

In memoriam

Svennik Høyer
(1931–2017)

Member of the Editorial Board of *CEJC*

A great man has passed away. Norwegian and international media research communities have lost a prominent scholar and Professor in Svennik Høyer, who was an active researcher until last year, and *primus motor* of several international projects. Colleagues and friends miss a person with a warm heart and special sense of humour who loved outdoor life (as probably most of Norwegians do).

Svennik Høyer's research focused largely on press history and relations between press and politics, as his scholarly background lay in political science and history. His Ph.D. dissertation (in 1977) *Norsk presse 1865–1965, strukturutvikling og politiske mønstre* (Norwegian Press 1865–1965, the development of its structure and political patterns) was the first doctoral dissertation in Norwegian media scholarship. The monograph on Norwegian press history *Pressen mellom teknologi og samfunn. Norske og internasjonale perspektiver på pressehistorien fra Gutenberg til vår tid* (The press between technology and society. Nordic and international perspectives of press history from Gutenberg till the present time, 1995) was an eminent milestone in research on Norwegian press history. Svennik also extensively published on the historical development of the journalistic profession and various aspects of journalism nationally and internationally. He was active in the Norwegian Press History Society. He was one of the “founding fathers” in 1973 of the Nordic Media Conferences (Nordmedia), when the first conference of Nordic media researchers took place in Oslo.

Svennik was also a devoted international player. He participated in numerous international media and communication conferences throughout his career and established close contacts with many media scholars abroad. One of the more remarkable results of his international collaboration was an edited volume *Diffusion of the News Paradigm 1850–2000* (2005; co-editor Horst Pöttker) with contributions from 15 scholars in nine countries. According to a reviewer, this book “offers the reader an essential, in-depth and cross-border study of journalism in all its facets”.¹

Svennik was a pioneer at least in two ways. He played a central role in launching and developing media studies in Norway and in establishing the Institute of Media and Communication (IMK) at the University of Oslo (in 1987). His colleagues from that time remember him as an enthusiastic contributor to the creation of what has

¹ *The Journal of International Communication* 2008, 14 (2), p. 190.

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become a twenty-first century multidisciplinary research milieu. He is also appreciated as the initiator of co-operation among the media and journalism scholars in the three Baltic countries. Due to his enthusiasm, interest and leadership, the first history of Baltic journalism in English (*Towards a Civic Society. The Baltic Media's Long Road to Freedom. Perspectives on History, Ethnicity and Journalism*) was published in 1993 as a result of the combined efforts of scholars from the Universities of Tartu, Riga and Vilnius. Svennik was also a founding member of the Baltic Association of Media Research (BAMR). Co-operation between the Baltic scholars and Svennik continued in various forms long after his retirement in 2001. He maintained his interest in the societal and media developments in the Baltic countries, and remained in touch with many scholars in new democracies in Central Europe (Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic). For several years he also served as a member of the Editorial Board of the *Central European Journal of Communication*.

In 2004, the Norwegian Media Researchers' Association awarded him an accolade for his contribution to the field.

Svennik's final publication was a contribution to *A History of the International Movement of Journalists. Professionalism Versus Politics* (co-authored with Kaarle Nordenstreng, Ulf Jonas Björk, Frank Beyersdorf and Epp Lauk) as recently as 2016.

Many Norwegian and international scholars regard Svennik as their academic mentor. He was always curious about hearing news from the country you came from; he also eagerly introduced his own and his home city Oslo. He took his visitors on ski trips in the mountains, boat trips on the sea, and long walks around Oslo. His generosity was admired by many. Maria Heller from Hungary recalls:

When I was invited to the Department [IMK], he took me to an academic bookshop, showed me all the best literature on media and communication, to which we did not have access in Hungary at that time, and having bought a whole heap of books, asked me to carry them back to our Institute.

A great man, pre-eminent in the field of journalism history, has gone to a well-deserved rest. His colleagues, students and friends both near and far may forever be grateful for his corpus of research, the time he devoted to us, and above all for his friendship.

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