Foreword

The following seven Norwegian colleagues hosted the 12th European Conference on Psychosomatic Research, which took place in the SAS hotel, Bodø, from July 9–13, 1978: Drs. Finn Askevold, chairman (Norway) and Hakon Hals, chairman (Bodø), Dr. Truls-Eirik Mogstad, conference secretary (Oslo) and a talented organizer, as well as the Norwegian national committee which comprised Drs. Astrid Heiberg (Oslo), Rolf Berg-Larsen (Nesbru), Frode Lårarsen (Asker) and Stein Ikdahl (Solberg).

Following the excellent Conferences in Edinburgh (1974) under the guidance of Drs. Cairns Aitken and A.K. Zeailey as well as in Heidelberg (1976) under the guidance of Drs. Walter Bräutigam and Michael von Rad (see Psychother. Psychosom. 28(1–4), 1977), the Bodø Conference represented a new peak in the series of successful European Conferences on Psychosomatic Research. It was the unanimous opinion of all the participants that no conference could be better organized than these outstanding Bodø meetings. In Bodø, the typical structure of the European Conferences was successfully realized: The optimal combination of very appealing scientific sessions on the one hand, and highly original social events creating the relaxed atmosphere of a very harmonious ‘family situation’, on the other.

In contrast to the previous conference in Heidelberg, the main topic of which was ‘Alexithymia’, the Bodø meetings had a rather broad scientific approach with a community-oriented basis. A whole day was devoted to giving the participants personal experience of a typical rural community in Northern Norway. As a result of this experience, the participants had some background against which to discuss the relationship between life conditions and health. The proceedings presented in this volume do not fully reflect the stimulating ‘climate’ that permeated these meetings. The scientific sessions were not only facilitated by the lectures and subsequent discussions, but also by the Freyberger

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prepublication of summaries of lectures and the daily microgroup arrangements. These microgroups, which consisted of 10 participants, met under the chairmanship of a well-experienced moderator and discussed up-to-date psychosomatic problems in research and practice.

The highest degrees of originality, characteristic of the social events, began with a ‘shaking together’, a buffet and dance at Ronvik Hospital, where the director, Dr. Hals, made particularly evident the great host qualities of the Norwegian colleagues. Immediately after this ‘shaking together’ the participants were able to experience personally the Midnight Sun. A one-day coast and inland tour by cruise and bus included visits to the local fishing community at Hellnes-sund and to the inland industrial area, in particular, the Salten Verkfactory as well as the world-famous current ‘Saltstraumen’. The invitation of the city of Bo to an evening meal and dance at the mountain restaurant ‘Turistkya’ as well as the farewell cocktails and banquet completed the social arrangements.
I would like to discuss the following two points which are closely connected with the generally strained financial situation and concerns both the conference organizers and the participants. Firstly, the program was too overloaded with several parallel sessions in one and a half days, obviously caused by the announcement of a relatively large number of suitable free papers on the one hand, and the relatively short period of time at the organizer’s disposal on the other. This program overloading rather frustrated the majority of participants. It may be symptomatic concerning the conference atmosphere that this frustration was particularly apparent to the participants at the Boåφ meetings. However, unfortunately, there is no way of avoiding such program overloading in the future.

Secondly, in Bodø it was evident again that conferences which take place both in geographically, relatively distant places and in countries with a high cost of living remain closed to a lot of interested colleagues due to the expense. This is very regrettable and considerably inhibits the coming together of researchers on an international level.

Finally, I regard it as relevant to mention that the European colleagues greatly appreciate the regular, very active and stimulating participation of certain American colleagues in their meetings, in particular the colleagues from the Boston–Beth Israel Hospital, Drs. Roberta Apfel and Peter Sifneos (regrettably, Dr. John Nemiah was unable to come); also Drs. Chase Kimball and Adam Krakowski, leading representatives of the International College of Psychosomatic Medicine; and finally Dr. Herbert Weiner, the renowned author of the book ‘Psychobiology and human disease’. Another contribution to the success of the European conference is the increasing regular participation of Japanese colleagues. The Fukuoka group (Dr. Mineyasu Sugita), the Tokio group (Dr. Hi-toschi Ishikawa) and the Nagamachi group (Drs. Jinichi Suzuki and Haruyoshi Yamamoto) were present in Bodø.

T. The 13th European Conference on Psychosomatic Research will take place in 1980 in Istanbul under the guidance of Dr. Günel Koptagel-Illal. Dr. George S. Philippopoulos succumbed to Dr. Koptagel-Illal by a show of hands with regard to the two proposed conference places Athens and Istanbul.

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