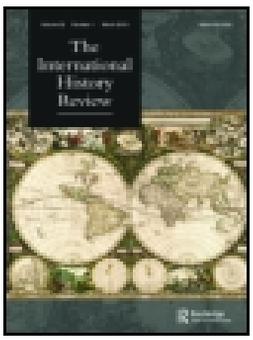

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European Reform Movements and the Making of the International Congress, 1840–1860

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ABSTRACT

In historical research on internationalism and the international sphere, the rise of the international congress during the nineteenth century has long played a prominent role. This article investigates the making of the international congress as a phenomenon by comparing three early series of meetings – anti-slavery conventions, peace congresses and philanthropic congresses during the 1840 s and 1850 s – as communicative events. The analysis shows that their staging was influenced by the fact that these meetings were organised to mobilise reform movements, and that they relied on a public sphere where elite groups, gathered in the metropoles of Europe, could expect that their speeches would reach geographically dispersed audiences through print media. A general conclusion is that these meetings pioneered a new way of being international – called 'representative internationality' in the article – through how they were arranged as independent actors beyond local contexts that could both 'speak for' and 'speak to' different collectives.

KEYWORDS

Internationalism; international congresses; reform movements; public speaking

Introduction

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Austrian pacifist and Noble Peace Prize laureate, Alfred H. Fried, wrote a survey that he called a Baedeker to 'the international land'; the purpose was to show that many of the ideas about international cooperation that were once regarded as utopian had already been realised and to provide a map of 'the recently discovered realm of the international'.[1] The rise of this realm, made up of international meetings and organisations, has later been charted and analysed in a range of publications that focus on the history of internationalism and the international sphere, in recent years for example in the field of transnational history.[2] The creation of the international congress plays an important part in these histories and many studies have described how an ever increasing number of international meetings were organised during the latter part of the nineteenth century in fields such as science, culture, public administration, and social reform.[3]

If by international congresses we mean not diplomatic meetings, but civil society gatherings organised to assemble participants from different countries and with ambitions to be something more than national or local events, then the phenomenon of the international congress was born in Europe during the 1840s. During the 1840s and 1850s the first 'conventions', 'meetings' and 'congresses' with such aspirations were organised in European cities like London, Paris, Brussels and Frankfurt. All these gatherings shared the ambition of being something more than national or local events, whether the designation used was 'world convention', 'general meeting'

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or 'international congress' (an expression first used in this context in the mid-1850s). These early international congresses or meetings – the terms will be used interchangeably in what follows – have been treated in several historical studies and the gatherings analysed as important nodes in the establishment of transnational networks of both people and information.[4]

Even though many of these early congresses are well known on a general level, they have not been much studied as events in themselves.[5] The focus in earlier research on networks and the transmission of information, means that it has not been much discussed how the meetings were organised with specific audiences in view, or how they used available media to communicate. This is arguably a lack since it makes it difficult to specify in what way these congresses represented something new, and as a consequence, how the birth of the international congress as a phenomenon can be understood. In this study I approach such questions through a comparison of early international congresses as *communicative events*. That is, I put the staging of the meetings at the center of attention and analyse how they used different media to address audiences in a historically specific media culture.[6] The general aim is to investigate the birth of the international congress as a phenomenon by analysing what kind of 'internationality' the first generation of such meetings created, and how it was related to the particularities of a mid-nineteenth century public sphere where public speaking played a prominent role.

Empirically, the study focuses on three early series of international meetings: the Anti-Slavery Conventions of 1840 and 1843, the Peace Congresses of 1848, 1849, 1850 and 1851, and the so called Philanthropic Congresses of 1855, 1856, 1857 and 1862. These meetings have been treated in earlier research on anti-slavery agitation, peace activism and social reform but not systematically compared as events. The analysis is based on the printed proceedings and the periodicals published by the organisers behind each meeting series, but also considers a range of separate publications such as travel narratives and specialised journals aimed at professional communities. With the help of databases of digitised news media, it has also been possible to examine how the meetings were reported in a selection of important newspapers and illustrated magazines in both Great Britain, France, Belgium and Germany.[7] To be able to compare different series, the analysis of each meeting will necessarily be brief in terms of content and instead focus on how they functioned as communicative events on a general level.

Most importantly, in what follows I will concentrate on how these meetings were arranged to *mobilise reform movements*. The meetings all revolved around representative practices that we can, with political theorist Michael Saward, summarise as 'representative claims'.[8] These claims sought to bring communities of reform into being by speaking for different collectives but were often contested by those in disagreement with the cause. In the terms Saward uses the organisers of these meetings can be described as 'makers' of a representational relation, where the meetings functioned as 'subjects' that represented reform movements as 'objects' in front of different 'audiences'.[9] In what follows I will describe how these practices also created a new form of internationality that can be called 'representative' to underline the importance of such claims. The focus is both on how the meetings claimed to represent communities of reform-minded individuals and how they addressed audiences at a distance (people not attending the meetings) in efforts to gain influence, primarily but not exclusively with the help of print media.

How the efforts to mobilise reform movements impacted on the way the meetings were staged will be analysed in more detail in three separate sections below dealing with each meeting series. In this context I will discuss both how different collectives were represented and by what means they were addressed. In a concluding discussion I will then return to the question of how these meetings established a specific way of being international that can be labelled 'representative internationality'. A general conclusion is that they appeared as international in the sense of independent actors, above or beyond local or national contexts, that could both 'speak for' specific groups and 'speak to' different audiences.

European cultures of reform and the importance of public speaking

Almost all the early gatherings during the 1840s and 1850s that can be classified as international congresses dealt with issues of social reform, and the organisers were also connected in a dense transnational network of reform-minded individuals and associations. The early 'conventions', 'assemblies' and 'congresses' dealt with issues such as slavery (1840 and 1843), the reorganisation of prisons (1846 and 1847), free trade (1847 and 1856), the promotion of peace (1843–1851), public health (1852), statistics (1853–), and philanthropy (1855–1862).[10] Many of the issues raised at these meetings were politically sensitive, but all were popular causes with liberal middle class reformers that were part of a widespread culture of reform. Reformist groups of this kind were most prominent in the Anglo-American world but also existed in many continental countries in Europe.[11]

The development of reform movements in general and the international meeting in particular, must be seen as part of a dynamic culture of public speaking that existed in many European countries and America in the nineteenth century. In many Western countries, public meetings or gatherings – from scientific congresses to political rallies – played an increasingly important part in public life during this period.[12] Speaking on political platforms, the agitation of reform causes, oral presentations in court, scientific lectures, and religious sermons, were all activities that became of great importance and often attracted huge audiences, in place as well as at a distance through reports in the press. Public speaking was at the time, as several historians have shown, a form of socially accepted mass entertainment.[13] It also occupied a place in the printed press – both general newspapers and specialised periodicals – that is very different from the scant attention similar gatherings often receive today. Often speeches in parliament, in church or at public meetings, could be reported at great length and sometimes almost word for word or 'verbatim'. This was a form of reporting that both depended on developments in techniques of stenography and presumed a large interest on the part of readers in what had been said.[14] The written reports often also recreated the meetings in print as events, with standardised ways of describing what happened in terms of audience reactions and atmosphere during the speeches, a form of well-established 'remediation' (representation of one medium in another) that was important for how individual meetings were perceived by a reading public.[15]

How the international conventions and congresses that concern us here were organised, has to be seen in relation to these practices of public speaking and how speech was mediated in print. The early international congresses developed both from an Anglo-American tradition of public reform meetings, often in the shape of 'conventions of delegates', elected to represent towns or associations, and from different traditions in countries on the Continent in Europe, where overtly political meetings were rare, not least due to persecution by the authorities. In the latter case, adherence to reforms were instead often demonstrated at public events of a more festive character – like banquettes or festivities to commemorate famous individuals – or at public gatherings of a scientific type, often pioneered by the many learned societies that dated back to the eighteenth century.[16] The best-known example of the former is of course the banquette campaign that became a prelude to the French revolution in February 1848, but similar forums for public speaking were created for many purposes during the period.[17] Examples of the latter can be found in several European countries, like Germany and Italy, where large scientific congresses were held from the 1820s onwards.[18]

Early conventions and congresses with border crossing ambitions used elements from these different traditions, while at the same time representing something new in the way they manifested themselves as international. A comparison of the organising of specific meeting series clearly demonstrates this; both the dependence on earlier forms of assembly and the fact that they wanted to be something else and more than their national or local predecessors. It also demonstrates the great importance of public speaking and its mediation to these organisational efforts.

'A sort of panorama': The world antislavery conventions of 1840 and 1843

In the 1830s, slavery was after a long campaign abolished in most of the British colonies. To further the universal abolishment of slavery, two anti-slavery conventions with delegates from different countries were organised in London in 1840 and 1843 by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. The conventions show-cased the British example and a central problem was how to demonstrate the success of what was at the time sometimes referred to as 'an experiment upon which the eyes of the whole world are fixed'.[19] To the organisers it was of great importance that credible facts about slavery itself and, especially, the results of its abolition, could be presented to a metropolitan audience that would never see these things in real life. This ambition can be seen both in the content of the conventions and in how they were staged.

The conventions were filled with detailed accounts of the situation in different parts of the world, as well as legislation and inter-governmental agreements that concerned slavery and the slave trade. Based on ambitious programs, distributed by the organisers in advance, the conventions dealt both geographically and thematically with the issues at hand. At the meetings a great number of reports were presented about slavery and the slave trade, and special attention was given the behavior of liberated populations and how they adapted to their life in freedom. In this way, the meetings sought to present a total picture of the current slave system, the enslaved themselves, and the results of abolition everywhere:

> The subject of slavery has hitherto been treated piece-meal, as it existed in one or other separate locality. Here it is treated as it exists throughout the world. Its atrocities are dragged to light as perpetrated in every quarter of the globe, and witnesses competent to detail them are adduced from every clime. [...] The whole earth is presented, in a sort of panorama, to the eye of the reader, and, for the first time, the sun of human sympathy and benevolence seems to shine upon it all.[20]

Apart from the new facts presented, these meetings could also be seen as historic events since they were, according to the organisers, expressions of a growing reform movement in many countries. A French delegate, for example, called the convention of 1840 a 'memorable manifestation of the opinion of the world', and an American delegate described the convention in 1843 as 'the body that represents the world's humanity' and that would 'testify to the world's humanity'.[21] This representative aspect was important for the legitimacy of the conventions. As one delegate put it in 1840: it was crucial that this was a meeting 'which is not British, but universal', since the purpose was to criticise the policies of different countries, and a world convention of this kind could express principles that overtook the claims of political power.[22] Another participant also stated this clearly: 'I consider that this Convention occupies a moral elevation from which it may look down on any throne on the face of the earth [...] we only come to reiterate the voice of eternal truth.'[23] At these meetings the delegates were not only knowledgeable experts that could present facts about slavery, but also representatives of wider collectives, a position that made cross-border critique possible of what had traditionally been presented as internal issues.

In practical terms, especially the meeting format with delegates appointed by different associations was used by the organisers to arrange meetings that displayed this growing opinion against slavery. The organisers repeatedly pointed out that delegates had come from different parts of the world, both from within the British empire and from France, Holland and America (even though this was difficult to sustain at the second meeting where there were in reality few foreign participants). During the conventions it was also emphasised that the participants were nominated by different churches and represented many Christian beliefs; participants belonged to both the Anglican church, the catholic church and several dissident churches in the English-speaking world.

In this context it is important to note that the 'subject' the conventions tried to speak for was of a particular kind: it consisted of those who had seen the sufferings of the enslaved and wanted to change the current system, at the time often summarised as 'the friends of the slave'.

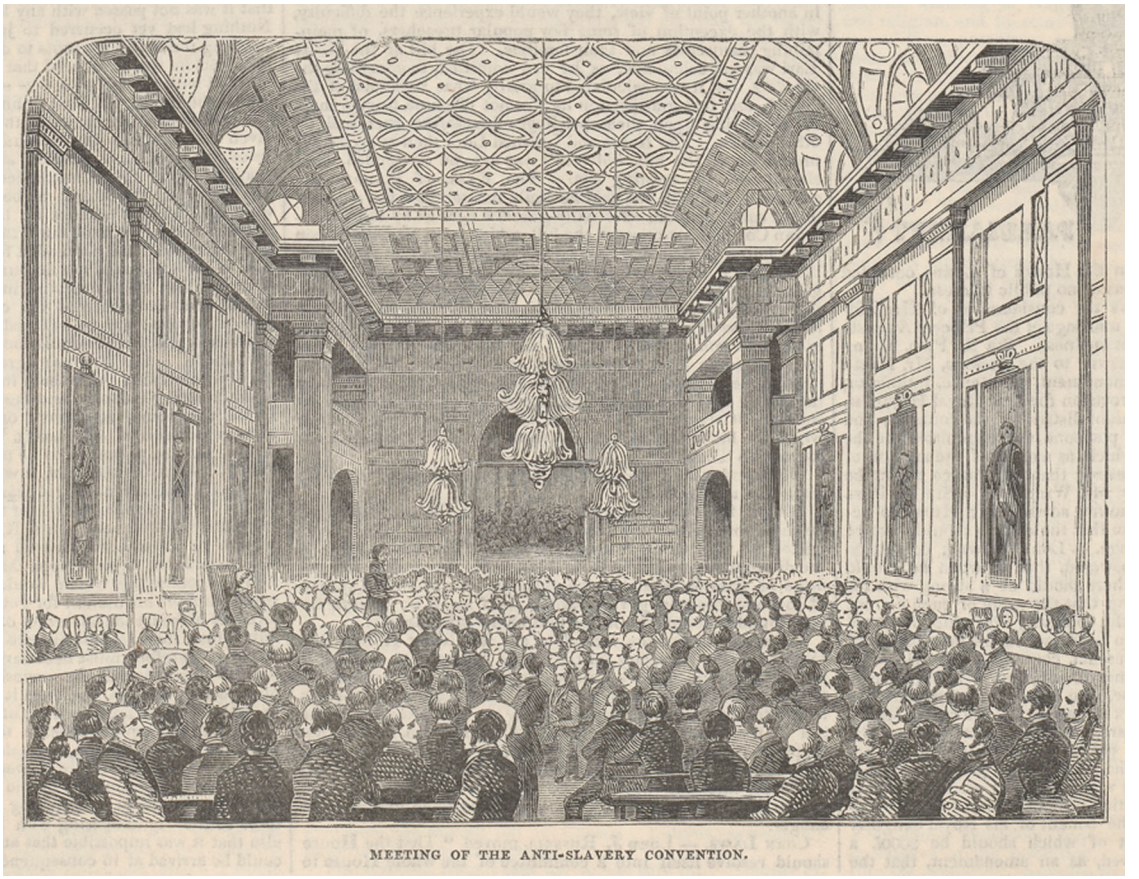

Figure 1. 'Meeting of the Anti-Slavery Convention', *Pictorial Times: A Weekly Journal of News, Literature, Fine Art and the Drama*, 17 June 1843.

In the invitation to the convention of 1840 it was stated that this was a meeting to discuss 'the interests of the slave' and in statements later issued to different heads of states the meeting spoke as 'a Convention of the friends of the slave, assembled from various parts of the world'.[24] If these meetings assembled the friends of the slave, the experiences of the enslaved themselves, on the other hand, was something that they spoke *about* rather than *for*, and the kind of 'representativeness' that they sought was programmatically elitist. They were 'the lords of humankind' as Catherine Hall has put it.[25] In different ways, the conventions claimed to speak for geographically widespread currents of both political opinion and moral feeling, but it was the elite they spoke for (the most enlightened and the most knowledgeable) and the delegates appeared on stage as themselves being part of this same elite subject.

Representative practices of this kind can be seen in the role accorded to different participants during the meetings. Famous abolitionists at the time, like the Baptist missionary to Jamaica, William Knibb, were given a prominent place and could without hesitation speak for the 'we' assembled at the conventions.[26] Former slaves, like the American reverend James Pennington, were also present but not really as one of the regular delegates. This becomes clear when he addresses the assembly with 'an affectionate appeal to you as the congregated representatives of the world': 'We appeal to you to help us'.[27] That these were elite representatives is also evident when a paper like the *Pictorial Times*, highly sympathetic to the cause, represents the assembly in 1843 (Figure 1).

The picture focuses, as was often the case in the pictorial press at the time, on the spacious hall and represents the delegates as respectable in terms of both dress and demeanor. In contrast to many contemporary pictorial representations of meetings, where both the number of people and the expression of emotions played an important part, here the assembly is depicted as a select meeting where arguments are listened to with great seriousness, by delegates that are all highly respectable men. Women were, in the picture as in reality in *Freemason's Hall*, relegated to the periphery, a sign of the meetings standing as a true assembly of delegates, which could at the time only be male.

At the anti-slavery conventions, the participants not only spoke *for* a reform-minded elite, they also spoke *to* audiences in different countries in specific ways. This can be seen if we look at them as events on stage. As such the anti-slavery conventions were ambitious undertakings and both meetings lasted about a week, with sittings both morning and afternoon. The regular sessions were, as we have seen, mainly held in Freemason's Hall, a well-known venue for large public gatherings of this type. In connection with both conventions, even larger public meetings were also arranged in Exeter Hall – perhaps the best-known place for reform meetings in London at the time – where speakers could address an audience that could be counted in the thousands rather than the hundreds.[28] As events on stage the meetings built on a the tradition of Anglo-American reform meetings, a tradition that the anti-slavery cause had been instrumental in creating in the first place.[29] Meetings of this kind borrowed the rules of proceedings from parliamentary practices: they were led by a chairman that decided on the order of debates, motions were supported or rejected, amendments were discussed and propositions were decided by voting.[30] In this way, the arrangements implied the value of discussion, but they were nevertheless often arranged as pure demonstrations of consensus since all participants were supposed to agree on most issues already at the outset. In this particular instance, the debates were sometimes heated, but much of the time was spent listening to long fact-filled accounts without much discussion.[31] The performances on stage were, to judge from the proceedings, often both solemn and emotional, and they found much of their strength in religious speaking and preaching practices.

Of special importance in this context is also how the meetings were conveyed in different media for consumption by wider audiences. Firstly, they were commemorated by the organisers as historic occasions; the best-known example is an oil painting by the British artist Benjamin Robert Haydon of the convention in1840, other examples include specially commissioned poetry and medallions.[32] Secondly, the meetings were remediated in the official proceedings that the organisers themselves published. The printed proceedings were substantial undertakings, published in large quarto format and running up to six hundred pages, and a contemporary reviewer referred to them as 'a monument of benevolent feeling'.[33] The way the printed proceedings were produced and edited was clearly intended to strengthen the credibility of the meetings, not least by toning down discussions that manifested differences among the participants and removing other elements that could be read as undermining the seriousness of the conventions.[34] To these print versions of the meetings, great hopes were attached. One of the organisers, the well-known American abolitionist Lewis Tappan, suggested for example that the printed proceedings from the meeting in 1843 would reach 'many […] thousands, whose attention would not otherwise have been directed to this movement'.[35] And as one commentator remarked: 'as this work speaks *of* the whole world, it speaks likewise *to* the whole world'.

> Into all the quarters from whence the members of the General Anti-Slavery Convention were collected will this account of its proceedings penetrate. Nay, more. The interest excited by the Convention will cause this volume to be sought for through the whole civilized world. Even the slave-holder and the slave-trader will be curious to know what has been said of them; while potentates, not a few will be inquisitive as to the proceedings of a body whose voice they have directly heard, and for the most part respectfully acknowledged.[36]

The organisers also expected that the meetings would be reported both by specialised anti-slavery-periodicals and the general press, especially by the London papers.[37] In fact, both the *Times*, *Morning Chronicle*, *Standard* and *Morning Advertiser* also published reports from the conventions in both 1840 and 1843. The importance attached to the London press can be explained by the expectation that the meetings would reach both the British public and audiences in other countries this way, both by the fact that British newspapers were read in other countries and through translations of articles in foreign papers.[38] Evidence for the high hopes attached to the transmission of information can, for example, be found in the discussions of the role of the British press in reaching North America. It was often pointed out that British newspapers were read by many in the United States, even in Southern states where anti-slavery propaganda was normally suppressed. According to one delegate, this situation made it possible to work through 'constant iteration and reiteration of […] facts and opinions through the medium of the numerous periodical and other publications of Great Britain' to convince an American public.[39]

When participants spoke at the meetings, it is often evident from the wording of their speeches that they addressed a geographically dispersed reading public through printed proceedings and articles in the periodical press. To take just one example: a delegate explained the purpose of a particular demonstration of facts at the meeting in London in the following way. 'For what purpose do I use these facts?' – 'I want to place that picture in the presence of the French people, to show them the horrors of those details, the abominations of these crimes, to proclaim to them the disgrace of continuing this system'. The speaker could, at this meeting in London, testify before both a French and a European audience: 'Here is a picture! – look on this side, and on that, and behold it exhibited in the face of Europe.'[40] As these examples suggest, it was with faith in the ability of an interconnected media system to pass on the message, both locally and to other countries, that the delegates acted at the conventions. In this way they spoke to like-minded groups of reformers, but also appealed to heads of state and rulers in different countries, that they assumed would take an interest in what was said during these meetings in London. Apart from the United States, they also directly addressed countries like France, Turkey, Sweden and Russia.

'Great international demonstrations': The peace congresses, 1848–1851

The creation of a peaceful order among states has a long history as a theoretical project, with many famous proponents not least during the eighteenth century, but as an organised activity in search of political influence, it belongs to the nineteenth century: peace societies were created in the first half of the century in both Great Britain, France and North America. Members of these organisations were also responsible for the series of peace congresses that were organised in Brussels, Paris, Frankfurt and London between 1848 and 1851.[41] These meetings were seen by the organisers as a huge step forward in the agitation of peace, and their comparable success have also given them a later reputation of being something of a high point for the peace movement during much of the century.[42]

In many respects, the meetings can be seen as a response to criticism of the peace cause at the time: in the general press, peace was often presented as completely unrealistic and the members of peace societies sarcastically designated as both 'peace showmen' and 'devisers of airy nothings'.[43] The organisers clearly meant the peace congresses to disprove this type of critique and they were organised with the intention of demonstrating that peace had become a realistic option. The content of the proposals that the delegates voted for at the congresses were important, but the meetings were primarily arranged to show the realism of peace by the very fact that they took place. It is no accident that the meetings could, at the time, be referred to as 'great International Demonstrations', and by one observer it was even suggested that they functioned as a 'practical refutation' of the idea that the people wanted war.[44]

The peace congresses were based on the same tradition of Anglo-American reform meetings as the anti-slavery conventions, but they used the format with much greater stress on the enthusiasm of the participants and less on the seriousness of debates. In this, they fully deserve the description 'theatres of discussion' that has been suggested for British reform meetings in general during these years.[45] The control exercised over the proceedings by the organisers, described as 'mechanisms of consensus-making' by Vanessa Lincoln Lambert, guaranteed that the opinions expressed were in line with official positions (the speakers were for example not allowed to make any 'direct allusion to the political events of the day').[46] The result was repetitive and well-ordered performances, that must be seen as an integral part of organising demonstrative meetings. There was practically no ambition to accumulate new information or knowledge, a fact that makes them different from both the anti-slavery conventions and the philanthropic congresses; the focus was rather the proclamation of the same messages in different places, and the same demands were constantly repeated on stage.

The peace congresses signaled the development of a sentiment in favor of peace, both in how they brought people together geographically, and in the activities that were part of the program. The fact that large delegations of mostly American and British delegates from peace societies, organised 'friends of peace', attended meetings on the Continent in Europe in itself held strong symbolic significance. By attracting large numbers of both participants and spectators to meetings held in different European cities, the organisers could demonstrate that they represented an important movement that crossed the boundaries of nations. At the congresses in Brussels, Paris, Frankfurt and London several hundred people attended as delegates, and at the sessions there were many hundreds more present in the audience. The venues used for the meetings were both fashionable concert halls (Brussels and Paris), buildings representing political power (Frankfurt) and meeting halls associated with established reform movements (London). Both numbers and places signaled the importance of these meetings as part of a growing movement among established classes in society.

The importance of publicly demonstrating adherence to the cause was also manifested in the range of festivities and celebrations that accompanied the meetings; activities that were arranged both to mark the importance of the occasion and to express sympathy between countries and groups. At these occasions, congratulations were exchanged, speeches of gratitude and fare well held, and numerous hurrahs delivered for services rendered to the cause. Already in Brussels a dinner was arranged with what was by the organisers referred to as 'the elite of the city', and in Paris the delegates were invited to a luxurious soirée by the foreign minister at the time, the writer Alexis de Tocqueville, with over a thousand participants in the *Hôtel des affaires étrangères*.[47] Other public buildings in Paris were also open to the delegates and the government ordered that the fountains of Versailles should be played for the guests, an event that was attended by many thousands in the park.

A central part of the staging was also a form of collective travelling to cities where the meetings took place. The main part of the delegates from both Great Britain and America travelled together from London to both Brussels, Paris and Frankfurt on special trains and boats chartered by the organisers. Along the way they were received in different places as a deputation of peace, for example in Ostend, Boulogne and Cologne. In narrative accounts of the travels to Paris in 1849 it was carefully described how the British and American delegates gathered in London and how they were later received in France: when they embarked, the quays in Boulogne were filled with people who welcomed the travelers, and the company was greeted by representatives of the city, instructed by the French government to assist them; no passports had to be shown – 'a mark of confidence unexampled in the intercourse between the two countries'.[48] To the peace congress in Frankfurt, there was once again a large party who travelled together, about 500 people, and this time they were given free passage by both French, Belgian and Prussian authorities.[49]

Even though the organisers could not travel in this way to the meeting in London, the congress in 1851 can be seen as the high point of these demonstrations of the will to peace. After the continental agitation the organisers could now return to England as 'leaders of this great enterprise', with delegates attending from many of the most important European countries and from America; the number of participants was greater than ever before and the meeting was held while the Great Exhibition was on show in the Crystal Palace, the 'first Temple of Peace that modern hands have reared'.[50] That the meeting was conducted in Exeter Hall, a place where public meetings in the agitation against slavery and other successful reform movements had been held during the previous decade, was important: in this way peace could be portrayed as the next reform to be carried through, and just as realistic as previous reform causes. In the illustrated press, the large number of both delegates and spectators was emphasised and the interior of the well-known venue itself was given a prominent place (Figure 2).

As this summary indicates, the peace congresses were arranged as rather spectacular events, where 'the apostles of peace' could be celebrated in different ways. The staging must be seen in relation to an ambition to get as much attention as possible from the press.[51] The fact that large foreign delegations would attract great interest in both local newspapers and magazines focused on contemporary events, was a crucial factor in organising congresses in different European cities as well as the collective travelling to the meetings.[52] The importance of the periodical press to the organisers can also be seen in other ways. For example, a lot of work went into recruiting well-known individuals that would attract attention in the papers. Examples include the famous agitator of free trade Richard Cobden, scientist Alexander von Humboldt, and writer Victor Hugo, as well as a range of parliamentarians, journalists and reformers that were known to a European reading public at the time. Speeches of these people were given at great length in the written reports and some were also the subject of pictorial representations, both in illustrated magazines and to be sold separately.[53] The organisers also sought to secure the participation of 'exotic' delegates, like former slaves or members of minority groups. One example is the preacher George Copway, also known as the Indian chief Ka-Ge-Gah-Bowh, that aroused great interest as he toured Europe before and after the peace congress he attended in Frankfurt in 1850.[54] There is also evidence to suggest that the organisers made special efforts to recruit members of the press itself to the congresses, something that would, presumably, be a sure way to get articles in the papers.[55]

Peace congresses organised in this way suggested the existence of a movement of a subject that we can summarise as 'the people'. The meetings were, in many ways, arranged as manifestations of the fact that the people had under modern conditions come to desire peace and the congresses spoke for this collective.[56] The importance of this theme can be seen both in how the delegates made reference to the people and in how the congresses were organised as meetings. In speeches the people was often invoked in a critique of militaries and diplomats and their reliance on an outmoded 'raison d'êtat'. When the people was rhetorically mobilised it was thus often as the people against the traditionally governing elite, and the people as the respectable, productive and self-governing part of the social body. At the meeting in Frankfurt, French journalist Emile de Girardin spoke about 'these pretended Statesmen' that 'waste and squander the money of the people [...] in an age altogether pacific and essentially industrious'.[57] Similar tropes were repeatedly used by Richard Cobden, for example when he stated that it was 'time that the people interfered' and that the governments should 'tender you their thanks for having [...] facilitated that process of disarmament which is called for alike upon every principle of humanity and sound policy'.[58] Dutch political economist Jan Ackersdijck was even more radical in his proposition that it was not 'the nations that make war [but] the sovereigns and the governments'; 'the nations or the part of nations who engage in war, are only the instruments made use of. [– – –] The contest is not international.'[59] War was not even something that could be labelled inter-*national* since the peoples had nothing to do with it.

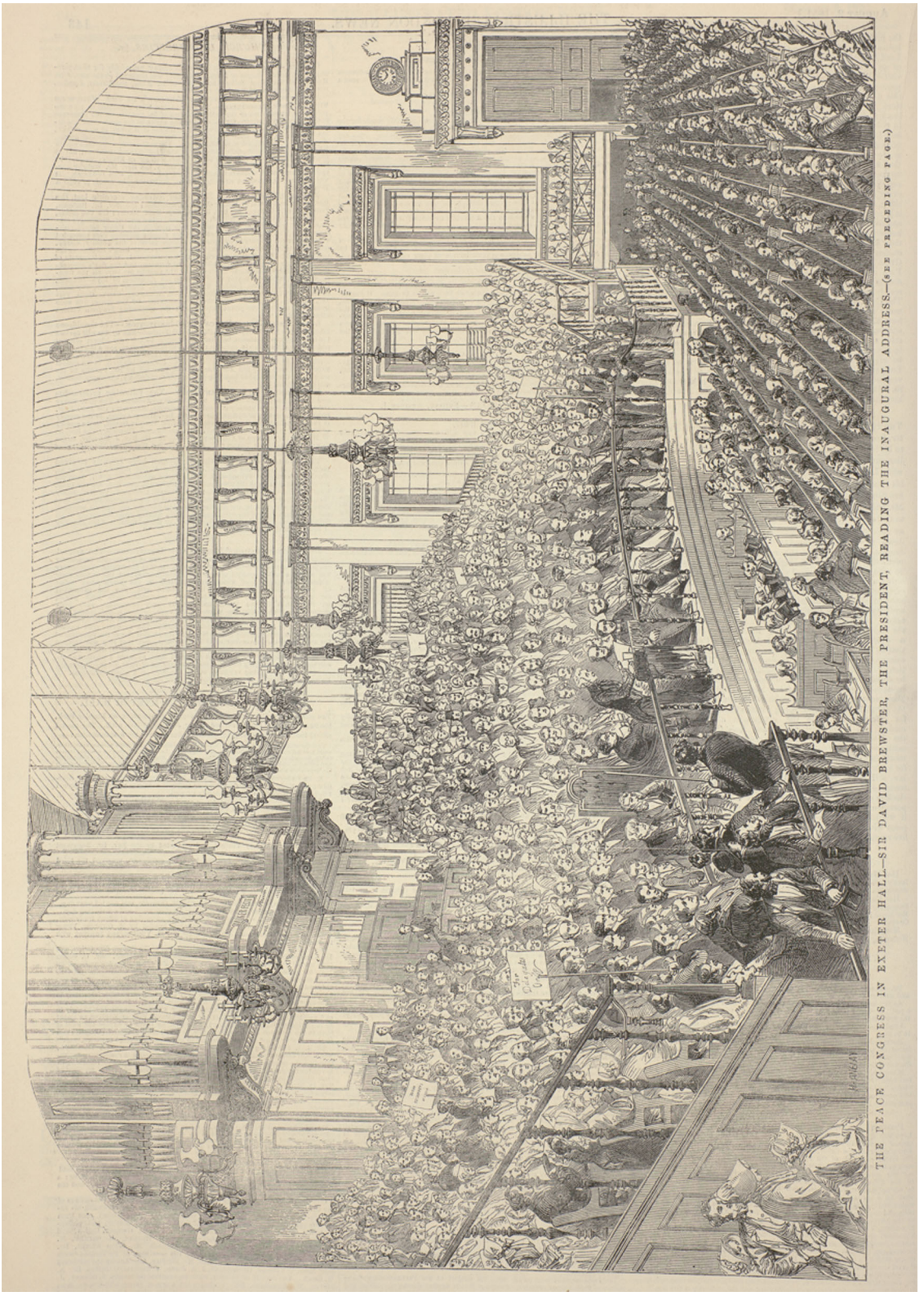

Figure 2. The Peace Congress in Exeter Hall. *Illustrated London News*, 2 Aug. 1851.

The people was also made present in the recurring and highly symbolic meetings between representatives of different countries acted out by the delegates on stage. For example, the French paper *La Patrie* reported a scene from the meeting in Brussels in 1848 that was often repeated in similar ways at other meetings. Leaving the stage after a speech in which he had praised the French nation, the British member of parliament, William Ewart, was greeted by Francisque Bouvet, member of the national assembly in France; at that point 'the liveliest hurrahs and laud utterances of acclaim erupted from the room'.[60] In scenes like these, the exchange between the podium and the floor demonstrate feelings of sympathy and the delegates were positioned as representatives of different nations. These demonstrations of 'inter-national' sympathy can be seen as a continuation of the wave of 'friendly addresses' between cities in Great Britain, the United States and France, often signed by thousands of people and published in the newspapers, that the organisers themselves had been instrumental in bringing about in the period leading up to the congresses.

The people being invoked at the peace congresses could, in this way, variously be understood as separate nationalities, and as the many as opposed to those in government.[61] The people represented at the meetings was different ethnographic groups, the 'ethnos', but it was also the political nation, the 'demos', regardless of borders. The last aspect was perhaps most clearly shown in the use of the church of St Paul as the venue for the meeting in Frankfurt. The church was well known as the place where the Frankfurt parliament (the short lived German national assembly) had sat until the year before. What could better symbolize the existence of a movement of the people as a political force than a meeting in this 'building consecrated to discussion', still furnished for the democratic representation of the German states.[62] That the congress was allowed in to this symbolically charged room was a sign of importance and trust – it was also a sign of the adherence to the principles of (a limited) rule by the people that the national assembly represented to a European public at the time. As the use of the Frankfurt parliamentary chamber implies, the peace congresses were staged, not only as meetings between different peoples, but also as a meeting of that part of the population in all developed countries that could claim a legitimate share in the business of government. It was a movement of this group that the congresses represented and it was the historical ascendance of this subject which had now, according to the organisers, made peace possible.

'A neutral ground': The international philanthropic congresses, 1855–1862

The 1840s was a time of economic expansion in Europe, but also of increasing hardship for the working classes as well as conflicts in society. From the middle of the decade a close-knit network of middle-class reformers in different European countries organised a series of public meetings about these 'social problems'.[63] They started with congresses about prisons and public health reform, and continued with a series of 'philanthropic' congresses during the 1850s and early 1860s. The latter meetings were intended as summaries of all concrete measures that had so far been devised to deal with the problem of poverty in modern society. The organisers were convinced that reforms were necessary, but the issues were often sensitive and they also feared that public meetings about these issues could degenerate into political controversy. Against this background, the congresses focused on what the organisers called practical measures and tried to avoid the propagation of grand theories. The goal was to exclude 'political or sectarian spirit; adopting philanthropy as a neutral ground where all parties and persuasions may work harmoniously'.[64] These totalising yet restrictive ambitions impacted on the way the congresses were arranged.

A closer look at how the international philanthropic congresses held in Paris, Brussels, Frankfurt, and London between 1855 and 1862, were staged shows that they used the scientific congresses of their day as role models. In addition to specialised meetings where scientific

papers were read, the scientific congresses often involved opening and closing sessions where the general public was invited, as well as a range of events like public dinners, excursions, entertainments and exhibitions. The philanthropic congresses emulated many of these practices, and like their scientific predecessors they soon became organised in both plenary sessions, with attendance by a large audience, and smaller subsections for the discussion of particular topics among specialists. Like the scientific congresses, as well as the anti-slavery conventions, the philanthropic congresses were organised as means to collect and systematise information.

Already at the first rather limited gathering in the series, the meeting in Paris in 1855, the organisers created a comprehensive program that was meant to summarise all that had been done in different European countries to deal with the issue of poverty: institutions to educate children, self-help associations, rules for apprenticeship, alimentary societies, savings banks, regulation of working hours, hygiene, housing reforms, lending libraries, workers associations, emigration, religious education, care for the sick, etc.[65] A similar encyclopedic approach can be observed in the even more ambitious general programs for the following three meetings. A preference for detailed knowledge about specific reforms and institutional arrangements, summarised in oral presentations as well as written documents, plans and artefacts, give these congresses a technical feeling. At the meetings, emphasis was put on exchange of facts between people with first-hand experience of specific areas of reform; long reports were often read and specialised subsections for more thorough discussions of certain topics common. The approach is evident in the summaries of social reforms in different countries that opened the general sessions – a recurring 'revue des nations' as one speaker called it.[66] In these often detailed narratives, information about the state of the poor and working classes as well as the latest initiatives for the creation of reform institutions were presented; many speakers also referred to facts made known at the contemporary statistical congresses that were created by the same transnational networks.[67] After preparatory discussions the meetings also voted on a large number of 'resolutions' or 'decisions' on sometimes very detailed questions. At the congress in 1856 for example, no less than 130 statements were made by voting on different questions and subquestions.[68] The statements concerned everything from the creation of credits for farmers, savings banks and insurances, to the adulteration of foodstuffs and new methods for increasing the production of crops, free trade reforms and the extension of communications both over land and at sea.

Long accounts of specific improvement schemes, as well as the collection of official reports, statistical tables and original documents that were amassed at the congresses, effectively limited the discussions to that which could – according to the organisers – actually be realised. But these types of detailed factual presentations were also used in a productive sense to establish the congresses as hopeful and convincing events. The extensive inventories of all that had been done demonstrated the means at the disposal of the groups behind the congresses. It was in many ways through 'details' that the philanthropic congresses proclaimed their authority: the enumeration and exhibition of a great number of new institutions demonstrated how much could, potentially, be achieved.

This ambition was especially apparent in the much visited public exhibitions that accompanied several of the meetings, the so called economic exhibitions, that contained both household products for the working classes and designs for reform projects, such as model houses for workers and new prisons.[69] In the exhibitions, the sheer number of useful items exhibited, supposedly all within economic reach of an ordinary worker's household, illustrated that improvements were possible; they represented 'at the same time ideal and present reality' as one of the participants put it.[70] These presentations directed the attention of observers towards things deemed realistic, but they also expressed a boundless faith in the possibilities of reform with available means: 'The war between capital and labor is now over' as the British reformer lord Shaftesbury put it during the congress in London.[71]

Part of the hopefulness of these meetings also lay in the expectation of a large audience eager for information about these improvements. This expectation can be seen in the way the organisers used print media to convey information. That the congresses, like the other international meetings discussed here, actively sought attention outside of the circle of specialists is evident from the fact that they also worked to secure attendance of famous people, like the Swedish writer Fredrika Bremer or the British nurse Florence Nightingale. Being women, neither Bremer nor Nightingale were allowed to speak in the assemblies, but their attendance was sure to attract attention in the press.[72] Even though the philanthropic congresses were hardly staged for newspaper reporting in the first place (as for instance the peace congresses), the organisers nevertheless relied on the press to convey their message in specific ways, and they could count on both local and foreign newspapers to help spread information about the meetings and their decisions. It is interesting to note that certain foreign papers even employed their own correspondents to report from the meetings.[73] In several cases the organisers also had connections that made it possible to publish a large part of the proceedings in the local press already as the meetings happened. In Belgium, for example, both the official newspaper *Le Moniteur belge* and another paper close to the organisers, *L'Indépendance belge*, published extensive stenographic reports from the congress in 1856.[74]

Stenographic reports of the type published in these newspapers could then later be used to produce the printed proceedings. The proceedings were printed in two volumes for each meeting, with the debates in the plenary sessions given in verbatim style in the first volume and a range of reports, statistical tables, plans and lists appended in the second volume. In this way, the printed proceedings supported the totalising ambitions of the congresses: here all ongoing reforms in different countries were detailed and the reports created a sort of print archive of practical reforms. The proceedings were produced for the delegates themselves – generally all those who paid the participation fee also got a copy of the printed proceedings – but the editions were larger than that, and the books were also meant for a market for literature on social reforms.[75] That booksellers in several European cities, where the books could be bought, were noted on the title page of each volume of the proceedings, is evidence of this. Audiences in different countries were expected to be interested in these questions.

Dispersed audiences were also addressed in the many travel narratives, reports and summaries that were written for different magazines and specialised periodicals run by associations with connections to the meetings, like the *Centralverein für das Wohl der arbeitenden Klassen* in Berlin, the *Statistical Society* in London and the *Société d'économie charitable* in Paris. Reports like these could at the time also be expected to be taken up by newspapers and thereby be transmitted to wider audiences. An example of how the media system functioned in a particular case can illustrate this. Karl Mittermaier, a well-known German law professor, published several articles about the congress in Brussels in the specialised magazine *Germania: Centralblatt für die volkswirtschaftlichen und gesellschaftlichen Interessen Deutschlands* in Heidelberg. Information from these articles were then reproduced in the *Kölnische Zeitung*, a paper that was read in several German states, before it passed on to more local publications like the *Neue Würzburger Zeitung*.[76] Simultaneously the same information was also used by newspapers as far away as Sweden.[77] This shows how public events like congresses on social reform could activate an interconnected media system in several countries, and that the organisers could, at least sometimes, count on a widespread interest in these types of questions.

In the ways exemplified, the philanthropic congresses could speak to different audiences about the improvements accomplished for the poor and working classes. At the congresses, these achievements were credited to a subject that can be described as a 'charitable elite', that these gatherings also represented. As the Belgian prison reformer Edouard Ducpétiaux, perhaps the single most important organiser, put it when he in 1862 looked back at earlier congresses and how the number of participants had grown from meeting to meeting: 'on the lists of our contacts are the names of practically all those that, in different capacities and in all civilized

countries, leads or supports the philanthropic movement [...] the results of which it is our aim to make known'.[78] As the passage suggests the congresses not only gathered information but wanted to represent a reform movement that consisted of the most knowledgeable and distinguished members of society. That these were assemblies of experts was repeated time after time. The British public health reformer, Frederick Oldfield Ward, for example, pointed out that the meeting he had visited consisted of ministers, civil servants, medical doctors, chemists, physiologists, engineers, architects, industrialists, agronomists and lawyers – 'in one word, specialists with knowledge in all the sciences and arts that are directly or indirectly connected to the important problems that have been placed before the assembly'.[79]

Furthermore, a recurring feature was the demonstration of belonging to well-established and influential groups in society. Being part of an elite was repeatedly presented as something valuable and what can be called official support for the proceedings was staged in different ways. In contrast to the peace congresses, that were in a sense organised in opposition to the conservatism of the political class, the philanthropic congresses were accompanied by repeated expressions of attachment to governments, at least in what was considered progressive countries. The congresses can in many ways be regarded as semi-official in that the participants acted with the support of governments and officials in high places.[80] The best example of the fusion with political power is perhaps that an increasing number of delegates were officially appointed by different countries, but the organisers also managed to recruit many independent delegates that held influential positions in public administration (such as inspectors of prisons and schools), as well as persuade individual governments that they should distribute invitations through diplomatic channels (as was the case when the meetings were held in Belgium).

A similar ambition can also be seen in the congresses as events on stage. At the philanthropic congress in Frankfurt, the official nature of the meeting was underlined by the presence on the podium of the two mayors of the city during the opening session, a session that was also held in the *Kaisersaal* in the city hall.[81] Even more explicitly connected to political power were the meetings held in Belgium, where both royalty and government ministers played important roles. In 1856, the congress was held in the rooms of the Royal Academy and the chairman was the former prime minister and well-known liberal, Charles Rogier. In his opening speech to the congress, he praised the large number of official delegates as well as delegates from influential reform associations around Europe as a sign of the importance of the meeting.[82] Leopold I, the Belgian king, also played an important role at the meeting. He distributed awards together with the crown prince at the economic exhibition arranged in conjunction with the congress, and the royals also invited the delegates to a special banquette.[83] When they visited the plenary session of the congress on the last day, the organisers stressed that their attendance lent 'an enormous authority' to the resolutions of the congress, resolutions that were otherwise fully 'dictated by science and judgement'.[84] These repeated associations with political power can be seen as an integrated part of the staging of the philanthropic movement represented as a charitable elite, as a benevolent group with influence and close ties to progressive governments. This was a group that could 'suggest measures inspired by selfless love of the good', but also see to it that these measures were actually carried into effect.[85]

Common features: The mobilisation of reform movements

A comparison of how the three meeting series described above functioned as communicative events shows that they differed in certain ways, for example in how they connected to different traditions of public meetings, but above all that they shared several fundamental features, whether they took their initial inspiration from political campaigns or scientific meeting practices. Even though anti-slavery conventions and peace congresses clearly built on a British reform culture based on 'pressure from without' and opposition to governments, while the philanthropic

congresses were in many ways styled as semi-official events, elements of the different traditions can be found in all series.[86] The anti-slavery conventions, for example, gathered information in ways reminiscent of scientific congresses, and at the more scientific philanthropic congresses emphatic speeches aimed at a general public through the press were not uncommon.

Many common features can be explained by the fact that all these meetings sought to mobilise reform movements. As we have seen, all the meetings were centered around certain representative claims. The delegates that attended these gatherings not only represented associations, but also appeared as spokespeople for more general collectives. The anti-slavery conventions did not 'speak for' the suffering slaves or the philanthropic congresses for the downtrodden masses themselves, collectives they talked about rather than for, but rather for the progressive forces that were emerging to come to the help of those in need. The congresses and conventions were assemblies of all those that could be summarised as *friends*: friends of the slave, friends of peace or friends of the worker. These were elite groups and the way they were presented at the meetings was very much alike from one series to the next: they were border crossing communities of a moral character – communities of those that could expose the horrors of the slave system, that condemned war on ethical grounds or sacrificed themselves for the poor and working classes – and as belonging to growing movements. Resistance to slavery was presented as a kind of Christian awakening taking place in many countries, the desire for peace staged as an emerging popular opinion that was being realised together with the rise of the people as a political force in modern society, and care for the poor and working classes was described as a growing concern among well-educated and influential groups in civilized countries. In arranging the meetings, the organisers also used a range of concrete representative means that supported these claims: flags and similar symbolic signs were used at several meetings, many of the gatherings moved from town to town to enlist different places in the cause, and, most importantly, participants at all these meetings were elected and referred to as delegates from countries, churches, institutions, and towns.

These meetings were also based on specific ways of addressing audiences through available media. In the mobilisation of reform movements it was equally important to be able to speak to influential groups in different parts of the world as to speak for elites in many countries. This ambition influenced the way the meetings were arranged. Most importantly, all three meeting series analysed used print media strategically to address a wide range of 'intended audiences', to use Michael Sawards term.[87] The live performances on stage can in many cases be understood as directed towards print media, such as newspapers and printed proceedings, and even the wording of individual speeches were often dependent on the possibility of addressing a reading public in print. Existing news media, where there was a willingness to translate public speaking into printed text, and where reform meetings were often deemed of sufficient interest to be reported at length, can thus be understood as an integral part of these meetings as communicative events.

The meetings also relied on the transnational circulation of information. Both newspapers, specialist periodicals, illustrated magazines and book-length proceedings were expected to have a broad geographical reach, both through circulation of locally produced news reporting, second-hand accounts, and translations. When they addressed dispersed audiences, the meetings were thus dependent on recent developments in communications, like new train lines, steam ships and postal reforms that enabled faster mass-distribution of both written information and print media. They were also dependent on a transnational but asymmetrical public sphere where interest could be expected in different parts of the world for public events in the metropolitan cities of western Europe. These conventions and congresses could be arranged in the way they were because information about reform meetings in London or Paris could be expected to reach both like-minded groups and political opponents in other countries, in Europe as well as in America and colonies overseas.

Conclusion

The preceding analysis of three series of meetings as communicative events has shown that the early international congress – at least as it was created in this context of mobilisation for social reforms – was something more ambitious than the gathering of people from different countries to exchange information. These meetings were created as international congresses not in the sense simply of 'gatherings' but in the sense of 'actors': the meetings were staged as collective entities that could represent different groups, as well as speak to geographically dispersed audiences as independent actors. A central aim of all these meetings was to demonstrate that 'they' transcended both political, geographical, and cultural boundaries. This was a 'move to internationality' that was presumably important in this context because a recurring problem was how to present proposals for reforms as something more than the views of specific groups (whether these claims were accepted or not by relevant audiences is another matter).[88]

In this way, these meetings contributed to the formation of a new way of being international that we can summarise as 'representative internationality' to underline that it revolved around representative claims. What was pioneered in this context should, however, not be understood as *the* international congress, but rather one model for how to organise international events. As the preceding analysis shows, the way these meetings were staged depended on their role in specific reform movements, and they relied heavily on the resources of a mid-nineteenth century public sphere that privileged the speaking of elites in the metropoles of Europe. That later meetings with international ambitions functioned in the same way is not certain. Many later meetings, whether in the sciences, social reform, or public administration, seem for example to have been much more specialised and to have focused more narrowly on the association of experts and discussions of technical information.

But at the same time, there is much to suggest that the kind of representative internationality described here would also reappear in many contexts. Later during the nineteenth century there was no shortage of international congresses that adopted conclusions or recommendations as collective bodies, or that spoke in the press for more general collectives, whether reform movements, social groups, or communities of experts. If anything, the ubiquity and importance of congresses that claimed internationality with different representative means seems to have increased in the later part of the nineteenth century. It might even be argued that many of the features outlined here eventually became so common that they came to appear as more or less self-evident and their specificity as claims became hard to see. To counter this tendency, what this article has tried to show is that this was a particular way of staging internationality that was, at least at the outset, deeply embedded in historically specific reform cultures.

Notes

1. Alfred H. Fried, *Das Internationale Leben der Gegenwart* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1908), iii. This is a passage that has often been quoted. For a contextualization see Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 15–16.
2. Classic works are F. S. L. Lyons *Internationalism in Europe 1815–1914* (Leyden: A.W. Sythoff, 1963), and Douglas Maynard, 'Reform and the origin of the International Organization Movement', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, cvii (1963). A renewed interest in nineteenth century internationalism was marked by publications such as Martin H. Geyer & Johannes Paulmann (eds), *The Mechanics of Internationalism: Culture, Society, and Politics from the 1840s to the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), and Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). For the transnational approach, see the introduction to Akira Iriye & Pierre-Yves Saunier (eds), *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History: From the Mid-19th Century to the Present Day* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). Of special relevance for this study is also Pierre-Yves Saunier, 'Les régimes circulatoires du domaine social 1800–1940', *Genèses*, lxxi (2008), and Davide Rodogno, Bernhard Struck & Jakob Vogel (eds), *Shaping the Transnational Sphere: Experts, Networks and Issues from the 1840s to the 1930s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014).

3. The role of congresses is evident from overviews like Madeleine Herren, *Internationale Organisationen seit 1865: Eine Globalgeschichte der Internationalen Ordnung* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2009), Bob Reinalda, *Routledge History of International Organizations: From 1815 to the Present Day* (London: Routledge, 2009), and Thomas Davies, *NGOs: A New History of Transnational Civil Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
4. The best analysis of these meetings from a network-perspective is to be found in Chris Leonards & Nico Randeraad, 'Transnational experts in social reform, 1840–1880', *International Review of Social History*, lv (2010), and Chris Leonards & Nico Randeraad, 'Building a Transnational Network of Social Reform in the Nineteenth Century', in Rodogno, Struck & Vogel, *Shaping the Transnational Sphere*. See also Marie-Sylvie Dupont-Bouchat, 'Du tourisme pénitentiaire à "l'internationale des philanthropes": La création d'un reseau pour la protection de l'enfance à travers les congrès internationaux (1840–1914)', *Paedagogica historica*, xxxviii (2002).
5. Exceptions to this with a focus on the meeting series discussed will be cited below, for example Vanessa Lincoln Lambert, 'The Dynamics of Transnational Activism: The International Peace Congresses, 1843–51', *The International History Review*, xxxviii (2016). In the history of science, Anne Rasmussen and others have also analysed scientific congresses as communicative spaces, though mostly with a focus on later developments. See the thematic issues 'Les congrès scientifiques internationaux', *Rélations internationales*, lxii (1990), and 'La fabrique internationale de la science: les congrès scientifique de 1865 à 1940', *Revue germanique internationale*, xii (2010).
6. The approach is inspired by the distinction between 'a transmission view of communication', that focus on how information travels in space, and 'a ritual view', that focus on how communication 'draws persons together', in James W. Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2009 [1989]), 15. It also draws on research that focus on performances and their mediation in the creation of historical events, for example Frank Bösch, 'Ereignisse, Performanz und Medien in Historischer Perspektive', in Frank Bösch & Patrick Schmidt (eds), *Medialisirte Ereignisse: Performanz, Inszenierung und Medien seit dem 18. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2010). That public gatherings can productively be analysed as parts of wider media systems has been argued by Patrik Lundell, for example in Jonas Harvard & Patrik Lundell (eds), *1800-talets mediesystem* (Stockholm: Kungl. biblioteket, 2010).
7. Important databases used are *British Newspaper Archive* (British Library), *Gallica* (National Library of France), *BelgicaPress* (Royal Library of Belgium), *Digipress* (Bavarian State Library) and the digital collections at the University of Heidelberg. Generally, searches have included a time span of around two weeks before and after the meetings, and used search terms such as the name of the meeting and the names of prominent speakers. Only part of the coverage in the press is relevant to the present argument, but for a more general analysis of similar events see Jakob Kihlberg, *Gränslösa anspråk: Offentliga möten och skapandet av det internationella, 1840–1860* (Lund: Mediehistoriskt arkiv, 2018).
8. Michael Saward, *The Representative Claim* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Sawards argument cannot be fully summarised here, but it is worth noting that he especially underlines the role of representation in the *creation* of political collectives. In this way he complicates traditional theories of political representation where groups tend to be seen as given prior to the act of representation. For this argument in the context of contemporary political theory, see Virginie Dutoya & Samuel Hayat, 'Prétendre représenter: La construction sociale de la représentation politique', *Revue franc¸aise de science politique*, lxvi (2016).
9. Saward, *The Representative Claim*, esp. 36–8.
10. See references in note 4. For the important statistical congresses, not treated further here, see primarily Nico Randeraad, *State and Statistics in the Nineteenth Century: Europe by Numbers* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), and Éric Brian, 'Observations sur les origines et sur les activités du congrès international de statistique (1853–1876)', *Bulletin de l'institut international de statistique: Actes de la 47ème session* (1989).
11. For a useful comparison, see Jonathan Sperber, 'Reforms, Movements for Reform, and Possibilities of Reform: Comparing Britain and Continental Europe', in Arthur Burns & Joanna Innes (eds), *Rethinking the Age of Reform: Britain 1780–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
12. References to research on cultures of public speech can be found in Diarmid A. Finnegan, 'Finding a Scientific Voice: Performing Science, Space and Speech in the 19th century', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, xlii (2017) and Tom F. Wright, *Lecturing the Atlantic: Speech, Print, and an Anglo-American Commons 1830–1870* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).
13. Martin Hewitt, 'Aspects of Platform Culture in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Nineteenth-Century Prose*, xxix (2002); Joseph S. Meisel, *Public Speech and the Culture of Public Life in the Age of Gladstone* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); Jean Starobinski, 'La chaire, la tribune, le barreau', in Pierre Nora (ed), *Les Lieux de mémoire*, part 3:2 (Paris: Gallimard, 1986).
14. Delphine Gardey, *Écrire, calculer, classer – comment une révolution de papier a transformé les societés contemporaines (1800–1940)* (Paris: La Découverte, 2008), ch. 1.
15. Jay David Bolter & Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999).
16. Françoise Waquet, *Parler comme un livre: L'oralité et le savoir (XVIe–XXe siècle*) (Paris: Albin Michel, 2003).

17. Henk te Velde & Maartje Janse (eds), *Organizing Democracy: Reflections on the Rise of Political Organizations in the Nineteenth Century* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Vincent Robert, *Le temps des banquets: Politique et symbolique d'une génération (1818-1848)* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2010).
18. Louise Miskell, *Meeting Places: Scientific Congresses and Urban Identity in Victorian Britain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013); Yvonne Steif, *Wenn Wissenschaftler feiern: Die Versammlung deutscher Naturforscher und Ärzte 1822 bis 1913* (Stuttgart: Wissenschaftliche Verlagsgesellschaft, 2003); Anne Rasmussen, 'Jalons pour une histoire des congrès internationaux au XIXe siècle: Régulation scientifique et propagande intellectuelle', *Rélations internationales*, lxii (1990).
19. *Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention, called by the committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and held in London, from Friday, June 12th, to Tuesday, June 23rd, 1840* (London: British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1841), 362. For more on the content of the conventions, see primarily Catherine Hall, 'The Lords of Humankind Re-Visited', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, lxvi (2003).
20. From a review of the printed proceedings in *British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 6 Oct.1841, 212.
21. *General Anti-Slavery Convention 1840*, 169; *Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention, called by the committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and held in London, from Tuesday, June 13th, to Tuesday, June 20th, 1843* (London: John Snow, 1843), 91.
22. *General Anti-Slavery Convention 1840*, 241.
23. *General Anti-Slavery Convention 1840*, 204.
24. *General Anti-Slavery Convention 1840*, 8 and 520.
25. Hall, 'The Lords of Humankind Re-Visited'.
26. For example, *General Anti-Slavery Convention 1840*, 363-7.
27. *General Anti-Slavery Convention 1843*, 54.
28. The meetings in Exeter Hall were annual meetings of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, but must also be considered an integral part of the conventions since they were held in conjunction and the same speakers appeared to repeat the same messages.
29. James Walvin, 'The Propaganda of Antislavery', in James Walvin (ed), *Slavery and British Society 1776-1846* (London: Macmillan Press, 1982).
30. Hewitt, 'Aspects of Platform Culture'; Paul A. Pickering & Alex Tyrrell, *The People's Bread: A History of the Anti-Corn Law League* (London: Bloomsbury, 2000), esp. ch. 9.
31. A well-known example of a heated debate concerned the participation of women at the conventions, see Lisa Shawn Hogan, 'A Time for Silence: William Lloyd Garrison and the "Woman Question" at the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention', *Gender Issues*, xxv (2008).
32. The painting has been discussed and reproduced many times, see J. R. Oldfield, '*Chords of freedom': Commemoration, Ritual and British Transatlantic Slavery* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), ch. 1. For poems and commemorative objects, *British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 25 Mars, 19 May and 1 July 1840.
33. From a review in *The Patriot* reproduced in *British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 20 Oct. 1841, 217.
34. Editing practices in printed proceedings cannot be further discussed here, but for an analysis see Kihlberg, *Gränslösa anspråk*, ch. 1.
35. *General Anti-Slavery Convention 1843*, 328.
36. From a review of the proceedings in *British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 6 Oct. 1841, 212.
37. See for example *General Anti-Slavery Convention 1840*, 569, and the discussion of published articles in 'The late Anti-Slavery Meeting', *British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 15 July 1840.
38. There are indications that this also happened. For example, see *Le Siècle*, 20 and 30 June 1840.
39. *General Anti-Slavery Convention 1840*, 129.
40. *General Anti-Slavery Convention 1840*, 174.
41. These groups also organised a peace convention in London in 1843, but it was a rather different kind of meeting and will therefore not be treated further here.
42. W. H. van der Linden, *The International Peace Movement 1815–1874* (Amsterdam: Tilleul Publications, 1987); Sandi E. Cooper, *Patriotic Pacifism: Waging War on War in Europe, 1815–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Martin Ceadel, *The Origins of War Prevention: The British Peace Movement and International Relations, 1730–1854* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
43. *The Times*, 24 and 27 Aug. 1849.
44. *Herald of Peace*, June 1850, 501. *Report of the proceedings of the second General Peace Congress, held in Paris, on the 22nd, 23rd and 24th of August, 1849* (London: Charles Gilpin, 1849), 25.
45. Pickering & Tyrrell, *The People's Bread*, 191.
46. Lincoln Lambert, 'Dynamics of Transnational Activism'. *Herald of Peace*, August 1849, 340.
47. *The Peace Congress at Brussels, on the 20th, 21st, and 22nd of September, 1848* (London: Tyler and Reed, [1848]), 44; *Second General Peace Congress*, 89.
48. *Second General Peace Congress*, 7-8.

49. *Report of the proceedings of the third General Peace Congress, held in Frankfort, on the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th August, 1850* (London: Charles Gilpin, 1851), xii and 67-9. Also see 'Departure of English Members of the Peace Congress for Frankfurt', *Illustrated London News*, 24 Aug. 1850.
50. *Report of the proceedings of the fourth General Peace Congress, held in Exeter Hall, London, on the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th July, 1851* (London: Charles Gilpin, 1851), 8 and 13.
51. The central role of the press is evident from the summaries of the reporting published by the organisers, for example *Herald of Peace*, 1848, 193-224, *Herald of Peace*, 1849, 378-96.
52. The breadth of the coverage can be exemplified by some of the journals that reported the meeting in Paris: *La Presse*, 21-25 Aug. 1849, *Journal des débats*, 26 Aug. 1849, *L'Illustration, journal universel*, 1 Sept. 1849, 'Le congrés de la paix', *La Mode: Revue politique et littéraire*, 25 Aug.1849.
53. See for example the picture of Richard Cobden produced for the congress in Paris, available online here: http://www.bildarchivaustria.at/Pages/ImageDetail.aspx?p_iBildID=7259032 (last visited: 1 Feb. 2020).
54. George Copway, *Running Sketches of Men and Places, in England, France, Germany, Belgium, and Scotland* (New York: J. C. Riker, 1851). Examples of the attention can be found in the German illustrated press, see *Illustrirte Zeitung*, 21 Sept. 1850 and 'Hi-ge-ga-ga-bu, Häuptling der Shipawahis, in Berlin', *Kladderadatsch*, 4 Sept. 1850.
55. For a standardised letter of invitation to editors of newspapers, see Elihu Burritt and Henry Richard to 'Sir', 31 July 1849 [Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, Swarthmore College Peace Collection], Elihu Burritt Papers, 1840–1965, DG 096.
56. As Pierre Rosanvallon and others have convincingly shown, the people referred to as the foundation of power in modern societies is often as 'omnipotent' as it is 'ungraspable', and the attributes it has been assigned has varied greatly over time. Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le peuple introuvable: Histoire de la représentation démocratique en France* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 15.
57. *Third General Peace Congress*, 32. The quoted utterance is not in the German edition.
58. *Second General Peace Congress*, 53-4.
59. *Second General Peace Congress*, 115. The letter was only published in the English edition.
60. *La Patrie*, 23 Sept. 1848.
61. That the congresses were arranged as meetings of 'nationalities' has also been suggested by Thomas Hippler, 'From Nationalist Peace to Democratic War: The Peace Congresses in Paris (1849) and Geneva (1867)', in Thomas Hippler & Miloš Vec, *Paradoxes of Peace in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
62. *Third General Peace Congress*, 5. The importance of the venue is for example shown in the pictorial reporting, see *Illustrirte Zeitung*, 21 Sept. 1850, and *Illustrated London News*, 7 Sept. 1850. That German observers could perceive the use of the church as a provocation is also evidence of the symbolism: 'Der Friedenskongreß zu Frankfurt', *Die Grenzboten: Zeitschrift für Politik und Literatur*, 1850, 365-7.
63. Leonards & Randeraad, 'Building a Transnational Network'; Dupont-Bouchat, 'Du tourisme pénitentiaire à "l'internationale des philanthropes"'.
64. 'International Philanthropic Congress', *Journal of the Society of Arts*, 21 Feb. 1862.
65. Proceedings published as 'Réunion internationale de charité' in *Annales de la charité*, 1855.
66. *Congrès international de bienfaisance de Bruxelles: Session de 1856* (Bruxelles: Aug. Decq, 1857), vol. 1, 62.
67. For an example see *Congrès international de bienfaisance de Francfort-sur-le-Mein: Session de 1857* (Francfort s/M: Joseph Baer, 1858), vol. 1, 73-9.
68. *Congrès international de bienfaisance de Bruxelles*, vol. 1, 481-98. Even at the time, the large number of resolutions was criticised as unpractical, both at the meeting and in the press. For example: *La Meuse: Journal de Liège et de la province*, 17-23 Sept. 1856.
69. Thomas Twining, 'The Brussels Economic Exhibition', *Journal of the Society of Arts*, 31 Oct. 1856; *Exposition d'économie domestique de Bruxelles ouverte du 25 août au 1er octobre 1856: Réglement – Catalogue* (Bryssel: Ch. Lelong, 1856).
70. Fredrika Bremer, 'Teckningar från Välgörenhetskongressen och Expositionen i Brüssel 1856', *Aftonbladet*, 6 Dec. 1856.
71. *Congrès international de bienfaisance de Londres: Session de 1862* (Londres: L'Association nationale pour le progrès des sciences sociales, 1863), vol. 1, 279.
72. For examples in the press: Fredrika Bremer 'Teckningar från Välgörenhetskongressen och Expositionen i Brüssel 1856', *Aftonbladet*, 6, 8 and 11 Dec. 1856; 'Congrès international de bienfaisance', *Daily News*, 14 June 1862.
73. Papers with their own correspondents in Brussels in 1856 were for example *The Morning Chronicle* in London and *La Presse* in Paris; both published several articles around the time of the meeting.
74. *L'Indépendance belge*, 16-21 Sept. 1856; *Le Moniteur belge: Journal officiel*, 16-20 Sept. 1856. In Frankfurt the proceedings were published in the French language paper *Journal de Francfort*.
75. For the size of editions, see Georg Varrentrapp to Karl Mittermaier, 3 Jan. 1859, in Lars Hendrik Riemer, *Das Netzwerk der 'Gefängnisfreunde' (1830–1872): Karl Josef Anton Mittermaiers Briefwechsel mit europäischen*

Strafvollzugsexperten (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2005), letter 270, and 'International Philanthropic Congress', *Journal of the Society of Arts*, 21 Feb. 1862.
76. *Neuen Würzburger Zeitung*, 22-23 April 1856.
77. 'Ekonomiskt museum för de arbetande klasserna', *Post- och inrikes tidningar*, 24 April 1856.
78. *Congrès international de bienfaisance de Londres*, vol. 1, 42-4.
79. F.-O. Ward, *Discours prononcé par F.-O. Ward, Esqre (Angleterre), à la séance d'ouverture du Congrès international de bienfaisance: Bruxelles, 15 septembre 1856* (Bruxelles & Leipzig: Librairie européenne, C. Muquardt, 1857), 4.
80. They were also financially supported by governments, see for example *Le Moniteur belge: Journal officiel*, 13 March 1856.
81. *Congrès international de bienfaisance de Francfort-sur-le-Mein*, vol. 1, 41.
82. *Congrès international de bienfaisance de Bruxelles*, vol. 1, 58.
83. *Congrès international de bienfaisance de Bruxelles*, vol. 1, 115, 193, 211 and 235.
84. *Congrès international de bienfaisance de Bruxelles*, vol. 1, 211. The importance of the visit is also evident in the reports in the press: *Journal de Bruxelles*, 18 Sept. 1856, and 'The Belgian International Philanthropic Congress', *The Morning Chronicle*, 20 Sept. 1856.
85. Armand de Melun, 'Congrès de bienfaisance de Londres en 1862', *Revue d'économie chrétienne*, ii (1861), 959.
86. Patricia Hollis (ed), *Pressure from Without in Early Victorian England* (London: Edvard Arnold, 1974).
87. Saward, *The Representative Claim*.
88. Paul Greenhalgh talks about a 'move to internationality' for exhibitions that developed from national to world fairs during these same decades: *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World Fair's, 1851–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 9.

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