMITS:**  
*The law is only one of many weapons aimed at independent media.*

## La renaissance dans la continuité : la CJFE décerne ses premiers prix

par Amrani Barutwanayo

Le mardi 24 novembre 1998 restera une soirée mémorable pour l'organisation Journalistes canadiens pour la liberté d'expression (CJFE), anciennement connue sous le nom de Comité canadien pour la protection des journalistes. Le caractère inoubliable de la soirée est cette renaissance dans la continuité marquée par la remise des premiers Prix internationaux de la liberté de la presse. L'événement, organisé sous forme de banquet, a eu lieu à l'hôtel Westin Harbour Castle de Toronto en présence de Mary Robinson, Haut Commissaire aux droits de l'homme des

Nations-Unies.

On a présenté des prix de distinction à cinq journalistes, reconnus pour leur courage face à des intimidations et autres formes de menaces.

Le journaliste nigérian Babafemi Ojudu, son collègue et compatriote Bayo Onanuga et San San Nwe de la Birmanie ont été choisis par la CJFE pour ces premiers prix internationaux. Ojudu a été passé à tabac par la police militaire de son pays avant d'être emprisonné pour une durée de huit mois. Il a été libéré au mois de juillet dernier sans être jugé et sans qu'aucune inculpation soit retenue contre lui. Nwe,

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**Canadian Journalists for Free Expression** (formerly the Canadian Committee to Protect Journalists) is an independent, non-profit association of journalists, writers, producers, editors and publishers promoting freedom of expression.

CJFE membership costs \$25. For a tax-creditable donation of \$50 or more, the membership fee is waived.

CJFE administers a Clearing House for the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), which operates an Action Alert Network and globally disseminates information to organizations and individuals.

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## Changing times

# Looking back on 1998, looking ahead

by Wayne Sharpe

Nothing illustrates the twists and turns for press freedom in 1998 better than a party I turned up at in Jakarta last October. After four years in limbo since the Indonesian government banned his news weekly *Tempo* in 1994 for a story linking highly placed officials to a corrupt military acquisition, Goenawan Mohamad, renowned poet and publisher of *Tempo*, welcomed a star-studded crowd to help celebrate the re-launch of the magazine at a lavish reception. None other than Foreign Minister Ali Alitas and a bevy of other political dignitaries were in attendance.

Alitas, a senior Suharto aide, toasted the rebirth of *Tempo* with as much glee as Mohamad himself – the winds of Indonesian politics had indeed changed course. Unfortunately, where there are winds, a storm is often not far behind. Perhaps this is why Goenawan handed umbrellas to each of the party's 2,000 guests.

After 35 years of autocratic rule in Indonesia, Suharto stepped aside last May in the face of a defiant student movement and a devastated rupiah. The winds of change swept through Nigeria as well, where scores of journalists had been imprisoned by dictator Sani Abacha. When Abacha died of a heart attack in June, most of the journalists were released. Both leaders terrorized the journalists' communities in their countries with harassment, detention, kangaroo courts and even execution.

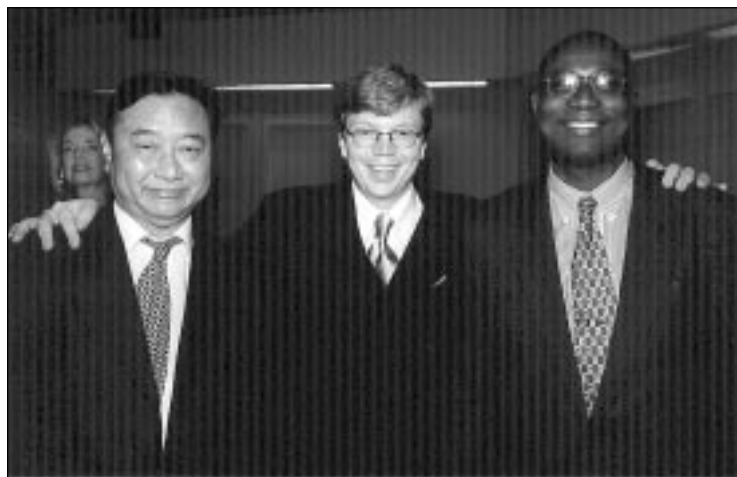
The freedom of expression community lobbied intensively to try to force these unreasonable men to release all those who were jailed simply for exercising their right to free speech. Ultimately, it wasn't international censure that changed the course of history in these two nations, but a currency crisis and a heart attack – although this does not detract from the importance of our work. Unfortunately, in too many countries, free expression is still a casualty of po-

litical and military struggle.

Colombia continues to be a deadly home for journalists. In May, Bernabé Cortés, a television reporter known for covering drug trafficking and corruption, was shot dead on his way to an appointment with someone who had paged him earlier with "important news." In all, seven journalists

memorate the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

At CJFE's Annual Meeting, we were honoured to welcome Nigerian journalist Chris Anyanwu to be our keynote speaker. In the midst of a 15-year sentence for publishing stories about an alleged coup plot against Abacha, she was



**AWARD WINNERS:** Win Pe of Burma (left) joins CJFE executive director Wayne Sharpe (centre) and Nigerian Babafemi Ojodu to be feted at the November press freedom awards banquet.

were murdered in the country in 1998. Another four journalists were murdered in Mexico alone.

As bad as 1998 was for journalists, 1999 got off to a dreadful start with the bloodbath in Sierra Leone. Canadian journalist Ian Stewart is lucky to be alive after being shot in the head by rebels as he was covering the fighting in Freetown. U.S. journalist Myles Tierney was killed instantly in the same attack.

The death toll for local journalists is unknown as of this writing, but among the confirmed dead is radio journalist Mohammed Kamara. Kamara was to have received part of a large grant CJFE is distributing to Sierra Leone's journalists to help them start over after the long civil war.

For CJFE, the past year has been a watershed. We had yet another successful annual meeting of the International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX), hosted by UNESCO in Paris to help com-

released last June – a relief and a triumph for everyone who campaigned on her behalf. Her inspirational speech encouraged us to keep up our good work.

Our biggest local event was our first International Press Freedom Awards. This represents a coming of age for a small organization with big aspirations and I am very proud of everyone who was involved in this event.

When all is said and done, however, some 52 journalists, writers and media workers were killed in 1998. We must remain cautious about improvement in places like Nigeria and Indonesia, as we must increase pressure on governments to take press freedom seriously. And we must remind ourselves that freedom of expression is a vital element of our own society, and fight for it by speaking out whenever we see our rights to inform and to be informed threatened.

## Thanks to Our Supporters

On behalf of the staff and volunteers, thank you to everyone who supported us in 1998, including our individual members, and the following:

Air Canada  
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WIC Western International Communications Ltd.

## Prix de la liberté de la presse

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qui est incarcérée à Rangoon (en Birmanie) depuis 1994 avec sa fille Mo Mo Tun, n'a pas pu assister au rendez-vous. C'est Win Pe, journaliste birmanais qui vit aux États-Unis, qui a accepté de recevoir son prix. Deux journalistes canadiens, Paul Kaihla et Judy Trinh, ont été primés – Kaihla pour son article publié dans la revue *Maclean's* au sujet d'une enquête de la GRC sur une affaire de stupéfiants, et Trinh pour son documentaire sur les adolescents homosexuels à London, en Ontario.

En répondant à l'invitation de la CJFE, Robinson a non seulement voulu saluer le courage louable de ces journalistes, mais aussi réaffirmer son engagement à défendre la liberté d'expression. S'adressant à une foule nombreuse (quelques 600 personnes) constituée de journalistes canadiens de renom, femmes et hommes d'affaires, et journalistes immigrants vivant au Canada, l'ancienne présidente de l'Irlande a rappelé ce que d'aucuns



**UN RÔLE À JOUER:** Mary Robinson a exhorté les grandes entreprises à s'impliquer.

semblent ignorer : « La liberté d'expression est un droit sans lequel aucun autre droit fondamental ne peut être obtenu ».

Elle a aussi lancé un appel exhortant les grandes entreprises commerciales, les multinationales en particulier, à se joindre à la lutte

pour les droits de la personne. À ce sujet, l'allusion était bien sûr faite en tenant compte de la place occupée aujourd'hui par les multinationales dans la gestion des affaires qui étaient traditionnellement du ressort de l'État. Mais, suite à la mondialisation, le rôle de l'État semble s'effacer de plus en plus pour céder la place à l'entreprise privée.

La défense de la liberté d'opinion ne devrait pas seulement être soutenue par les organisations qui promouvoient la liberté d'expression telles la CJFE. Comme a expliqué Hilary Weston, la lieutenant-gouverneure de l'Ontario : Les pouvoirs politiques dans maintes régions se méfient tant d'une presse libre et forte qu'ils sont prêts à tout faire pour imposer le silence, au point de causer la mort.

Raison de plus de ne pas attendre une soirée gala pour venir en aide à la CJFE et à tous ceux qui ont pour défi constant la promotion des droits de la personne à travers le monde.

**DES RETOMBÉES POUR LA PRESSE : Suite à la mondialisation, le rôle de l'État semble s'effacer de plus en plus pour céder la place à l'entreprise privée.**

## Inaugural event a glittering success

# Awards banquet brings home the m

by Moira MacDonald

When you work in the freedom of expression field you hope for small miracles. The date of 24 November 1998 did not make that category. For those of us at the Canadian Journalists for Free Expression (CJFE) who had a hand in pulling the event together, it was a huge miracle – and we're still pinching ourselves to make sure it really happened.

Nearly two years of preparation finally paid off in a glittering affair at downtown Toronto's Westin Harbour Castle hotel. Some 600 of Canada's sung and unsung media personalities, journalists in exile and business sponsors turned out to hear keynote speaker Mary Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, while

honouring a few of the many brave journalists worldwide who inspire us to continue our work.

"As a journalist, you have to tell the world what is happening even though the government never wants the corruption to be exposed," said Nigerian journalist Babafemi Ojudu, accepting one of two International Press Freedom Awards on behalf of Nigeria's Independent Communication Network Ltd. (ICNL), the publishers of *Tempo*, *The News* and *PM News*. ICNL continued publishing under the military dictatorship of the late Gen. Sani Abacha despite arrests, banning and the seizure of its equipment.

Ojudu's appearance at the Toronto event was a miracle in itself since he had nearly died from illnesses contracted during an eight-month imprisonment without charge in a Nigerian jail that ended just last July. Greeting Ojudu was Owens Wiwa, brother of writer Ken Saro-Wiwa, executed by the Nigerian government in 1995, a good friend of Ojudu's from their days working together in the struggle against the Abacha régime.

"When they come after journalists then you know you've got to go, because then nobody can tell the world you're no longer there," said Wiwa, who went into exile in Canada several years ago. Also named for the ICNL award was Bayo Onanuga, founding editor of ICNL, whose strong criticisms of the Abacha regime forced him to flee the country after evading a "find and kill" military order.

For San San Nwe, our other International Press Freedom Award recipient, we still hold out hope that this courageous Burmese editor and writer will be released, despite the military dictatorship's iron grip on the country. She was jailed in 1994 along with her daughter for "spreading information injurious to the state" and "contact with an illegal organization." Win Pe, a Burmese journalist now living in the United States, accepted the award on her behalf.



## CJFE HEA

Guests of honour, winners and organizers at the first annual Canadian Press Freedom awards banquet used to announce the CCPJ's new name:



MIXING: Globe and Mail president Philip Crawley (left) with Wayne Sharpe, Hilary Weston and Richard Gwyn of the Toronto Star.

MEETING: Diana and Owens Wiwa of Nigeria with TVO's Eric Margolis and CBC's Pamela Wallin.

Photos by John Scully



**MARY ROBINSON:**  
*"It's vital to recognize that journalists need legal fees, medical fees, and all kinds of support in their work."*

**BABAFEMI OJUDU:**  
*"We are grateful to the government and people of Canada for standing solidly by us. I am pledging that we will continue to fight oppression, to expose misdeeds of those in authority, not only in Nigeria but in other parts of Africa."*



CANADIAN WINNERS: Paul Kaihla (above) and Judy Trinh.



**JUDY TRINH:**  
*"I believe there are stories out there that need to be told. By telling these stories we can be powers of positive change."*

# Meaning of press freedom



worried they were about the deaths of six journalists in 1998. "Everyone has the right to free expression, regardless of borders or frontiers," she said.

Robinson's Irish compatriot, Ontario Lieutenant Governor Hilary Weston, referred to the deaths of journalist Veronica Guerin, gunned down in 1996 in Ireland, and newspaper publisher Tara Singh Hayer, shot in November in Canada. "A free press is a powerful thing," said Weston. "Powerful enough to get you killed. Powerful enough to be worth dying for."

It was a proud moment too to watch Canadian winner Paul Kaihla and student winner Judy Trinh accept their awards. Kaihla, now an editor with *Canadian Business Magazine*, later wrote the CJFE's Board of Directors that the award – given for a *Macleans* magazine story on a bungled RCMP drug investigation – had "marked a career high for me."

The evening was also one of those rare occasions where a good cross-section of the media industry – print and broadcast, managers and reporters – was brought together. Although we're glad that it was the CJFE that made that happen, freedom of expression hardly needs extra encouragement among a bunch of journalists around a bar!

Thanks are also owed to our many generous corporate sponsors including principal sponsors the *Toronto Star* and the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. Thanks also to Richard Gwyn and Diane Francis, our benefit committee co-chairs, who convinced the corporations this was an event worth supporting.

CJFE Executive Director Wayne

Sharpe said, "The press freedom awards event was a milestone for us because it not only insures the financial good health of the organization for every year that we can draw sponsors to the event, but it also gives this small but determined organization the profile it has lacked until now. Everything you do becomes easier when the public knows who you are and what you stand for."

The event raised \$65,000 for CJFE's work, \$25,000 of it going to



OFF AIR: Peter Gzowski and Ann Medina of the CBC take a breather.

the Journalists in Distress Fund which allows us to extend emergency help to more journalists than ever before.

Notice the event was billed as the "Inaugural CJFE Press Freedom Awards"? That means there will be more to come.

And that means we need you. Planning has already begun for the next banquet with the hope that the trails we blazed for the first one will make the job much easier. Dinner, anyone?

*Moira MacDonald is the education reporter at the Toronto Sun and is a long-time member of the CJFE Board of Directors.*

## HILARY WESTON:

***"The threats to a free press are not confined to history books of far away dictatorships. They are as close as last week. As near as Vancouver. Both Veronica Guerin and Tara Singh Hayer understood that a free press is a very powerful thing – powerful enough to be worth dying for."***

## ADLINERS

ers gather at the banquet celebrating the awards in November. The occasion was also Canadian Journalists for Free Expression.



"The right to freedom of expression is an essential test right enshrining other rights," reminded Robinson, who was touring Canada as part of the UN's commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights. The former Irish president spoke of being "very struck" when she met Colombians participating in a Bogotá human rights symposium who told her how



## WIN PE:

***"San San Nwe has always been devoted to the cause of freedom and justice. She is undeniably and significantly a symbol not only for Burma but also for the international arena."***



## Government interference

# Serbia's beleaguered press



Drazen Pantic  
of OpenNet.

**NO RESPITE:**  
*The intensity of the Milosevic regime's efforts to pressure and censor independent sources of news will not subside.*



PHOTOS BY ISABELLE PATENAUDE / CJFE

**LOUD AND CLEAR:**  
A Belgrade poster advertises a concert to benefit Radio B92's campaign "Serbia, Silence does not become you."

— from page 1

through the university servers. OpenNet reacted immediately by mirroring its site and sending users information on how to access the mirrors.

The filtering of OpenNet came on the heels of a new law on universities. One of the motives for blocking access appears to have been a link on the site to a political cartoon showing the new government-appointed dean of the university's School of Electrical Engineering, Vlada Teodosic, in a Nazi uniform giving a Nazi salute; the cartoon also portrays another newly appointed administrator as a monkey.

Creative use of information technology to circumvent censorship is not new to OpenNet and B92. December marked two years since B92 turned to the Internet after its broadcasts were jammed during the months of protests at the government's attempts to annul the opposition's victory in local elections.

Although other independent and private broadcasters have similarly managed to weather the storm, survival is always in peril. Financial viability is next to impossible, with advertising revenue practically inaccessible and advertisers pressured to cancel their contracts with independent broadcasters. The sheer number of broadcast media – over 1,000 across the Yugoslavia republic – make survival that much more difficult. In Montenegro, some broadcasters are being crushed under heavy debts. Tanza Knezevic, editor-in-chief of Radio Montena, says her station owes the government over 180,000 dinars (about \$30,000) for its frequency.

The targeting of independent media has intensified since October – particularly through a decree which was used to ban three private dailies and then through the new Law on Public Information enacted on 21 October. According to ANEM's Milos Zivkovic, the

new law – which abolishes the presumption of innocence and the right to a legal defence and im-

poses huge fines – is being applied in even more restrictive ways.

But the law is only one of many weapons aimed at independent media. Most media have been prosecuted to date under existing legislation – charged, in most cases, for operating without a license.

ANEM Radio Coordinator Dusan Matic sees the allocation of frequencies as one of the best indicators of how much the government fears the independent press. Only one out of 20 requests for licenses from ANEM members has been granted in two "open" frequency allocation tenders which were anything but. Three ANEM members – Radio City, Radio Index and Radio Senta – remain closed.

Recent events warn that the intensity of the Milosevic regime's efforts to pressure and censor independent sources of news will not subside. A sustained and coordinated show of support from all corners – one that takes its cue from local initiatives – is as needed as ever.



This cartoon was among the items that got OpenNet into trouble.

## Media a family business in Serbia

When Slobodan Milosevic came to power in 1987, he promised to create a "Greater Serbia." Since making this promise, four out of six republics of former Yugoslavia have declared independence. The remaining partner in the rump federation, Montenegro, is also threatening to secede. Two autonomous regions, Kosovo and Vojvodina, are exploring different roads in their desire to separate.

Serbia is getting smaller, as Milosevic's influence over state run media grows. The Yugoslav Left party, led by Mirjana Markovic, Milosevic's wife, does not miss an opportunity to demonize free and independent media. Each campaign against the independent media is joined by right-wing extremist Vojislav Seselj, leader of the Serbian Radical Party.

In March 1998, five independent newspaper editors were charged with disseminating misinformation because they referred to Albanians who had died in Kosovo as "people" rather than "terrorists." The charges were later dropped but the action was a clear warning to all journalists in Serbia: "Mind your language!"

At least two broadcasters have not complained of the new information law. One is a radio station run by Milosevic's son, Marko, and another is a television station which belongs to his daughter, Maria.

— Gordana Knezevic

# Striving for press freedom in Southeast Asia

By Kristina Stockwood

Journalists in Southeast Asia want media freedom throughout the region and they are doing everything they can to achieve that goal.

An alliance of journalists was formed to support and promote media freedom in the region at a meeting in Bangkok, Thailand last November. Twenty-five representatives from five independent journalists' organizations in the Phil-

ippines, Thailand and Indonesia formed the Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA), which will grow to include other nations in the region. The alliance plans to open a secretariat in Bangkok on 3 May 1999, World Press Freedom Day, to monitor attacks on journalists and threats to the media in Southeast Asia. The alliance will also encourage governments in Southeast Asia to reform repressive media laws and release the press from longtime restrictions.



## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

At the 1997 CCPJ Annual Meeting, Moira MacDonald, a Director, introduced an issue that this organization has struggled with for a long time: changing our name. She explained that this is an issue because "CCPJ is often confused with the U.S. press freedom group the Committee to Protect Journalists," and that "many of us want to include the freedom of expression concept in the name as well."

Last fall, we finally found a name to satisfy everyone – **Canadian Journalists for Free Expression**. Both elements our membership felt were needed are included in this name: journalists, and freedom of expression. The name better reflects the fact that we promote freedom of expression for all, not only journalists, and still recognizes the fact that our membership is primarily comprised of journalists, and that journalism is a focus of our work.

At our Annual Meeting on 17 September 1998, the membership approved the new name, and it was officially announced at the CJFE International Press Freedom Awards banquet on 24 November. We think the new name is a good fit, and we hope you like it too.

A steering committee was formed with members from the Reporters' Association of Thailand (RAT), the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR) of the Philippines, and two Indonesian groups, the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) and the Institute for Studies in the Free Flow of Information (ISAI).

Most of the groups involved either are members of IFEX or will apply to become members, with a view to close cooperation with the international network.

"This is a landmark development in [our] history," said Kavi Chongkittavorn, a member of SEAPA's six-member steering committee and Executive Editor of the *Nation* newspaper in Bangkok. "We journalists have to be able to defend ourselves and help our Asian colleagues."

The seminar was hosted by RAT in conjunction with the World Press Freedom Committee and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). At the conference, Melinda Quintos de Jesus, Executive Director of the CMFR, and Howie Severino of the PCIJ, warned that, while press freedom thrives in the Philippines, the level of violence in the country results in frequent murders of journalists.

The CMFR estimates that at least half of the 60 to 80 journalists murdered in the Philippines in the last decade were murdered for practising their profession.



**WORKING TOGETHER:**  
*"We journalists have to be able to defend ourselves and help our Asian colleagues."*

At left, panelists at a regional meeting discuss press freedom. Below, Layla Mirza of Indonesia's Radio Mara (left) with Luz Rimban and Howie Severino of the Philippines.



PHOTOS BY KRISTINA STOCKWOOD / CJFE

## Internet controls a worrying trend

by Michaël Elbaz

Most of the world's countries are still slow to acknowledge the benefits of an Internet free of government controls. Continued legislation, filtering and monitoring of cyberspace are increasingly placing limits on the dissemination of and access to online information.

As Human Rights Watch (HRW) explains in its 1999 *Report on Freedom of Expression and the Internet*, "the trend is towards extending [filtering] technologies more broadly, with global implications for free expression."

This reflex to control was made most apparent last year in a number of cases around the world. In December, one much publicized case involved Shanghai software company owner Lin Hai, convicted for "inciting to overthrow the government" after providing 30,000 mainland China e-mail addresses to a United States-based dissident group. Lin is the first "cyber-dissident" convicted by the Chinese government.

In 1997, China banned e-mail critical of the government, making such exchanges punishable by long prison sentences. Ken Farrall, who operates a web site on Internet use in China, says, "With an explosion of Internet use here – from 100,000 users in 1996 to as many as five million today – Chinese authorities are focusing on increasingly sophisticated monitoring techniques, in addition to blocking numerous web sites."

In Russia, *Index on Censorship* reported in October 1998 that the secret police (FSB) are close to implementing a regulation that will allow them to monitor all Internet communications without a warrant. Russian free expression advocates see this as an effort to develop totalitarian-style tactics for cyberspace. A regulation is already in place in the country which allows officials to monitor specific Internet communication but only with a court-issued warrant.



In December, the Serbian government ordered university administrators to install "filters" meant to prevent the Serbian academic community from accessing the Internet provider operated by Belgrade's Radio B92 – OpenNet – a rare and important independent news source.

In January 1999, officials in Syria announced that the government would introduce the first public e-mail service in the country this February. Unfortunately, the move will be subject to control by authorities through a special server at the state telecommunications centre that will al-

low control of incoming and outgoing services, including the ability to block contact with destinations regarded as "undesirable." Officials also suggested that efforts were underway to find the means of controlling access to web sites abroad, in the hopes of "protecting the public."

Such efforts to censor, filter or otherwise control the Internet are hardly limited to dictatorships or emerging democracies. The U.S. government tried to pass a Communications Decency Act (CDA) in 1996 which would have criminalized Internet communications considered "obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy or indecent." The law was deemed too broad and was struck down by the Supreme Court. Congress has since introduced a second, more narrow law, the Child Online Protection Act, expected to take effect in 1999, which while less intrusive than the CDA, is still considered by most analysts as too broad.

In Canada, regulators at the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) began hearings last fall with an eye towards regulating the Internet. The agency is trying to determine whether to introduce regulations designed to curb online pornography and hate speech. Aside from concerns over censorship, freedom of expression groups and computer industry insiders are also worried that new laws could stifle efforts towards universal access and hurt small Internet service providers.

The Internet remains subject to the same or greater controls as other media in many countries where governments traditionally frown on free expression, and is also put under pressure in democracies where governments are increasingly uncomfortable with the seemingly unbounded possibilities for expressing opinions and ideas which the new medium offers.

Such efforts seem increasingly misguided. National or local laws generally prove ineffective in blocking access to pornography or online hate speech. The Internet, by its very nature, is difficult to regulate. The medium has built-in features which automatically reroute information when faced with a barrier. Jagdish Parikh, HRW online research associate, explains that, "savvy users can find technological detours around filters, and the sheer volume of information on the network could ultimately inundate the most diligent corps of censors."

Ultimately, Internet censorship runs contrary to its very nature and purpose. Chuck Lankester, Director of the United Nations Development Program's Sustainable Development Networking Programme, summed it up in a May 1998 conference on free expression and new technologies held in Copenhagen, "The true value of the Internet lies in how it can level the playing field, foster more open competition, and help to attain sustainable development. Policies that emphasize a participatory approach, open systems and transparency will go a long way to limit abuses."