

PRIME MINISTER ODVAR NORDLI AT THE OPENING OF THE  
22nd WORLD CONGRESS OF FIPP OSLO, 5th OF JUNE, 1979

Your majesty, your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a pleasure for me to address the 22nd world conference of the FIPP.

It is also a pleasure to welcome you to Norway.

You are representing a wide variety of periodicals, coming from countries which all believe in democracy, including freedom of the press. Nevertheless, we are different in the way in which we tackle our problems, having different traditions economically and politically.

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I say these obvious truths because I feel it is the starting point of our discussions. When judging the solutions of others, we must bear in mind the different contexts within which they are sought and found.

As for the Norwegian media situation, you may know that we have a state broadcasting monopoly, with one TV Channel and one radio channel. A new act on broadcasting has just been presented to the Storting, but has not yet been debated there. The broadcasting corporation is obliged to be manifold, concerned about facts, and impartial. Within this framework, the corporation has its full editorial freedom.

As for our press, newspapers in this country are to a considerable degree connected with, or supporting,

political parties.

We have a decentralised system of press service. The big national newspapers are less dominating than in other countries. In our country with 4 million inhabitants we have<sup>160</sup> daily newspapers, to our standard, some very big ones, some very small.

We make a great effort to keep the decentralised model in order to maintain a democratic press and in order to strengthen the influence of the districts.

This is the reason why the Government subsidises newspapers in various ways. This is done in cooperation with the press organizations. The subsidies are, of course, given without strings. Editors and managers of the newspapers do not oppose the subsidies. On the contrary, the Government might often be criticised

for not fully understanding the economic problems of the press.

Periodicals are an important part of the media field. We have a great variety of periodicals from the serious, analytic kind to the light, entertaining magazines. They have a wide circulation, and provide for many people the main sources of information of what goes on in the world.

I shall not go into this too much, as this is your own profession.

In the 80's, we must foresee a technological development which may alter the conditions in the media field considerably, and the future is already here. TV-satellites are there - and on a Nordic basis we are

investigating the possibilities of programme-interchange by means of direct broadcasting satellites. A report on this will, according to plans be submitted to the Governments of the Nordic countries by the end of June. After that the Nordic Council will decide the matter.

Taking into consideration technological developments, videograms, teletext, teledata and so on, it is obvious that society is on the threshold of a new information structure.

This may be for better or for worse. Technology may lead us - or we may try to lead technology.

Government policy in the media field does not at all mean State interference in the actual production and editing of media content. On the contrary: the State must accept its important but clearly limited role.

A sharp dividing line should be drawn between the role of the State and what should be left to the profession itself.

I have touched upon some of the items that you will discuss in more detail during the next few days. I hope you will profit from talks with your colleagues. I also hope you will find time to look around while you are here in Norway.

The Norwegian authorities are pleased that this important world congress takes place in Norway. I hope that through your discussions you will contribute to improving conditions for the press and the periodicals which are in competition with already existing and future electronic massmedia.

I wish you good luck in your work and hereby declare the congress open.