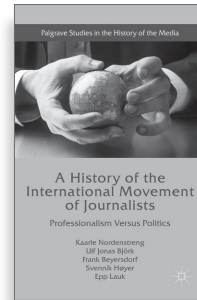


Book Reviews

Editor: Ragnhild Mølster, Nordicom Norway

Kaarle Nordenstreng, Ulf Jonas Björk, Frank Beyersdorf, Svernik Høyer, and Epp Lauk
A History of the International Movement of Journalists: Professionalism Versus Politics
Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, 274 p.



Today, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) is the leading international organisation of journalists. It counts around 600,000 members in 139 countries, and calls itself “*the global voice of journalists*”.¹

The process leading up to the IFJ’s success started with a congress in 1894. Since then, its history is filled with short-lived organisations and political conflicts. Parts of this history are told in this book, consisting of four long articles written by five Scandinavian and one German scholar. As a whole, it is a tale more about failure than success and that is what makes it interesting.

One of these failures is the collapse of the International Organisation of Journalists (IOJ), which was the biggest international journalist organisation in the world until 1990. The former director of the IOJ, the Finnish media professor Kaarle Nordenstreng, was the director of the IOJ for 14 years. He is the leading figure in this book project and, in some ways, this is a loser’s tale about his own past.

An important task for a professional organisation is to produce the profession’s ideology. Logically, the first chapter is a condensed presentation of the development of professional ideology among journalists from the 1890s

until today, written by the Norwegian, Svernik Høyer, and his Lithuanian colleague, Epp Lauk. This chapter is a gem, one of the best presentations of the topic available. Høyer and Lauk have managed to present their complex subject in a clear, nuanced way, without the heavy Anglo-American bias common in such presentations. It is recommended to any lecturer planning a syllabus.

It could be said that, in the beginning, there was talk. The first international journalist organisation, the International Union of Press Associations (IUPA) (1894-1914), was established by a congress in Antwerp in 1894, and continued to arrange journalist congresses until World War I. The IUPA paved the way for an endless row of organisations and committees, which left a strip of obscure abbreviations, such as the PCW, the IAJA, the FIJ, and the IFJAC behind them. Luckily, they also left archives.

The IUPA did not manage to get much done, but in his chapter on its congresses, Ulf Jonas Björk shows how already in 1894, the themes of their endless discussions were surprisingly modern: how to make journalism a respected profession; how to educate journalists, and how to establish an international code of ethics? In 2016, it is time to

ask whether such questions are possible to answer. Perhaps they are of the naturally disputed kind. Perhaps it is time to replace them.

The IUPA became a victim of World War I, and was replaced by the even weaker, United States-based Press Congress of the World (PWC) (1915-1926). The PWC was defeated by inner contractions. Both IUPA and PWC showed how deeply the journalistic field was divided, between journalists and publishers, commercial news organisations and idealists, different political directions, and between Europe and the United States.

In 1926, the League of Nations intervened in the journalistic field through the International Labour Organization (ILO). The result was the *Fédération Internationale des Journalistes* (FIJ) (1926-1940), the first modern international press organisation. The FIJ was based in Europe, and its members were journalists' trade unions. It promoted a liberal press theory, concentrating on the professionalisation of journalists. The FIJ had limited success: it managed to create an international press card, and established an international press tribunal to enforce an international press code. The only problem was that only a few used the card, and the tribunal never started working. In the 1930s, the FIJ became paralysed by the political conflicts of the time but it survived until 1940.

In his chapter on the FIJ, the German, Frank Beyersdorf, presents a study of the themes and arguments in the troubled organisation. The chapter is detailed, and must be read slowly to avoid getting a headache but the right reader, who is probably a researcher, will find a treasure trove. Beyersdorf documents early historical examples of almost every thinkable ideological and practical conflict.

The IFJ was established in a decade when the American press developed the fundamentals of today's liberal press ideology and press ethics. The FIJ was Europe-centric, and the European discussions on the topic were different from those in the United States. In this way, the history of the FIJ can be read as a correction to today's standard tale of press history, which is heavily oriented towards the United States.

In the optimistic year of 1946, the International Organisation of Journalists (IOJ) (1946-1997) was established as the direct successor to the FIJ, supported by the United Nations and with a secretariat in Prague. This choice meant trouble. In 1948, the IOJ was split because of the communist coup in Czechoslovakia. The Western journalists' unions left, and the IOJ became a Soviet-oriented organisation. In 1952, the Western journalist organisations established the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) (1952-). The Cold War would split the journalists' international organisations for four decades.

Kaarle Nordenstreng's tale of the struggle between the IOJ and the IFJ fills the last chapter, and to most readers this might be the most interesting one. Nordenstreng is walking a fine line. As the former president of the IOJ from 1976 to 1990, he writes the story of his own achievement, his organisation's success and failure, and portrays its main antagonist. This is definitely not the last word on these conflicts but Nordenstreng is clear about his position, and knows this topic better than anyone else.

The IOJ and the IFJ were supported by their respective superpowers. The Soviet support to the IOJ was relatively open, while the IFJ was independent on paper. In 1967, it was revealed that the IFJ received secret support from the Central Intelligence Agency. Nordenstreng tells that the IFJ stopped this immediately. The IOJ got its own relative economic independence in a strange way: in the 1960s, the organisation was allowed to build its own capitalist island inside communist Czechoslovakia, with a publishing house and translating agency employing more than 200 people. Best of all, the IOJ was allowed to keep the profits.

The IOJ and the IFJ had different views on press freedom. The IFJ defended a liberal standpoint. The press should be free from any government influence, with no ideological obligations. The IOJ advocated a 'responsible' view, where journalists should work for peace and coexistence, two typical words in the more pleasant part of communist vocabulary. The journalist could not act independent of ideology, and the press should keep a balanced relationship with state power.

The IOJ expanded beyond the communist bloc through alliances with liberation movements in the third world. Journalists from the liberated colonies flocked together under the umbrella of the IOJ, which could offer resources and arrange congresses. As a result, the IOJ became the world's biggest journalism organisation.

Nordenstreng is eager to tell how hard the IOJ tried to build bridges between East and West, and this also was his own personal motive.² He presents the IFJ as a stubborn antagonist, rejecting all invitations for ideological reasons. On this point, his analysis looks somewhat naïve. By the end of communism in 1989, the IOJ collapsed like a house of cards. The organisation staggered on until 1997 and today, the remains of the IOJ are found in some cardboard boxes in Prague and Amman, Jordan, in addition to Nordenstreng's own publications.

After the collapse of communism, the IFJ grew rapidly to its current position as the leading journalism organisation, defending the rights of journalists and disseminating a liberal view of press freedom. The story of these 25 years is mentioned briefly in Nordenstreng's account, but probably deserves its own chapter.

One can be critical of Nordenstreng's priorities and analysis, but he is relatively fair, and tells a story that is seldom told. His article is a good starting point for a fruitful

debate about the effect of the Cold War upon journalism. In addition, he makes a valuable theoretical point in his conclusion:

It is naïve and self-deceptive to believe that international journalists and their associations could ever be completely apolitical. (p.180)

This conclusion is not only supported by the conflict between the IOJ and the IFJ: the history of international journalist organisations from 1894 until today tells the same story of journalism's intrinsic link to politics and state power. It is impossible to avoid these links, but journalists can relate to them in different ways. The professional ideology, which dominates the press in free countries today, is only one possible version of this relationship. This book tells us how it changed, and that it probably will change in the future.

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Notes

1. <http://www.ifj.org/about-ifj/> 07-04-2016
2. <http://blexkom.halemverlag.de/promoting-democracy-and-equality/> 07-04-2016

Graham Murdock and Jostein Gripsrud (Eds.)

Money Talks: Media, Markets, Crisis

Bristol: Intellect, 2015, 200 p.

“Crisis is a process of struggle, including struggles over its definition”. This paraphrase of Antonio Gramsci on page 192 summarises the argument presented in *Money Talks; Media, Markets, Crisis*, edited by Graham Murdock and Jostein Gripsrud. The book analyses

the way political elites, the media, cinema, and the public make sense of, and talk about, the economy and the world of finance in the aftermath of the 2007-2008 financial crisis.

The book consists of four parts, each examining how finance is discussed in a dif-

