

United Nations

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**ECONOMIC
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COMMUNICATION TO CHAIRMAN OF COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
BY MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION

May 7, 1946

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Chairman,
Commission on Human Rights,
Economic and Social Council,
The United Nations.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

We understand that proposals for an International Conference to discuss the best means of promoting the free flow of ideas and information throughout the world has been referred for consideration to the Commission on Human Rights.

In the event such a conference is called, the motion picture industry, with which I am associated, desires to participate as one of the three prime media of communication.

You may be interested to know that we have been informally advised that our State Department is in accord with the principle that motion pictures should be included in any conference which touches upon the freedom of expression.

As a result of experience gained in the recent World War, it is now universally agreed that the motion picture is one of the most potent instruments ever devised for the dissemination of ideas, information and mutual understanding between peoples. The motion picture is no longer looked upon solely as a device for mass entertainment. Its power to inform, to instruct and to teach is just now being realized.

In the next decade, the use of the motion picture for teaching purposes, and for unfolding the current and background aspects of news events, will advance enormously. This fact is recognized by other

governments as well as our own. In many countries, the development of an expanded motion picture industry is being made a matter of national policy.

Anticipating this growth, we believe these principles should be considered as a framework for the development of United Nations policy:

1. The right to know is a basic human right and, therefore, governments should accord equal access to sources of information.
2. The right to disseminate information is a basic human right and, therefore, governments should see that communications facilities are equally accessible to all; and
3. Discrimination against instruments of information violate basic human rights and, therefore, governments should impose no barriers, economic or otherwise, to impede exchange of information by word and image throughout the world.

We appreciate that the foregoing statement of principles expressed the ideal. But we believe that the goal of man's ambition, lasting peace, will not be achieved on a firm foundation until these principles, guaranteeing freedom of expression, are universally adopted.

We believe the motion picture can play an outstanding role in advancing the cause of human brotherhood and enduring peace. In this spirit, we request, respectfully, that the unique role of the motion picture in promoting world understanding shall be considered by the Commission on Human Rights on the same status as the press and radio.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Eric Johnston
President
