

“Collaboration of the press in the organisation of peace: guiding public opinion towards moral disarmament” The League of Nations promoting a vital intellectual trend

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Outline:

1. The League of Nations resolutions and activities (overview & [paper](#))
2. Context I: Intellectual trends after World War I (short list)
3. Context II: The international movement of journalists (photos)
4. Conclusions

Genève, le 25 septembre 1925.

SIXIÈME ASSEMBLÉE DE LA SOCIÉTÉ DES NATIONS.

COLLABORATION DE LA PRESSE A L'ORGANISATION DE LA PAIX

*Résolution adoptée par l'Assemblée, le 25 septembre 1925 (après-midi) sur le rapport
de la sixième Commission.*

L'Assemblée,

Considérant que la presse est le moyen le plus efficace d'orienter l'opinion
vers le désarmement moral — condition et accompagnement du désarmement
matériel :

Invite le Conseil à examiner l'opportunité de la convocation d'un Comité
d'experts représentant la presse de différents continents, afin de rechercher les
moyens de concourir à l'organisation de la paix, notamment :

a) Par la transmission plus facile et moins coûteuse des nouvelles de presse,
afin de diminuer les chances de malentendus entre les peuples ;

b) Par la discussion de toutes les questions professionnelles dont la solu-
tion peut aider à l'apaisement de l'opinion publique.

SIXTH ASSEMBLY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

COLLABORATION OF THE PRESS IN THE ORGANISATION OF PEACE.

*Resolution adopted by the Assembly, on September 25th, 1925 (afternoon), on the
report of the Sixth Committee.*

The Assembly,

Considering that the Press constitutes the most effective means of guiding
public opinion towards that moral disarmament which is a concomitant condition
of material disarmament :

Invites the Council to consider the desirability of convening a committee
of experts representing the Press of the different continents with a view to deter-
mining methods of contributing towards the organisation of peace, especially :

(a) By ensuring the more rapid and less costly transmission of Press
news with a view to reducing risks of international misunderstanding ;

(b) And by discussing all technical problems the settlement of which
would be conducive to the tranquillisation of public opinion.

Geneva, October 12th, 1925.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

CO-OPERATION OF THE PRESS IN THE ORGANISATION OF PEACE.

RESOLUTION OF THE SIXTH ASSEMBLY.

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I. INTRODUCTION

On September 26th last, during its thirty-fifth session, the Council of the League of
Nations decided, in order to give effect to an Assembly resolution of September 25th, to
consider at its next session the desirability of convening a committee of experts representing
the Press in the different continents with a view to determining by what means the Press
might contribute towards the organisation of peace.

For this purpose the Rapporteur, M. HYMANS, the Belgian representative, invited his
colleagues to consult the associations of journalists and the associations of newspaper
proprietors and directors of agencies in their own countries for the purpose of obtaining
competent opinions as to the desirability of convening such a committee. He pointed out
that the International Association of Journalists accredited to the League of Nations could
offer the Council valuable help in this enquiry. The Council also requested the Secretary-
General of the League of Nations to furnish the next session of the Council (December 1925)
with information regarding the point of view of circles immediately affected.

The present documents have been compiled in order to facilitate this enquiry, and those
entered with individuals and collective groups, will find in these documents the informa-
tion necessary for an understanding of the meaning and scope of the Assembly and Council
resolutions.

LoN resolution on 25 September 1925

The Assembly,

Considering that the Press constitutes the most effective means of guiding public opinion towards that moral disarmament which is a concomitant condition of material disarmament;

Invites the Council to consider the desirability of conceiving a committee of experts representing the Press of the different continents with a view to determining methods of contributing towards the organisation of peace, especially:

- (a) By ensuring the more rapid and less costly transmission of Press news with a view to reducing risks of international misunderstanding;
- (b) And by discussing all technical problems the settlement of which would be conducive to the tranquillisation of public opinion.

Geneva, May 11th, 1927.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

CONFERENCE OF PRESS EXPERTS

(Geneva, August 24th, 1927)

Preparatory Documents.

S. d. N. 500 (A.) 500 (F.) 4/26+250 (F) 150 (A) 5/27. Imp. Kundig.

Publications of the League of Nations
GENERAL QUESTIONS
1927. 1.

Conf. E. P. 13.

Geneva, October 25th, 1927.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

CONFERENCE OF PRESS EXPERTS

Geneva, August 1927.

FINAL REPORT

Publications of the League of Nations
GENERAL.
1927. 15.



ENZ DER PRESSESACHVERSTÄN

LoN resolution on 24 September 1931

The Assembly,

I Convinced of the great value of the contribution of women to the work of peace and the good understanding between the nations, which is the principal aim of the League of Nations,

Requests the Council to examine the possibility of women co-operating more fully in the work of the League.

II Considering that the organization of peace demands an international spirit freed from all prejudices and misconceptions, (...)

Requests the Council to consider the possibility of studying, with the help of the Press, the difficult problem of the spread of false information which may threaten to disturb the peace or the good understanding between nations.

CONFERENCE
DES
BUREAUX DE PRESSE GOUVERNEMENTAUX
ET DE
REPRESENTANTS DE LA PRESSE

tenue à

Copenhague, du 11 au 14 janvier 1932

CONFERENCE
OF
GOVERNMENTAL PRESS BUREAUX
AND
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRESS

held at

Copenhagen, January 11th to 14th, 1932

II CONFERENCIA INTERNACIONAL
DE OFICINAS GUBERNAMENTALES DE PRENSA
Y DE REPRESENTANTES DE PRENSA

MADRID, 1933.

II CONFERENCE
DES BUREAUX DE PRESSE GOUVERNEMENTAUX
ET DE REPRESENTANTS DE LA PRESSE

MADRID, 1933.

II CONFERENCE
OF GOVERNMENTAL PRESS BUREAUX
AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRESS

MADRID, 1933.

LoN resolution on 26 September 1934

The Assembly, (...)

In view of the valuable contribution made by the Conference to the problem of the spread of false news which might endanger the maintenance of peace and a good understanding among the nations;

Hoping that the proposed enquiries into the technical and financial means of putting an end to the spread of false news and in regard to the correction of false news appearing in the Press may prove successful; (...)

Requests the Council to authorize the Secretary-General to facilitate, by such means as are at his disposal, the preparation for and organisation of the next Conference of Government Press Bureaux and Press Representatives, by lending the services of the appropriate sections of the League to perform the secretarial work (...)

No further LoN conferences, nor resolutions on collaboration of the Press in the organisation of peace after 1934

But the international federation of newspaper editors and publishers adopted its own convention on the correction of false news in 1936

Meanwhile, LoN pursued relevant activities in the context of the World Disarmament Conference prepared since 1925 and finally convened in 1932–33, under the title Moral Disarmament

Geneva, September 23rd, 1931.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

MORAL DISARMAMENT

MEMORANDUM FROM THE POLISH GOVERNMENT

At the request of the Polish Government, the Secretary-General has the honour to communicate to the Governments invited to the Disarmament Conference a letter from the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, and a memorandum annexed thereto on moral disarmament.

**LETTER FROM THE POLISH MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.**

Geneva, September 17th, 1931.

[Translation.]

With reference to the statements made by the Polish delegate at the last session of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, the discussions in the Special Committee appointed to prepare a draft general Convention for strengthening the Means of preventing War, and my own statement at the Council meeting of May 21st last during the discussion of that Committee's report, I beg to forward to you herewith a memorandum from the Polish Government concerning the practical attainment of moral disarmament. I would request you to transmit this document to all the Governments invited to the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments and I should be grateful if you would be good enough to give it the widest possible publicity.

In the Polish Government's opinion the problem is one of great importance for the future work of the Disarmament Conference. In this connection, the statements made by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs at the tenth session of the League Assembly and by the British Foreign Minister at the annual meeting of the "Burge Memorial Trust" this year may be recalled.

Further, two great international associations, the International Federation of League of Nations Societies and the World Peace League, devoted special resolutions to this problem at their congresses this year. Their appeals to the Governments should not be in vain.

At the twelfth session of the Assembly, the problem of moral disarmament has also been raised by the Spanish delegation, which has submitted a proposal of great interest. This proposal, however, only deals with certain aspects of the problem.

The Polish Government believes that the question should be examined in its entirety and that the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments, where all the principal countries of the world will be represented, is alone capable of finding practical and adequate solutions of this important question, which is so closely bound up with the future Convention for the Limitation and Reduction of Armaments.

(Signed) Auguste ZALESKI,
Minister for Foreign Affairs.

SOCIÉTÉ DES NATIONS

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

CONFERENCE

POUR LA

FOR THE

**RÉDUCTION ET LIMITATION DES ARMEMENTS
REDUCTION AND LIMITATION OF ARMAMENTS**

JOURNAL

GENÈVE 1932

GENEVA 1932

N° I. — MARDI 2 FÉVRIER 1932.

No. I. — TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2ND, 1932.

**COMMUNICATIONS A LA RÉDACTION DU JOURNAL
DE LA CONFÉRENCE.**

Les communiqués et informations à insérer dans le *Journal* doivent être adressés à M. John Palmer, rédacteur en chef, Bureau 710, Bâtiment des Commissions.

Note: Le *Journal* est publié pour la commodité de MM. les délégués et du public. On n'y trouvera pas un compte rendu complet et définitif des séances de la Conférence et des Commissions; il ne doit donc pas être employé comme source de documentation. Au surplus, si l'on veut qu'il paraisse très exactement, il faudrait donner autre chose qu'un résumé sommaire des discussions.

**COMMUNICATIONS TO THE EDITOR OF THE
CONFERENCE JOURNAL.**

Material to be included in the *Journal* should be addressed to the Editor, Mr. John Palmer, Room 710, Committee Building.

Note: The *Journal* is issued for the convenience of the delegates and the public. It is not intended to serve as a complete and permanent record of the discussions which take place in the Conference and its Committees, and it should not therefore be used for purposes of reference. Moreover, if it is to appear promptly, it cannot give more than a brief summary of the discussions.

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Modern Means of Spreading Information Utilised in the Cause of Peace

In the early 1930s, film and radio became central to LoN activities of intellectual co-operation, with the International Educational Cinematographic Institute established in Rome and the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation pursuing educational aspects of broadcasting

LoN resolution on 24 September 1931 started a process leading to adoption of the International Convention on the Use of Broadcasting in the Cause of Peace

CONFERENCE FOR THE CONCLUSION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CONCERNING THE USE OF A BROADCASTING IN THE CAUSE OF PEACE: ACTION TO BE TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THE CONFERENCE.

Report by the French representative.

In accordance with a resolution of the Assembly of 1935, the Council of the League of Nations, at its meeting on January 20th, 1936, convened an inter-governmental Conference to conclude an International Convention concerning the Use of Broadcasting in the Cause of Peace.*

The preparatory work for the Conference was carried out by the Intellectual Co-operation Organisation.

The Council decided to invite to the said Conference the Members of the League of Nations and the following non-Member States: United States of America, Brazil, Costa Rica, Free City of Danzig, Egypt, Germany, Iceland and Japan.

The Conference was held at the League of Nations Secretariat from September 17th to 23rd, 1936.

The Governments of the countries mentioned below were represented: Albania, Argentine Republic, Belgium, United States of Brazil, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, India, Irish Free State, Italy, Lithuania, Luxemburg, United States of Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Roumania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Uruguay, Yugoslavia.

* Document C.399.M.252.1936.XII.

No. 4319. — INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION¹ CONCERNING THE USE OF BROADCASTING IN THE CAUSE OF PEACE. SIGNED AT GENEVA, SEPTEMBER 23RD, 1936.

Official texts in French and in English. This Convention was registered with the Secretariat, in accordance with its Article II, on April 2nd, 1938, the date of its entry into force.

ALBANIA, THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC, AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, THE UNITED STATES OF BRAZIL, THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND, CHILE, COLOMBIA, DENMARK, THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, EGYPT, SPAIN, ESTONIA, FRANCE, GREECE, INDIA, LITHUANIA, LUXEMBURG, THE UNITED STATES OF MEXICO, NORWAY, NEW ZEALAND, THE NETHERLANDS, ROUMANIA, SWITZERLAND, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, TURKEY, THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS and URUGUAY,

Having recognised the need for preventing, by means of rules established by common agreement, broadcasting from being used in a manner prejudicial to good international understanding;

Prompted, moreover, by the desire to utilise, by the application of these rules, the possibilities offered by this medium of intercommunication for promoting better mutual understanding between peoples:

¹ Ratifications :

INDIA	August 11th, 1937.
GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND	August 18th, 1937.
DENMARK	October 11th, 1937.
NEW ZEALAND	January 27th, 1938.
LUXEMBURG	February 8th, 1938.
BRAZIL	February 11th, 1938.
FRANCE	March 8th, 1938.
NORWAY	May 5th, 1938.
EGYPT	July 29th, 1938.
ESTONIA	August 18th, 1938.

Accessions :

AUSTRALIA (including the Territories of Papua and Norfolk Island and the Mandated Territories of New Guinea and Nauru)	June 25th, 1937.
BURMA	October 13th, 1937.
SOUTHERN RHODESIA	November 1st, 1937.
UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA (including the Mandated Territory of South West Africa)	February 1st, 1938.
IRELAND	May 25th, 1938.
SWEDEN	June 22nd, 1938.
SALVADOR	August 18th, 1938.
GUATEMALA	November 18th, 1938.
FINLAND	November 29th, 1938.

From the Convention on the Use of Broadcasting in the Cause of Peace

Article 1

The High Contracting Parties mutually undertake to prohibit and, if occasion arises, to stop without delay the broadcasting within their respective territories of any transmission which to the detriment of good international understanding is of such a character as to incite the population of any territory to acts incompatible with the internal order or the security of a territory of a High Contracting Party.

Article 2

The High Contracting Parties mutually undertake to ensure that transmissions from stations within their respective territories shall not constitute an incitement either to war against another High Contracting Party or to acts likely to lead thereto.

Article 3

The High Contracting Parties mutually undertake (...) any transmission likely to harm good international understanding by incorrect statements (...)

Context I:

Intellectual trends after World War I

Parliamentary democracy prevailed, e.g. in the Weimar Republic

Radicalism proceeded in ideologies, inspired i.a. by Soviet Communism

Progressivism promoted social reforms, including trade unions (ILO)

Modernism flourished in culture and beyond

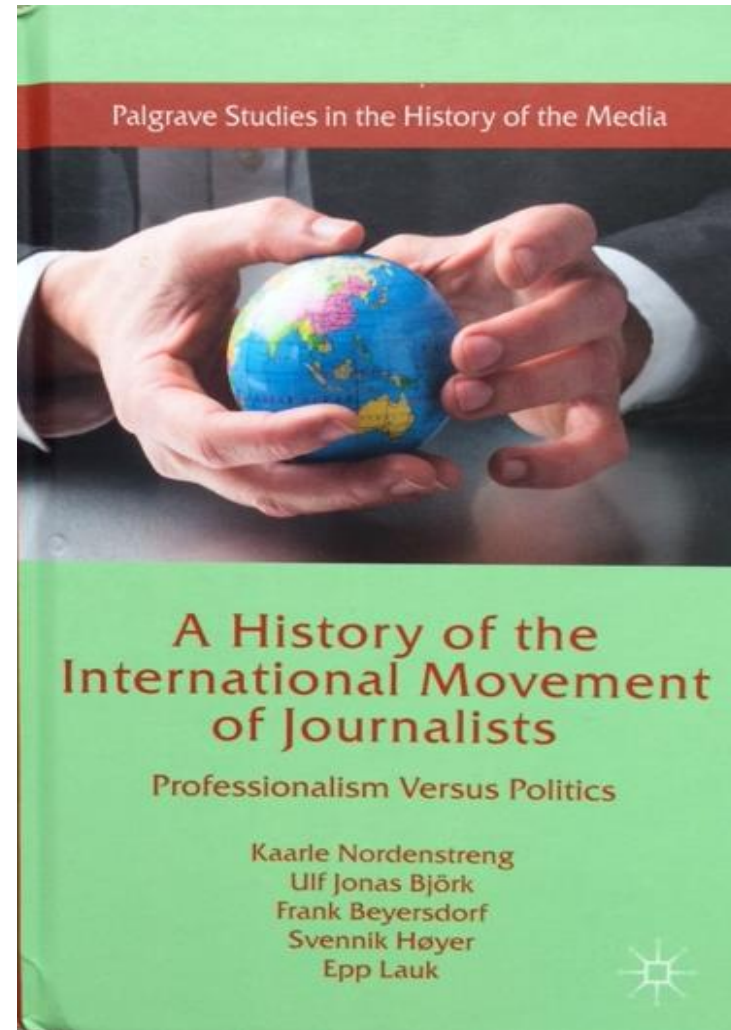
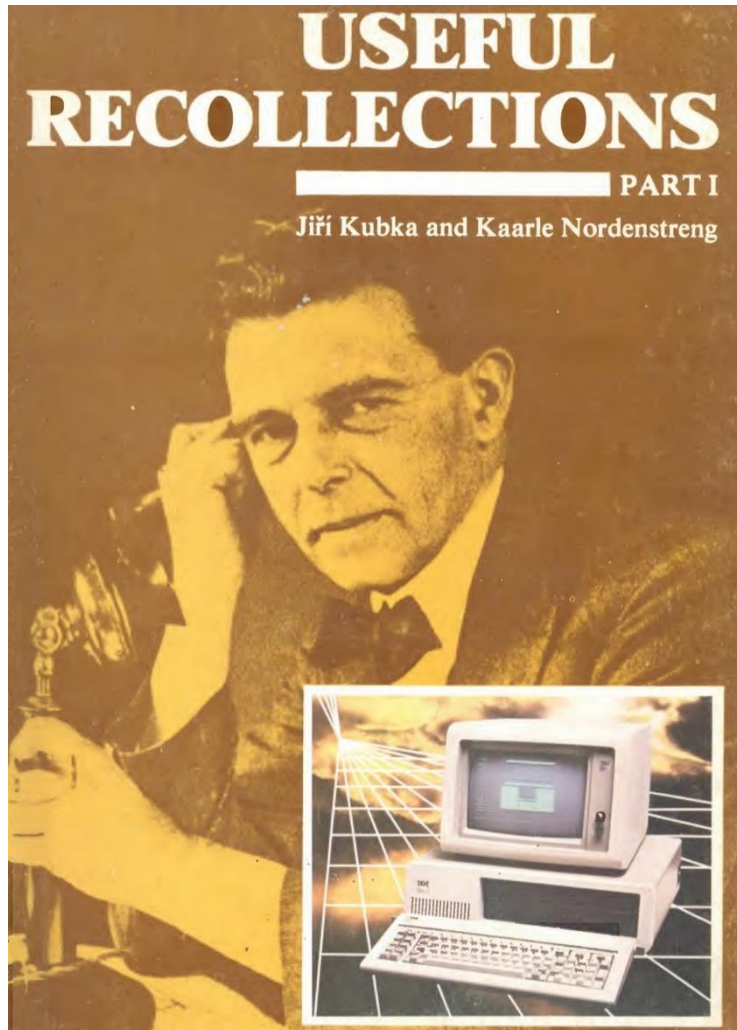
Pacifism accompanied peace movements against militarism

Idealism figured in politics and political science

Decolonization was brewing in Asia, Africa and Latin America (hastened by Japan's unprecedented victory over Russia in 1905)

Context II:

History of the international movement of journalists



First international associations of journalists

International Union of Press Associations (IUPA) 1894–1936

Congresses after Antwerp 1894 in Bordeaux 1895, Budapest 1896, Stockholm 1897, Lisbon 1898, Rome 1899, Paris 1900, Bern 1902, Vienna 1904, Liège 1905, Bordeaux 1907, Berlin 1908, Trieste 1910, Rome 1911, Copenhagen 1914.... London 1927, Barcelona 1929, Oslo 1932, Antwerp 1934 and Prague 1936.

Press Congress of the World (PCW) 1915–1927

Initiated by Americans in "World Press Parliament" in St Louis 1904

International Association of Journalists accredited to the League of Nations (IAJA) 1921–1936

Fédération Internationale des Journalistes (FIJ) 1926–1940

1^{ER} CONGRÈS INTERNATIONAL DE LA PRESSE

(1894 — ANVERS)

RENSEIGNEMENTS

PROCÈS-VERBAUX DES SÉANCES

ET

DISCOURS COMMUNIQUÉS

ANVERS

J.-E. BUSCHMANN, IMPRIMEUR-ÉDITEUR, REMPART DE LA PORTE DU RHIN

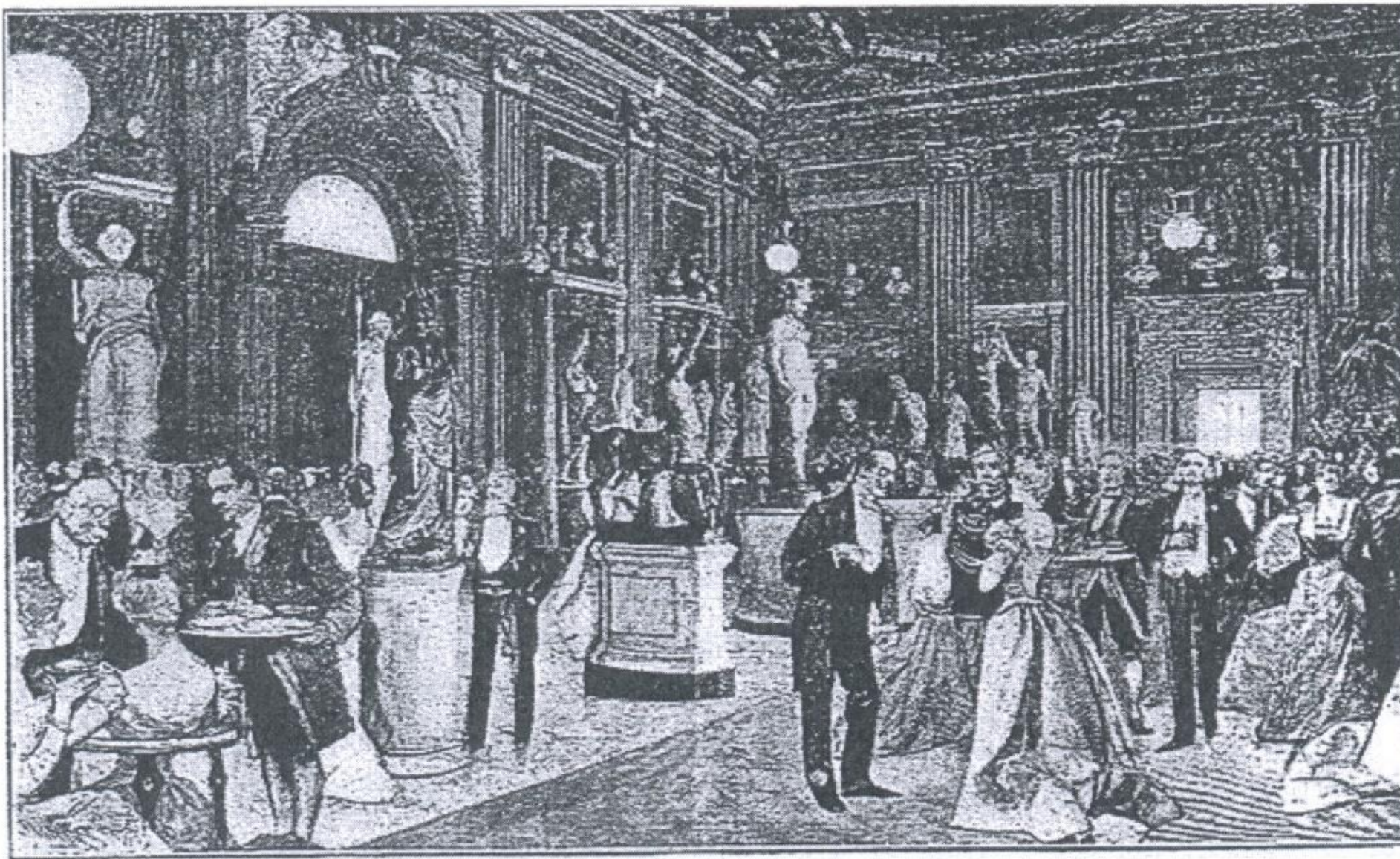
1894

N.-B. Cette brochure, offerte par le Comité organisateur Central aux journalistes délégués au Congrès, est mise en vente par l'éditeur au prix de Fr. 1.25 et sera envoyée FRANCO aux personnes qui lui feront parvenir le dit montant.

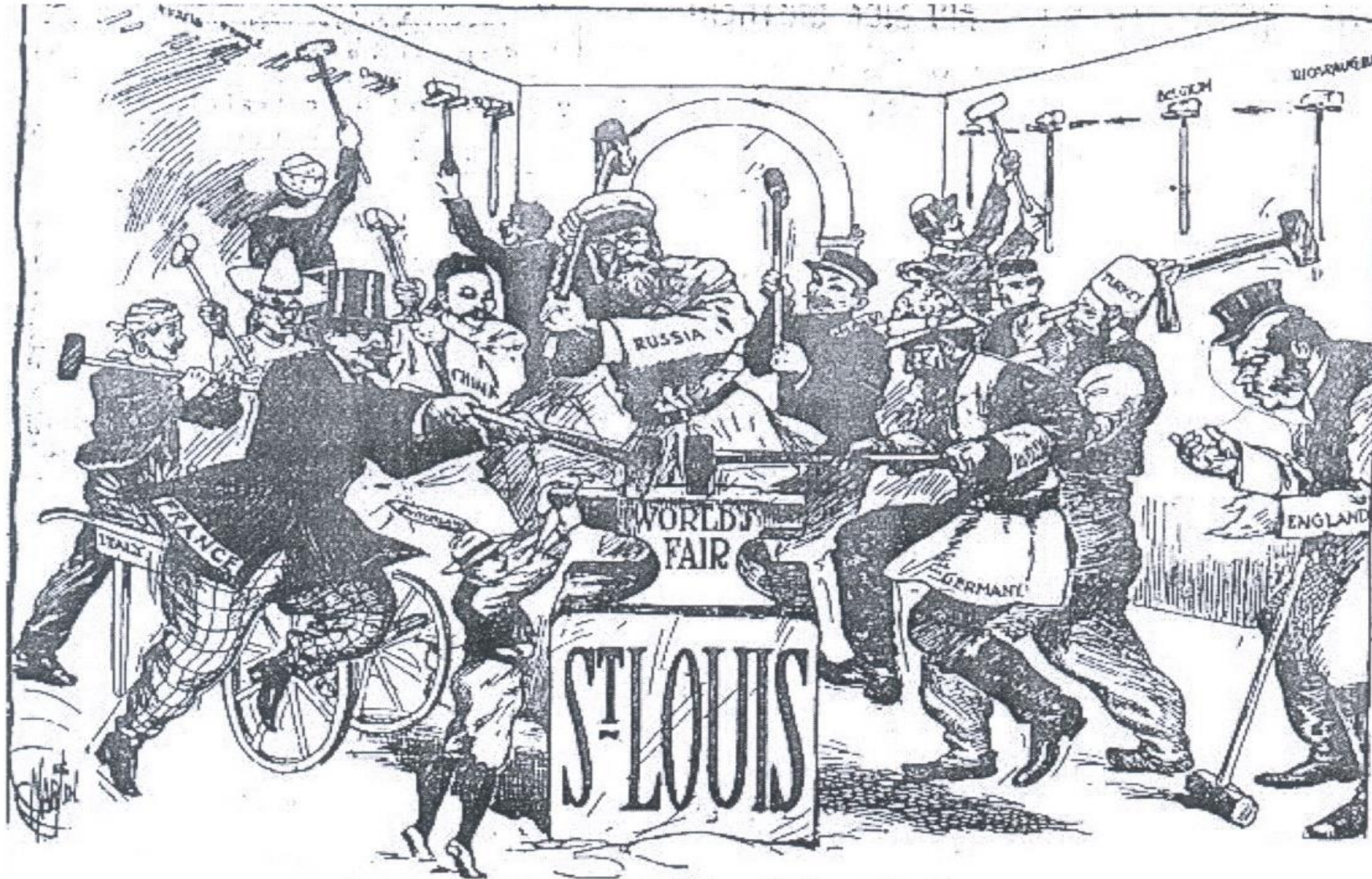


Figure 1.1 Several Belgian newspapers covered the Congress in Amsterdam on 7–11 July 1894. Examples here are from two contemporary local papers. *De Scheldegalm van Antwerpen* on the right-hand side of its front page carried a piece of news on 6 July under the title "International print press congress" (framed in this copy), with the day-to-day programme. *Het Handelsblad van Antwerpen* on 10 July under the title "Congress of print press" (columns framed) provided a detailed report of the previous day's session. (Digital images from the Royal Library of Belgium in Brussels, thanks for assistance of Wim Vanobberghen.)

IUPA Congress in Rome 1899

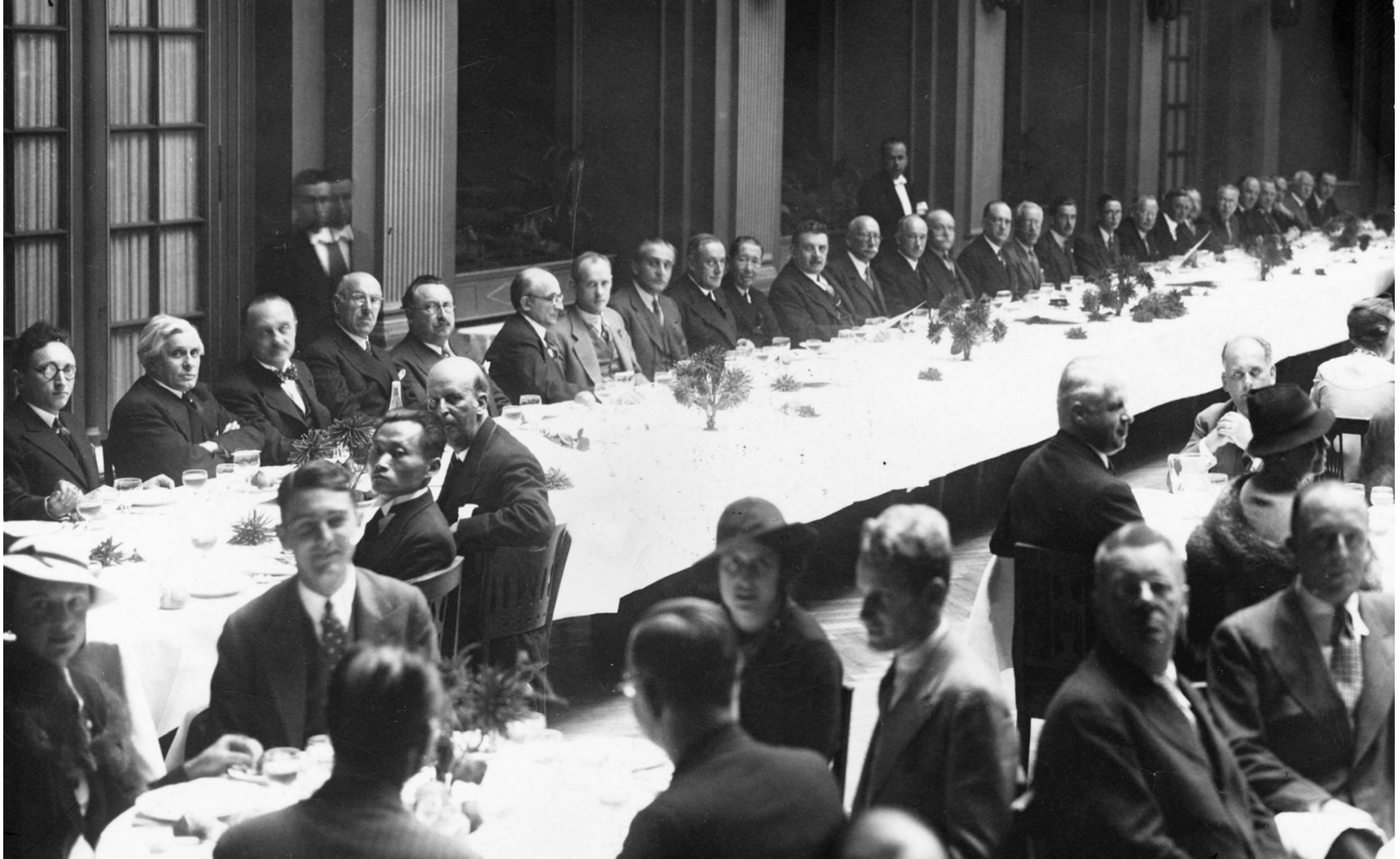


World Press Parliament in StLouis 1904



The International Press Parliament "Going to Press."

IAJA in Geneva in the 1920s





The FIJ emblem

DEUTSCHE PRESSE

ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR DIE GESAMTEN INTERESSEN DES ZEITUNGSWESENS
ORGAN DES REICHSVERBANDES DER DEUTSCHEN PRESSE E. V.

20. JAHRGANG NR. 43

BERLIN-SCHÖNEBERG, 25. OKTOBER 1930

Herausgeber: Reichsverband der deutschen Presse, Geschäftsführend, Vorsitz: Dir. G. Richter.
Schriftleitung: Otto Schabbel, Berlin W 10, Tiergartenstraße 16, Fernsprecher: Kurfürst 2694

Friedrich Ernst Hübsch Verlag, Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung, Berlin W 62, Maaßenstraße 34
Fernsprecher: Amt Lützow 2212 und 2851 / Postscheck-Konto: Berlin 146997. Telegr.-Adresse: Hübschverlag

Alle Einsendungen für die Schriftleitung an den Reichsverband der deutschen Presse, Berlin W 10, Tiergartenstraße 16.
Sprechstunde: 12 bis 1 Uhr. — Fernsprecher: Amt Kurfürst 2694

Erscheint Sonnabends. Jedes Postamt und der Verlag nimmt Bestellungen an. Bezugspreis monatlich Mk. 2.—, einzeln Mk. 1.—. Anzeigen laut Tarif. Anzeigenschluß: Mittwoch. Erfüllungsort: Berlin-Mitte

Zum Kongreß der Fédération Internationale des Journalistes

in Berlin vom 22. bis 25. Oktober 1930

Gruß des Herrn Reichsministers des Auswärtigen Dr. Curtius

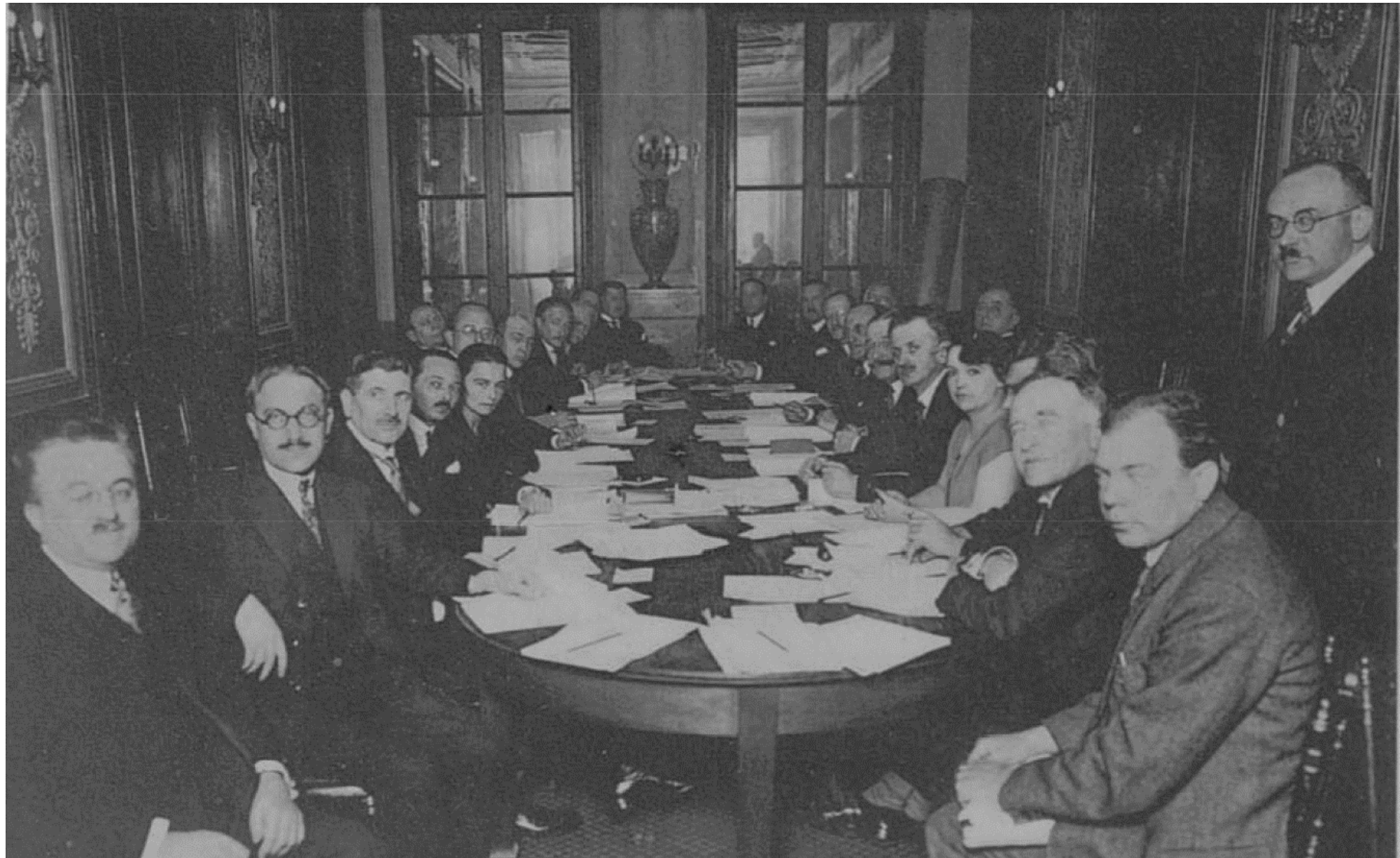
Es ist mir eine besondere Freude, die Teilnehmer an dem 2. Kongreß der „Fédération Internationale des Journalistes“ in der Hauptstadt des Deutschen Reiches als Gäste begrüßen zu können.

Die Organisation der „F.I.J.“ hat in den vier Jahren ihres Bestehens bewiesen, daß der Gedanke, der zu ihrer Gründung geführt hat, lebenskräftig ist. Die „F.I.J.“ verfolgt den Zweck, durch regelmäßige Aussprache und Regelung vom nationalen Boden aus die internationale Gemeinschaft zu befestigen, die internationale Gegensätzlichkeit aber zu beseitigen. Dementsprechend will die „F.I.J.“ durch ihre Einrichtungen und Verhandlungen die Kräfte der nationalen Presseverbände wahren und dadurch kräftigen, daß sie die internationale Gemeinschaft pflegt.

In diesem Sinne begrüße ich die bevorstehende Berliner Tagung der „F.I.J.“ und wünsche ihrem Arbeitsprogramm den besten Erfolg.

Curtius

FIJ Executive Committee in The Hague 1931



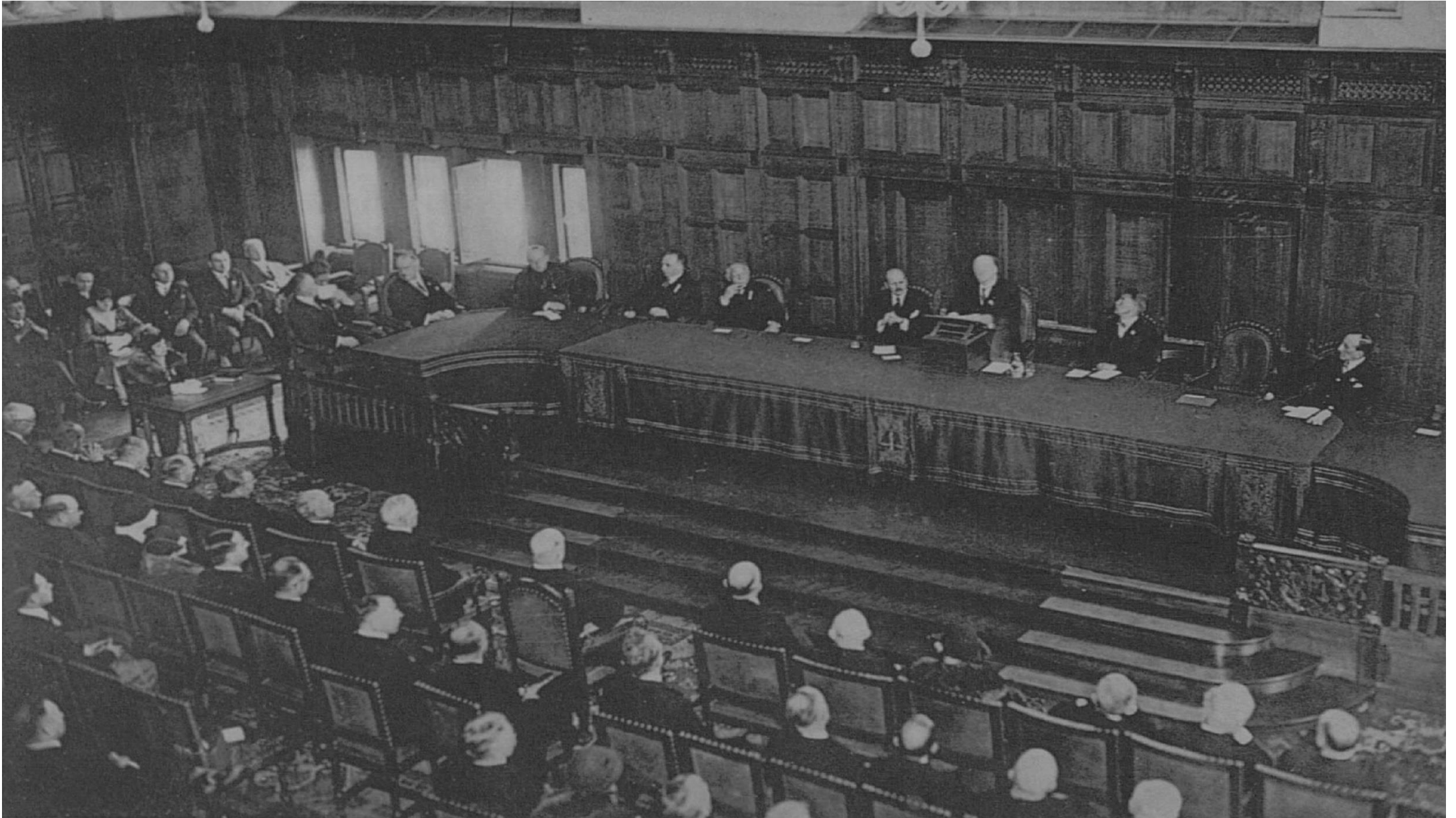
<p>The Editor-in-Chief certifies that Mr. is a permanent member of the staff of this newspaper and as such is required to perform duties at from to</p> <p>Stamp of the Newspaper.</p> <p>Signature of Editor-in-Chief.</p>	
<p>(Space reserved for remarks or stamps of official authorities.)</p>	<p>Identity Card for Journalist on duty abroad.</p>

LE TRIBUNAL D'HONNEUR INTERNATIONAL DES JOURNALISTES



FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE
DES JOURNALISTES
2, RUE MONTPENSIER, PARIS

FIJ Tribunal of Honour in The Hague 1931



Congress of the Union of National Journalist Unions in Venice 1942



Conclusions

- LoN and media remains a forgotten story which needs to be rediscovered (and the paper from 1986 published).
- The elements of the story are highly topical in today's world with nuclear weapons and increased globalization.
- The normative parameters for the media are clearly articulated, neither compromising nor deferring excessively to freedom.
- LoN represents idealism, which came under criticism from the rising school of realism in international relations.
- LoN stands for the emerging principles of solidarism and pluralism.
- LoN was no historical failure; while not preventing WW II, it did lay the foundations for the UN and the post-war international order, including decolonization.