NATIONAL ETHNIC PRESS AND MEDIA COUNCIL OF CANADA

Conseil national de la presse et des medias ethniques du Canada

"Canada's other Voices"

Office of the President

PRESENTED

BY

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With an increasing number of newcomers and substantial changes in Canadian demographics- mother tongue of more than 35% of the Canadian population is not English- therefore the importance of foreign language press in Canada has been enlarged. The role of the National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada is to take serious and active interest in fostering Canadian unity and territorial integrity; and as pro-Canadian, it will pursue this goal vigorously in the future. The ethnic press of the Canada performs a unique function with the boundaries of the Canadian mass media.

Generally, its purpose is to inform the readers in a language more readily understood than the official language of the country. This press, serving the various ethnic communities of Canada has fulfilled its role, which goes beyond the immigrant communities internal needs.

For more than eleven decades the ethnic newspapers have been meeting the challenges of assistance, guidance and integration of millions of newcomers who have immigrated to Canada from many lands. It performed this role in full awareness of a great responsibility towards a country, which has been developed by many cultural and linguistic communities.
In addition to provide the news to these people the ethnic press is in forming them about settlement issues and available assistance and also helps them to be introduced to our democratic institutions as well as the new way of living in the new country.

To these citizens who, at one time or another, have found themselves behind language barriers in a country whose laws, traditions and customs were different from their own, the ethnic press is acting as a guide, interpreter and teacher and also as an intimate and trusted friend. Its role is to introduce to members of the immigrant communities to their own environment as efficiently and as painlessly for themselves and their community as possible the socioeconomic system of the new country, in order for them to become full-fledged citizens of Canada as soon as possible, willing and able to contribute their talents and abilities for the benefits of all Canadians.

Classical democratic theory always viewed democracy as a set of institutions, which both promoted and depended upon the full rational development of the individual.

With the influx of immigrants after the Second World War and even recently, both the duties and the influence of the ethnic press in Canada have multiplied. The ethnic newspapers and magazines serve now over five million Canadians who are neither Anglophone nor Francophone. This, is in addition to all those who have been here for a generation or more but still retain the habit of reading papers in their own heritage language.

Conversely, it also tried to inform newcomers about the existence of negative influences and ideological conflicts counter-productive to democracy and Canadian traditions. All this is done in the spirit of helping them to become better Canadians. In this enchanted role, the ethnic press became an important tool in influencing new Canadians who arrive daily to the hospitable ports of this great country. To some extend this has been well recognized by many politicians but not by all levels of the government.
With the increasing number of newcomers and substantial changes in the demographics in Canada - mother tongue of more than half of the Toronto population is not English anymore - the scope and importance of foreign language press in Canada has been enlarged. There is a qualitative change in its operation.

It is no more merely an information disseminating medium but rather a powerful vehicle operating at the grassroots level. In the past, it had taken serious and active interest in fostering Canadian unity and territorial integrity; and as pro-Canadian, it will pursue this goal vigorously in the future.

While ethnic media and ethnic communities continue to participate fully in nation-building processes, it is important to recognize that their aspirations, dreams and concerns cannot be indifferent than those of mainstream society. Therefore the members of the ethnic press cannot be look for special status or treatment by the mainstream media; they would feel hurt if they were treated as second class citizens and negligible entity.

Today, the social structure and the educational level of the ethnic communities are compatible to those of the members of the founding people of the nation. This is easily seen as more and more members of the ethnic communities in Canada are seeking elective offices at all levels at each election. Furthermore, they are make very productive and effective contributions in all walks of life in Canada. Therefore, the ethnic press expects that both the ethnic press and the ethnic communities should receive equal treatment and be accepted as equal partners in the nation-building process.

Finally, it must be recognized that as long as immigration to this country continues, the importance and influence of the ethnic press will be more pronounced.

Canada, today, is in a period of socio-economic changes in a world that is becoming smaller and smaller daily, looking for new markets and searching for new partnerships. In this connection, the ethnic press and the ethnic communities they serve could prove to be an important participant in the
Canadian economic growth because of their ability to speak all the languages of the world, their global contacts and their global knowledge.

This strength of the ethnic communities and their media has not fully recognized by the Canadian society. In view of its internal importance due to demographic changes and external influence on Canadian economy through international trade and investments, the ethnic press and media has a multidimensional role to play. Hence, the council is trying to find the right place in the social, cultural, political and economic life of Canada.

The National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada (NEPMCC), is a non-profit, non-governmental, media organization with 850 member publications, printing in about 110 languages along with 150 radio and television directors, websites and TV producers and journalists.