

deník II. světového  
sjezdu mezinárodní  
organizace novinářů  
отман II. всемирного  
съезда международной  
организации журналистов



daily of the II. world  
congress of the international  
organisation of journalists  
journal du II. congrès  
mondial de l'organisation  
internationale des journalistes

Praha, 1. VI. 1947

1

Mezinárodní organizace novinářů  
Международная организация журналистов

International Organisation Of Journalists  
L'Organisation Internationale Des Journalistes  
KAARLE NORDENSTRENG  
II. SVĚTOVÝ SJEZD · II. ВСЕМИРНЫЙ КОНГРЕСС  
II. WORLD CONGRESS · II. CONGRES MONDIAL

PŘAHA · ČESKOSLOVENSKO

3.—10. VI. 1947

# THE RISE AND FALL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF JOURNALISTS BASED IN PRAGUE 1946-2016

## USEFUL RECOLLECTIONS PART III



Svazu československých novinářů.  
Svazu československých novinářů.  
Svazu československých novinářů.  
Svazu československých novinářů.

- President of the International Organisation of Journalists:  
Mr. Archibald Kenyon (United Kingdom)
- Vice Presidents of the I.O.J.  
Mr. Eugene Morel (France), Mr. Tor Gjendal (Norway), Mr. Milton M. Murray (USA), Mr. Alexander Sverlov (USSR).
- Secretary-Treasurer of the I.O.J.:  
Mr. Keith F. Bean (Australia)
- Organising Committee of the Prague Congress:  
Mr. Jih Hronek (Chairman)  
Mr. Zdeněk Avšič, Mr. Stanislav Budín,  
Mr. Evžen Čuk, Mr. Karel Hetteš, Mr.  
Edvard Maška, Mr. František Noska, Mr.  
N. Pavlov, Mr. Jindřich Prokop, Mr.  
Karel Zecis.

was created at the World Congress of Journalists at Copenhagen, June 2 to 8, 1946. Its formation followed the voluntary resolution, in separate meetings on June 2, of the Federation Internationale des Journalistes (F.I.J.), which was founded in 1926, and of the International Federation of Journalists of Allied and Free Countries (I.F.A.F.C.) which, from 1941, carried on the idea of international cooperation of democratic journalists.

The I.O.J., thus founded based on a respectful tradition and experience of work for international cooperation in journalism, celebrates this year its coming of age. It is, in this sense, 21 years old.

The aims of the I.O.J., as set out in the pre-natal constitution adopted at Copenhagen, were:

- 1) Production by all means of all liberty of the press and of journalism, as a necessary condition of the people's right to be informed.
- 2) Promotion of international friendship and understanding through free interchange of information.

The promotion of trade unions amongst journalists.

This resolution is subject to further consideration of the second World Congress in Prague, but the fundamental aims remain unchanged.

Membership of the I.O.J. comprises one representative national organisation of working journalists from each country, provided such national organisation subscribes to these same principles and accepts the other aims as set out in the constitution.

All participating trade union members participated in the Congress, and a total of 20,000 members of the national organisations (including 10,000 journalists).

Since then 23 more countries have either affiliated or applied for affiliation to the I.O.J., and the Prague World Congress is attended by 25 countries (16 non-affiliated countries attending as observers).

In addition, the Prague World Congress has representatives from United Nations, U.N. E.C.O.C., the International Labour Office and other world organisations concerned with the aims and work of the I.O.J.

Международная организация журналистов

Эта организация на Всемирном конгрессе журналистов в Копенгагене, 2 июня 1946 г. была образована по добровольному решению журналистов Международной Федерации Журналистов (Ф.И.Ж.), основанной в 1926 г., и Международной Федерации Журналистов Союзных и свободных стран (М.Ф.Ж.С.), бывшей международной федерацией журналистов.

Международная организация журналистов создана таким образом, что сохраняет лучшие традиции журналистской профессии и опыта международного сотрудничества журналистов, ставших в этот период своим союзниками.

Цели организации, выработанные журналистами в Копенгагене, таковы:

- 1) обеспечение свободы печати и журналистской работы, как необходимого условия для свободного обмена информацией;
- 2) содействие дружбе и пониманию между народами путем свободного обмена информацией;
- 3) поддержка профессионального сотрудничества журналистов.

Этот устав служит примером для выработки устава на втором конгрессе в Праге, но основные принципы были неизменны.

Члены Международной организации журналистов являются национальные организации рабочих журналистов отдельных стран, признающих профессиональные принципы журналистской профессии и стремясь к созданию международной организации журналистов этих стран численностью в общей 20 000 человек.

С тех пор более 23 стран и Международная организация журналистов эти цели поддерживают и осуществляют. В этот день организация журналистов этих стран насчитывает в общей 20 000 человек.

С тех пор более 23 стран и Международная организация журналистов эти цели поддерживают и осуществляют. Кроме того на Всемирном конгрессе в Праге были также представлены наблюдатели из Объединенных Наций, ИЛРО, Е.С.С.С.С., Международной организации труда и других международных организаций, заинтересованных в деятельности Международной организации журналистов.

KAROLINUM

**THE RISE AND FALL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF JOURNALISTS  
BASED IN PRAGUE 1946-2016**

USEFUL RECOLLECTIONS

PART III

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**Kaarle Nordenstreng**

KAROLINUM PRESS

Karolinum Press is a publishing department of Charles University

Ovocný trh 560/5, 116 36 Prague 1, Czech Republic

[www.karolinum.cz](http://www.karolinum.cz)

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Text © Kaarle Nordenstreng, 2020

Photography © author's private collections, 2020

Set in the Czech Republic by Karolinum Press

Layout by Jan Šerych with regard to first edition by Aila Helin

Second, revised edition, first in Karolinum Press

A catalogue record for this book is available from the National Library of the Czech Republic.

The original manuscript was reviewed by Professor Emeritus Stanislav Perkner  
(Humphreys University in Stockton, California) and Professor Verica Rupar  
(Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand).

ISBN 978-80-246-4505-6

ISBN 978-80-246-4524-7 (pdf)



Univerzita Karlova  
Nakladatelství Karolinum

[www.karolinum.cz](http://www.karolinum.cz)  
[ebooks@karolinum.cz](mailto:ebooks@karolinum.cz)



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**Ing. Václav Slavík**

(22. 3. 1937 - 26. 2. 2014)

is the main source of documents used for this book. He worked in the IOJ Secretariat from 1966 until 1992 in various tasks involving studies and documentation, notably as director of the International Journalism Institute (IJI). He was originally to have been the co-author of this book but he sadly passed away before the work proceeded from the compilation of materials to the systematic writing of the chapters. However, his personal recollections are included. The book is dedicated to the memory of this invaluable Czech professional.

# PREFACE

This book is a sequel to *Useful Recollections: Excursion into the History of the International Movement of Journalists*, Parts I and II, published by the International Organization of Journalists (IOJ) in Prague, 1986 and 1988 respectively.<sup>1</sup> The first two volumes were written by the Finnish President (Kaarle Nordenstreng) and the Czech Secretary General (Jiří Kubka) of the IOJ at the time, covering the prehistory of the IOJ from the 1890s to 1945 and the first 20 years of the IOJ until 1966.

The original intention was to continue writing a third volume to record the history of the IOJ until the late 1980s. However, history itself derailed the plan: Kubka was removed from the IOJ in 1988, while I was first kept busy by the unstable ground of the IOJ after the “Velvet Revolution” in late 1989 and then as ex-President was only looking in from outside when the IOJ began to disintegrate. However, in 1994, when a hundred years had passed since the first international congress of the “press people” in Antwerp, I began work on the third volume. The work has progressed slowly, delayed by many other projects, but now – 26 years later – it has finally materialized.

Actually the project produced two books. First, *A History of the International Movement of Journalists* (2016) pooled separate histories of all the international associations of journalists into a single volume – the IOJ being just one of five main organizations throughout the 120 years of history. That book, co-authored with me by four academic colleagues, was published in England by Palgrave Macmillan, the three volumes of *Useful Recollections* being its major source. Consequently, the present volume of the trilogy should be seen as a more detailed chronicle of the IOJ.

The story of the IOJ offers an intriguing perspective on history from the eve of the Cold War in the 1940s until the new millennium. The IOJ was founded in 1946 as a truly universal association of professional journalists, but the Cold War caused it to split, whereby it turned into one of the Soviet-dominated “democratic international organizations” – along with those of

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1 Both parts were translated into French and published by the IOJ. All the titles are out of print but the English originals are freely available online at <http://books.google.com> (search “useful recollections”).

women, youth, students, lawyers, scientific workers and trade unions as well as radio and television organizations – with the bulk of its membership in the socialist countries of central and eastern Europe.

However, in the 1950s and 1960s the IOJ membership spread to the developing countries of the global South and by the 1970s it had become the world's largest international non-governmental organization in the media field. Its growth continued in the 1980s, thanks to the financial means generated in Czechoslovakia through a number of commercial enterprises run by its headquarters in Prague – with the approval of the Government and the Communist Party of the country. Yet this success story was brought to a halt by the Velvet Revolution and the IOJ began to lose its political and material base in the country. The post-communist government even ordered the headquarters to be expelled, leaving only a nominal presence in the Czech Republic. Meanwhile, the once flourishing activities throughout the world disappeared.

Thus the history of the IOJ is really the story of the rise and fall of an empire. Today most of the earlier core IOJ member unions have moved to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), which was established in 1952 as a Western antipode to the IOJ. The IFJ used to be a bitter rival of the IOJ during the Cold War period but now it enjoys fairly universal support.

The present Part III of *Useful Recollections* is not only a new volume as a sequel to the earlier two parts, but also the complete story of the IOJ from its antecedents until the present day. The book is unique, as no complete history of the IOJ has so far been published.

The book consists of three parts. First, ten thematic chapters present the story of the IOJ written as conventional history, proceeding chronologically and illustrated by a number of photos, followed by an overview in the final chapter. An epilogue concludes Part One. Second, 18 personal recollections by selected authors from inside and outside the IOJ provide perspectives on the organization and its principal actors. Third, a number of documents as appendices complement those already published in the two earlier volumes of *Useful Recollections* and in the Palgrave Macmillan book. The photos and documents displayed as figures in this book were chosen to be mostly complementary to those included in the earlier volumes. Accordingly, the three volumes together serve as comprehensive reference material on the IOJ.

The unpublished materials used as sources for this book and the earlier volumes are stored in the National Archives of the Czech Republic. Official publications of the IOJ are mostly to be found in the collections of *Klementinum*, the National Library of the Czech Republic. Several IOJ publications are also in the collections of the library of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Charles University. Details of the sources used appear in the Bibliography at the end.

I am the main author – both as a media scholar and as a former President. One might wonder how it is possible to reconcile these different roles. My response to such doubts is, first, that writing any history is inevitably more or less subjective, and personal experience may even add valuable elements to the narrative. Second, in this case I have benefitted from a great deal of unique inside knowledge and documentation accumulated during the nearly 15 years of my presidency. I do concede a certain bias attributable to my Finnish background and to the lifelong home base of the IOJ in Czechoslovakia, which accounts for the prominence of these two countries in this book.

I consider it my moral obligation to tell the story of the IOJ honestly and openly for posterity. I do not claim to present the definitive account but rather history as I see it, with the advantage of personal involvement.

After my earlier co-author Jiří Kubka left the IOJ in 1988, and passed away in 1992, I began to work with Václav Slavík, who, when retiring from the IOJ in 1992, took with him a lot of documentation, while most of the archives were lost in the lamentable shambles of the Secretariat in the 1990s. Slavík was first envisaged as my co-author, but his failing health and finally his death in early 2014 did not allow it. Yet a substantial part of the personal recollections in Part Two of this book is written by him. Also, his invaluable documentation served as source material for much of the rest of the volume. It is with good reason that this book is dedicated to his memory.

In addition to Slavík, I wish to acknowledge the assistance of three former employees of the IOJ: Rudolf Převrátíl, Chief Editor of IOJ publications 1985–90; Leena Paukku, Secretary for Europe 1987–91; Josef Komárek, Legal Advisor of the Secretary General 1994–97 and Director of Mondiapress 1997–.

Special support was provided by Markéta Ševčíková, who thoroughly studied the IOJ for her Master's thesis (2008) and for a PhDr. thesis (2015) at the Charles University. Ševčíková also prepared with me a paper on the rise and fall of the IOJ for presentation at the 6th European Communication Conference of ECREA in Prague in November 2016. On that basis we wrote in 2017 a joint article on journalist organizations in Czechoslovakia, published in the online journal *Media and Communication*.<sup>2</sup> The article includes an overview of the political history of Czechoslovakia from 1918 to the 1990s, providing a context to understand the story of the IOJ in this country.

These colleagues and friends deserve my sincere thanks. Special thanks are due to those colleagues, both from inside and outside the IOJ, who shared their personal recollections for this book in Part Two.

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2 <https://www.cogitatiopress.com/mediaandcommunication/article/view/1042>.

Two more acknowledgements on my home front at the University of Tampere: Virginia Mattila, who meticulously checked the English of the texts, and Aila Helin, who skillfully processed the photos of varied quality and expertly did the model layout of the book.

Finally, I am grateful to the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Charles University for including this book in the publishing programme of the Karolinum Press. And the Karolinum team deserves a diploma for patience for having worked under the extraordinary conditions of the pandemic.

*Kaarle Nordenstreng  
Tampere, September 2020*

PART ONE  
**HISTORY OF THE IOJ**



# CHAPTER 1

## PREHISTORY 1894-1945<sup>1</sup>

### THE STARTING POINT IN THE 1890s

The first national associations of journalists began to appear in the UK, France and other countries in the second half of the 19th century. At first they were mostly informal guild organizations. Although at that time most journalists were already wage earners, they were not always closely associated with the trade union movement, which was rapidly getting organized. Journalists as creative writers typically considered themselves as independent publishers. Thus the first organizations of the field were associated with both the journalists and the owners of the press. Yet there were also organizations which followed a clear trade union orientation, such as the syndicate established in the Netherlands in 1884 and the syndicate of French journalists founded in 1886. In the UK, the National Union of Journalists was established in 1907 and affiliated to the British Trade Union Congress in 1920. This was the pattern for most national associations of journalists established after 1900 in Scandinavia, Australia, the USA and elsewhere.

The newspaper publishers and editors were even faster to organize than journalists. In the UK, the Newspaper Society was founded as early as 1836 to safeguard the interests of British newspaper owners. In the USA, the American Newspaper Publishers' Association was founded in 1887.

By the 1890s journalists and publishers in most European countries were more or less organized – not everywhere in solid associations but at least as loose fraternities around a common profession. Newspapers were growing along with increasing advertising and the press achieved a higher profile both in politics and as a form of industrial modernization.

Obviously the time was ripe for national groups to be internationally connected for mutual benefit: to learn from each other, to create rules for trans-border sales of news, and above all to strengthen the profession's prestige.

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1 This chapter is based on *Useful Recollections, Part I, "The Shaping of International Cooperation: From the 1880s to the 1940s"* (Kubka & Nordenstreng, 1986, pp. 41–85). The quotes below are taken from this book. More on the early associations can be found in *A History of the International Movement of Journalists* (Nordenstreng & al., 2016, pp. 42–124).

The initiative for international conferences and a permanent international organization in the field was made at a small meeting of British, French and Belgian journalists arranged by the Institute of Journalism in London in 1893. This led to the convening of the **International Congress of the Press in Antwerp** (Belgium) on 7–11 **July 1894**, in connection with a World Exposition which took place in that city that year for several months.

According to Antwerp newspaper reports, the Congress was attended by over 400 participants. The conference proceedings<sup>2</sup> lists in the programme over 60 delegates from 17 European countries, including the three conveners and Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Portugal, The Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden as well as Russia. The only delegate from outside Europe was from New Zealand. No Americans, either North or South.

The agenda and discussions are well documented in the proceedings. Six plenary sessions during three days discussed a wide range of topics, including the definition of a journalist, the characteristics of the profession, professional education, Sunday work, and problems faced by women journalists. Special attention was paid to issues of copyright.<sup>3</sup>

On the agenda was naturally also the question of how to continue the congresses and to establish a permanent association. Accordingly, the Antwerp Congress launched the **International Union of Press Associations (IUPA)**. This first international organization of journalists was formally established only two years later, once its constitution was drawn up and adopted by the next two congresses in Bordeaux (1895) and Budapest (1896). IUPA was based in Paris and by 1900 its congress was attended by 69 associations from 24 countries, representing over 10,000 journalists and publishers.

IUPA's congress met altogether 15 times between 1894 and 1914, when World War I disrupted regular activities. Participants came mostly from the European countries but occasionally also from Turkey, Egypt, Argentine, Brazil, Mexico and Japan. After the war the first disagreement erupted about admitting members from the former Central Powers, and by 1927, when the congress was able to meet again, it had lost much of its momentum to a new federation (FIJ). Moreover, in 1933 the newspaper publishers also established their own federation. Nevertheless, IUPA survived until 1938.

Consequently, while IUPA had a spectacular beginning, inspiring a generation of professionals to engage in international co-operation, its idea as a com-

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2 *1er Congrès International de la Presse* (1894). This 104-page publication surfaced in some libraries and served as the main source on how the international movement really started (for both Kubka & Nordenstreng and for Björk). The proceedings contain as appendices five lengthy presentations, including Aaron Watson's "On Copyright, or the Protection of Literary Property" and Grace Stuart's "English Women in Journalism".

3 See Björk (1996) and Nordenstreng & al. (2016).

mon platform for both publishers and working journalists did not meet the challenges of the early 20th century and was therefore doomed to disappear.

Meanwhile, Czech journalists were active in creating a sub-regional Association of Slavonic Journalists in 1898. Prague also served later in 1929 as the venue of an important FIJ Executive Committee meeting.<sup>4</sup>

## THE FIJ BETWEEN THE WORLD WARS

In the early 20th century there was a boom of international organizations. For the news media, these included special sectors of the press – the periodic press, the sporting press, the Roman Catholic press and even revolutionary-proletarian writers – as well as regionally based organizations such as the Imperial Press Union (1909, later the Commonwealth Press Union). A particular case was the Geneva-based **International Association of Journalists accredited to the League of Nations (IAJA)**.<sup>5</sup>

The most important of the post-World War I organizations was to be the international association of journalists, established in 1926 with the name **Fédération Internationale des Journalistes (FIJ)**. It was based on the initiative of the French Journalists' Syndicate, which hosted a founding meeting in Paris on 12–13 June 1926, attended by unions of journalists from 21 countries. The initiative was prompted by the ILO which already in 1925 launched an international survey on the working conditions of journalists.<sup>6</sup> In the name of the commission which had prepared the meeting, Stéphen Valot of the French Syndicate pointed out that the profession of journalists was becoming increasingly international, making it imperative for journalists to be organized on an international level.

During the discussion in Paris, certain doubts were first voiced about the relations of the new organization to IUPA and IAJA. Yet after its special character was explained, the doubts were allayed and those present unanimously took a decision to set up a new organization. Its statutes, drawn up by the hosts, were then approved. The FIJ was defined to be an association of national organizations of journalists whose members were to be exclusively professional journalists, affiliated to the permanent editorial office of a news-

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4 See Holoubek (1976).

5 The League of Nations, predecessor of the United Nations, and the International Labour Organization (ILO), played an important role in promoting press policies in the 1920s and early 1930s. See *Useful Recollections, Part I* (1986, pp. 69–73); Nordenstreng & al. (2016, pp. 80–104).

6 The results of the survey were published in *Conditions of Work and Life of Journalists* (1928). Excerpts from this report are reproduced as an annex in *Useful Recollections, Part I* (1986, pp. 91–107).

paper or a news agency and who derived their main income from journalistic work. Thus the goal of the organization was clearly to safeguard the rights and trade union benefits of professional journalists and to improve their working conditions. Among the statutory tasks were the following:

The elaboration, preservation, and publication of statistical and other documents of a nature to assist in the work of defending professional interests;

The study of formulas capable of bringing about the institution of standard contracts for individual or collective employment, and the general surveillance of the enforcement of these contracts wherever they have been accepted;

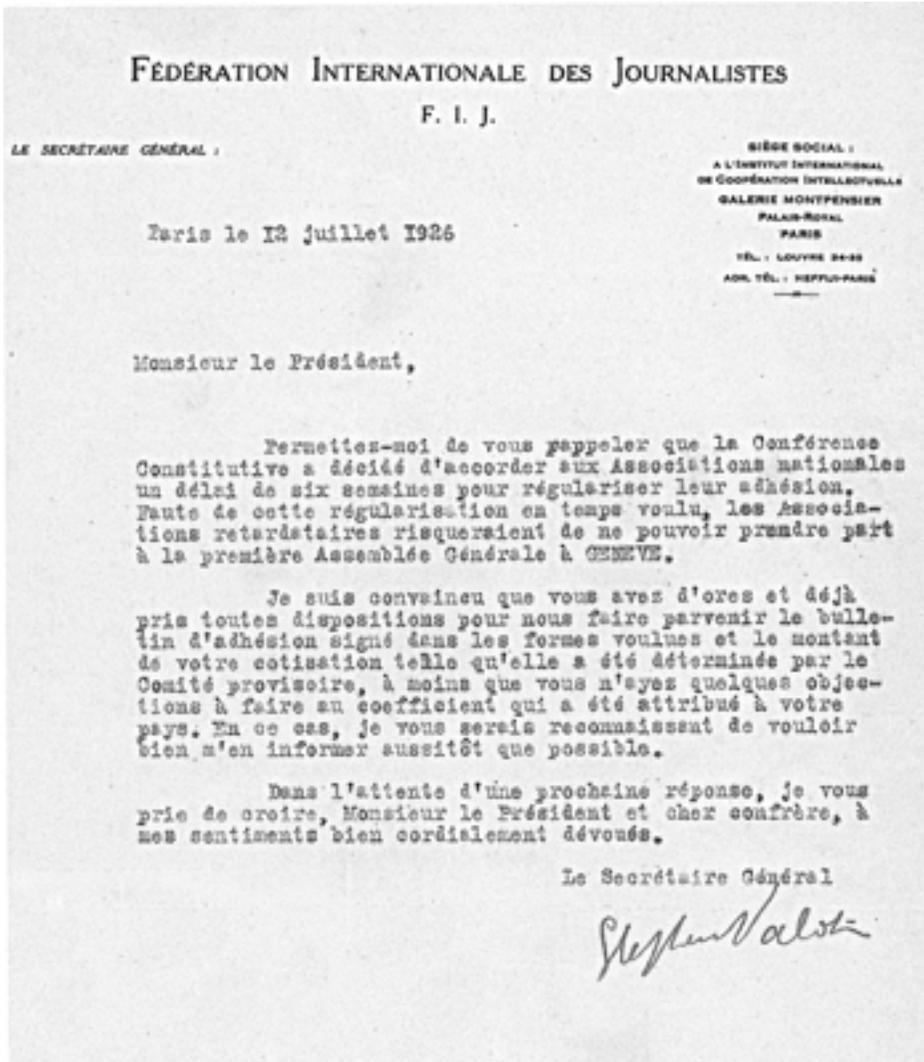
The extension to journalists of all countries of the advantages and the rights won by national associations.

After the founding meeting in Paris, Valot sent out an invitation to the **1st FIJ Congress** (Figure 1.1). This Congress, which officially constituted the organization, took place in Geneva in the premises of ILO on 24–25 September 1926. It was attended by unions representing journalists from 16 European countries, including Czechoslovakia. Russian publishers and journalists, who were active in the launching of IUPA and attended its first congresses, were no longer prominently present in international professional associations after the turn of the century – certainly not after 1917. Attending as observers at the 1st FIJ Congress were the ILO and the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (the predecessor of UNESCO) as well as the Secretariat of the League of Nations and the IAJA.

The congress heard a report by ILO on the working conditions of journalists in different countries and pledged to help in the successful completion of its international survey. The congress also declared that it would strive for these freedoms to be guaranteed by law through its member unions.

At the time of its establishment, the FIJ united 25,000 journalists through its national member associations. By joining the Federation, each association implicitly acknowledged the principles of a syndicalist organization the main task of which was the conclusion of working contracts, the setting of minimum wages and the acknowledgement of a court of arbitration as an institution to settle disputes between journalists and the newspapers for which they worked.

The FIJ had a permanent secretariat in Paris, administrated by a Secretary General elected for four years, and an Executive Committee composed of two members for every country affiliated and meeting annually. A bureau, composed of the President and Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, Secretary General and his deputies, was to meet more frequently. The President was elected for two years and the congresses had to be convoked every two years. Stéphen Valot was an obvious choice for Secretary General, and the first President was Georges Bourdon of the French Syndicate.



**Figure 1.1** The circular letter of the FIJ to national journalist organizations after its founding conference in June 1926, inviting all to the constitutive 1st Congress in Geneva. The seat and address of the FIJ was established at the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (predecessor of UNESCO) where the FIJ had its address until September 1939.

In the first years of its existence the FIJ flourished. In early 1927 it issued a list of collective contracts in different countries with an index of subjects included in them, and at the end of the year it published a draft model contract drawn up on the pattern of existing instruments. It also continued the ILO survey on the profession and began compiling media laws in European nations.

In those years, issues of a more general character appeared among problems of a purely professional nature, such as concessionary fares on railways and ships for journalists and the setting up of schools for journalists. The FIJ was active in these issues and attended the League of Nations conference of press experts in Geneva dealing with better and cheaper international transfer of information that could “help calm down public opinion in different countries”.

The FIJ Executive Committee, which met in Vienna in May 1927, noted with satisfaction that more organizations had joined the Federation, including those of Australia, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Latvia. On the other hand, a problematic matter of principle was raised by the application for membership of an association of Russian journalists – a group of Czarist refugees based in Paris, while the FIJ practically ignored the new world of revolutionary journalism being created in the Soviet Union.

The **2nd FIJ Congress** was convened in Dijon (France) in November 1928 (Figure 1.2). It approved positions and activities on several important issues, such as concentration in the press industry, an international identity card for journalists, a new phenomenon of “radiophonic journalism” as well as a code of ethics and a tribunal of honour for the profession. Georges Bourdon voluntarily handed over the FIJ presidency to the head of the *Reichsverband der deutschen Presse*, Georg Bernhard.

Various projects were developed further in 1929 by the FIJ Executive Committee, meeting in Prague and Antwerp. The global economic depression brought a new item to the agenda – unemployment. Nevertheless, the main attention was paid to issuing the international journalist’s card and to establishing the tribunal of honour. The ruling of the tribunal began as follows:

1. In defence of the honour of the profession it is necessary to draw up strict rules determining the rights and duties of journalists as regards the good reputation of private and public persons.
2. As regards conflicts between journalists from different countries, the committee declares that no theory or comments are banned, but they must not be based on consciously distorted facts or on them known to be false.
3. Every journalist is responsible for the information he has personally obtained. The sending to any newspaper of false or intentionally distorted information so as to poison the international atmosphere shall be put before the tribunal. If the informer’s bad intentions are proved, he will be subject to strict sanctions.