

Wereldcongres Voor Dierenbescherming 1950: Spirit and Legacy on Global Animal Protection Movement

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Abstract: This article examines the *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming* (World Congress for Animal Protection) held in 1950 at the Kurhaus in Scheveningen, a pivotal event in the history of global animal protection. The congress, opened by Dr. W. Hugenholtz with Queen Juliana in attendance, aimed to address pressing international animal welfare concerns while strengthening global cooperation. A key goal was the creation of a large international association comprising all animal protection organizations worldwide. Several notable resolutions were passed, including the abolition of trained animal performances in circuses and other venues, the immediate closure of non-scientific and commercial zoos, and limiting scientific zoos to one per 15 million inhabitants. The congress also underscored the importance of public education, particularly in fostering respect for living creatures among the youth, and highlighted the role of religious institutions in promoting animal welfare. This article explores the congress's enduring legacy, emphasizing its role in shaping contemporary animal protection laws and its influence on the ongoing global movement for animal welfare. The event's historical significance continues to inspire international efforts toward humane treatment and protection of animals worldwide.


1 INTRODUCTION


In the mid-20th century, awareness of animal welfare began to rise alongside the global consciousness about ethics and animal rights. Despite numerous efforts by local and national organizations to protect animals from exploitation and cruelty (Boomgaard, 2004; MacKenzie, 2017), varying approaches and a lack of coordination between countries and regions hindered the effectiveness of these efforts. Differences in regulations, ethical standards, and cultural perspectives on animal protection created significant gaps in animal welfare practices worldwide (Boomgaard, 1998; Clason, 1967; Thoenes et al., 2009). Amidst these challenges, an urgent need arose for a platform to coordinate and unify the global animal protection movement to establish fundamental principles and shared policies that could be widely adopted.

The 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming*, held in Scheveningen, was a response to this need for global coordination in the animal protection movement. This congress not only

served as a forum for discussion but also provided an opportunity for organizations from various countries to reach consensus in advocating for animal rights and welfare (Bronner, 2008; Reporter, 1927, 1929). One of the primary issues addressed was the exploitation of animals in the entertainment and commercial industries (Boomgaard, 1994), where animal welfare was often disregarded in favor of economic gain (Boomgaard, 1999). Additionally, the congress emphasized the importance of public education and the role of religion in instilling animal welfare values across broader society (Reporter, 1930). Through the resolutions it produced, this congress sought to establish a stronger ethical and operational foundation for the international animal protection movement, marking a historic starting point in the advocacy for animal rights worldwide.

The main concept of this article centers on welfare state theory in the context of animal protection, which emphasizes the duty of the state and society to safeguard the welfare of all living beings, including animals. According to this theory, animal protection should be part of public policy aimed at reducing

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animal exploitation and suffering (Singer, 2004). This idea aligns with the utilitarian theory proposed by Jeremy Bentham and Peter Singer, where an action is considered right if it minimizes suffering and maximizes welfare. This principle supports the view that humans have a moral responsibility to protect animals from inhumane treatment, making animal protection an integral part of ethical commitments and global social responsibility.

Additionally, social movement theory is employed to understand how the 1950 congress became a catalyst for the international animal protection movement. This theory emphasizes the importance of social and collective organizations in creating sustainable structural change (Tilly & Wood, 2015). By bringing together key figures and international organizations, the congress succeeded in establishing a cooperative network that transcended national boundaries. According to Sidney Tarrow (Tarrow, 2022), an effective social movement forms when there is solidarity among actors, a clear agenda, and a shared strategy—all of which were present at the congress. Thus, these concepts provide a framework for understanding why the 1950 congress had such a profound and lasting impact on the global movement for animal protection.

Previous research has shown that animal protection efforts have evolved through various social movements and policies aimed at reducing animal exploitation in the entertainment, laboratory, and commercial trade sectors. Francione's study (Francione, 2008) in *Animals as Persons: Essays on the Abolition of Animal Exploitation* reveals that banning animal exploitation in the entertainment industry is a crucial first step in shifting public perception regarding animal rights. Another study by Regan (Regan, 2016) in *The Case for Animal Rights* strengthens the understanding that animal welfare policy should extend beyond physical protection, encompassing the fundamental right to live free from unnecessary suffering. Additionally, Singer's research (Singer, 2004) in *Animal Liberation* underscores the importance of an educational approach to instill ethical values on animal protection in society from an early age. These findings are relevant to this study as they support the notion that international animal protection movements, like those initiated at the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming*, have had a significant impact on shaping public understanding and policies regarding animal rights globally.

This study aims to examine the historical role and legacy of the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming* in shaping the global animal protection movement and its influence on public policy and perceptions of animal welfare. The

primary contribution of this research is to offer a fresh perspective on the long-term impact of this historic congress, which served as a starting point for international agreements on banning animal exploitation and emphasized the importance of public education. The significance of this study lies in its ability to bridge the understanding between history and modern policy, illustrating how the principles established at the congress remain relevant in shaping contemporary animal welfare policies. The novelty of this research is found in its in-depth analytical approach to the congress's role in building an international animal protection network, a topic that has been underexplored in historical studies on animal protection. The originality of this study is evident in its emphasis on the importance of the 1950 congress's legacy in inspiring current policies and movements for animal protection, making a significant contribution to the literature connecting the history of social movements with global animal protection policy.

2 METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a historical research design using Renier's framework (Renier, 2016) to reconstruct the events of the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming* and analyze its impact on the global animal protection movement. This approach relies on historical methods, utilizing primary sources in the form of archival newspapers from Australia, the Netherlands, Canada, India, the United States, and Switzerland that document the congress and related events. These sources enable the researcher to understand the social and political context surrounding the congress while exploring international public reactions to the resolutions it produced. By examining news archives from countries with differing perspectives, this research design offers broader insights into the congress's global reception and influence, enriching the historical interpretation of its role in laying the foundations for the animal protection standards we recognize today.

2.2 Data and Source of Data

This research relies on primary data sourced from international newspapers, including from Australia: *The Advertiser*, Adelaide (1929), *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, Queensland (1927), *Sunday Mail*, Brisbane

(1930); from the Netherlands: *Eindhovens Dagblad*, Eindhoven (1950), *Deventer Dagblad*, Deventer (1950), *De Noord-Ooster*, Groningen (1950), *Nieuwe Apeldoornsche Courant*, Apeldoorn (1950), *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, Groningen (1950), *Het Binnenhof*, Zurich (1958), and *Algemeen Dagblad*, Rotterdam (1978); from Canada: *The Windsor Daily Star*, Ontario (1950), *The Calgary Herald*, Alberta (1950); from India: *The Indian Express*, Uttar Pradesh (1950); from the United States: *The Spokesman-Review*, Washington (1950), *The Washington Reporter*, Washington (1950), *Toledo Blade*, Ohio (1950), *The Dispatch*, North Carolina (1950); and from Switzerland: *Het Binnenhof*, Zurich (1958). These newspapers documented the events and proceedings of the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming*.

The Dutch-language newspapers are particularly valuable for their local perspective on the congress, including Dutch media's recognition of prominent figures like Dr. W. Hugenholtz and Queen Juliana's presence. These articles offer insights into the discussions, resolutions, and domestic public responses regarding the animal welfare issues prioritized by the congress. Additionally, through Dutch newspapers, this research examines historical details concerning the background, objectives, and dynamics that unfolded during the congress in Scheveningen, the Netherlands.

On the other hand, international newspapers serve as complementary sources, revealing how the event was received and reported from countries outside Europe. The non-European press provides an external view, illustrating the extent of international attention garnered by the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming* and the global resonance of its agenda and resolutions. These reports assist this research in assessing the congress's impact on public opinion and animal welfare awareness more broadly. By combining perspectives from these countries, this study reveals the congress's global influence and identifies cross-national responses and support for the animal protection issues discussed at that time.

2.3 Data Collection

The data collection techniques in this study were carried out through document analysis of newspaper archives that recorded the events and developments of the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming*. These newspaper archives were obtained from archival institutions and libraries with both digital and physical collections of old newspapers. The data collection process began with identifying and selecting relevant articles, followed by content analysis to gather information related to the events

and issues discussed at the congress. This process involved keyword searches and specific topics related to animal welfare and the congress's agenda, ensuring that the collected data effectively supports the research objectives.

In addition to newspaper documentation, the study also conducted cross-verification of the information obtained to ensure data accuracy and validity. This technique involved comparing news content from multiple newspapers to assess the alignment and consistency of information regarding the congress's agenda, resolutions, and public reactions. Data collection also included constructing a chronological sequence of events to fully understand the social and political context surrounding the congress. Through this approach, the study was able to gather detailed and in-depth data, documenting not only the congress's content but also its impact and influence on domestic and international audiences at the time.

2.4 Trustworthiness Data

The reliability of the data in this study is ensured through a rigorous process of verification and source triangulation, involving the comparison of information from various newspapers reporting on the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming*. This process ensures that data obtained from one newspaper source can be validated or corroborated by other sources, especially when those sources originate from different countries. Through this source triangulation, the researcher can identify consistency in reports regarding the congress's agenda, resolutions, and public responses, reducing the risk of bias or inaccuracies. These steps are crucial to maintain data reliability and ensure that the research findings are based on verified facts.

Additionally, the accuracy of the data is strengthened through critical analysis of the political and social context during the congress, which helps to understand how each newspaper may have been influenced by cultural or national perspectives. The researcher considers the potential for editorial bias and varying media viewpoints in reporting on animal welfare issues at that time. This approach ensures that the study does not rely solely on texts as raw data sources but also confirms the historical background and relevance of the issues in both local and international contexts. Consequently, the accuracy of the resulting data is high, and its relevance strongly reflects the congress's influence on the global animal protection movement.

2.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis techniques in this study begin with a content analysis approach to newspaper articles related to the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming*. Each article is analyzed to identify key themes, such as the congress's agenda and resolutions, public reactions, and responses from prominent figures and institutions involved. This process involves examining keywords, phrases, and contexts associated with animal welfare. By highlighting these essential aspects, the researcher can identify emerging patterns in the congress's coverage, gaining deeper insight into the issues considered significant at the time. This content analysis helps organize data into relevant categories, facilitating interpretation and conclusion-drawing.

The next step is a comparative analysis, where articles from Dutch newspapers are compared with those from Australian newspapers. This technique is used to evaluate differences in perspectives and viewpoints from each country regarding the congress and animal welfare issues. Through this comparative analysis, the researcher can assess consistency and variation in international and domestic reporting, providing insights into how the congress's issues were received globally. This technique also allows the researcher to observe how national cultures and policies may influence how the media respond to and present information related to the animal protection movement.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Background and Projection of the *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming*

The reports by *Eindhovens Dagblad* and *Deventer Dagblad* highlight the series of events surrounding the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming* held at Kurhaus in Scheveningen. Both reports underscore the congress's importance to the international public and the involvement of prominent figures at its opening, including Queen Juliana, whose presence lent legitimacy and significance to the event. On August 27 (Reporter, 1950l), the evening before the congress commenced, a welcoming meeting was held at the Kurhaus Hotel to initiate the congress's activities. This meeting also served as an opportunity for organizers to establish the International Council for the World Congress on Animal Protection, which functioned as the main steering committee and played a crucial role in

strategic decision-making related to animal protection agendas.

An analysis of this event series reveals that the 1950 congress was not merely an academic meeting or internal discussion but a large-scale event with a clear organizational structure aimed at fostering international collaboration among animal protection organizations. The decision to form an International Council indicates that the congress sought to create a permanent body capable of continuing and expanding animal protection efforts globally (Reporter, 1950j). With the official opening by Queen Juliana, the congress attracted attention not only from Dutch media but also internationally, which contributed to raising global awareness about animal welfare issues. The well-organized structure of the event and royal support illustrated that the Netherlands, at that time, positioned itself as a central hub for the global animal protection movement, with the hope that the critical decisions made at this congress would have a broad impact on international animal welfare policies.

The involvement of Queen Juliana and the establishment of the International Council underscored a serious commitment to forming a more organized global movement, reflecting an awareness of the importance of cross-national collaboration in addressing issues of animal exploitation and welfare. The formation of a committee responsible for guiding the congress and continuing as an international supervisory council showed that congress participants shared a long-term vision of making animal protection a collective priority. Through this congress, various relevant resolutions were agreed upon and designed for implementation in multiple countries. Thus, the congress served not only as a forum for discussion but also as a strategic platform to advance international animal welfare policies.

In the opening of the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming*, Dr. W. Hugenoltz expressed that society's concern for animals' position was growing, reflecting a shift toward more inclusive moral development (Reporter, 1950f). Citing Clemenceau, who referred to animals as the "fifth class," Hugenoltz drew a parallel to other marginalized groups of the past—such as the poor, slaves, women, and children—who eventually gained dignity and attention. This statement reflects Hugenoltz's progressive outlook, viewing animal protection as part of humanity's moral evolution. With the success of human rights movements for various vulnerable groups, he argued that society should now expand its ethical circle to include animals, who remain entangled in exploitation and helplessness.

Dr. W. Hugenoltz was an activist and prominent leader in the animal protection movement in the Netherlands during the mid-20th century. He was

widely recognized for his role in advancing animal welfare issues through the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming*, where he played a key role in promoting international collaboration for the establishment of policies to protect animals. Hugenholtz introduced a progressive view that animals, like other vulnerable groups, deserve dignity and protection from exploitation and cruelty. Through his influence, he advocated for the formation of an international association aimed at creating consistent animal protection legislation across various countries. Historical sources from Dutch newspaper archives, such as *De Noord-Ooster* and *Nieuwe Apeldoornsche Courant*, frequently highlight Hugenholtz's contributions to the congress, reflecting his dedication to animal protection ethics that continues to inspire today.

Hugenholtz employed historical and moral frameworks to legitimize the fight for animal rights on a global level. His statements went beyond rhetoric, illustrating how animal protection was beginning to be seen as part of humanity's growing social and ethical responsibility. By positioning animals within the "fifth class," Hugenholtz successfully built a powerful narrative that animals deserve serious attention from society. This approach reinforced the congress's relevance as a forum to address pressing animal welfare issues that demanded immediate action. Drawing parallels to the successful advocacy for human vulnerable groups, Hugenholtz emphasized that the animal protection movement could follow a similar path to achieve comparable success.

Furthermore, Hugenholtz highlighted two primary goals of the congress: a collaborative discussion on international animal welfare issues and the strengthening of international cooperation through the establishment of a global animal protection association. This demonstrated the congress's ambition to go beyond theoretical discussions, aiming instead to build a structural foundation that would enable cross-border collaboration (Reporter, 1950k). The formation of this major international association was envisioned as a platform for animal protection organizations worldwide, facilitating the exchange of information, resources, and support across nations. This long-term vision aimed to reinforce the animal protection movement through a more integrated organizational structure. Analysis suggests that the 1950 congress had grand aspirations to create a sustainable global network to support and advance animal welfare, laying the groundwork for future animal protection policies.

In his remarks, Hugenholtz described the strategic vision of the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming* to establish an international

association that would connect with bureaus in Paris and Geneva, tasked with designing standardized and modern animal protection laws. This plan emphasized the importance of legal harmonization among countries, with the goal of enabling each nation to implement consistent standards for animal welfare. Through this international network, it was hoped that animal protection policies would gain stronger legitimacy and momentum for adoption by various countries. This approach reflects an effort to overcome differences in policy and approach to animal welfare across nations, ensuring that animal protection issues could be addressed more systematically and comprehensively on a global scale.

However, Hugenholtz also acknowledged the significant challenges in implementing these laws within each country, even when established in international legal documents. He recognized that the success of animal protection legislation relies not only on policy formulation but also on the readiness and acceptance of society in each nation. In other words, this international legislation must be supported by shifts in public attitudes and awareness to be truly effective on the ground. This analysis indicates that while the congress was ambitious in striving for unified policies, it was also realistic about the complexities of legal implementation within diverse cultural and social contexts. Consequently, the congress focused not only on legal aspects but also emphasized the importance of public education as a step toward ensuring societal acceptance of animal protection, reinforcing the idea that substantial change is only achievable when accompanied by a shift in collective attitudes.

The 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming* placed significant emphasis on educating youth, recognizing the importance of fostering ethical awareness from an early age. Educational initiatives proposed during the congress were designed to integrate animal welfare into school curricula, focusing on empathy and the ethical treatment of animals as core values. Programs often included interactive activities such as visits to animal shelters, discussions on humane practices, and the inclusion of animal welfare topics in civics and ethics classes. These efforts aimed to create a generational shift in attitudes toward animals, embedding compassion and responsibility into cultural norms. Long-term effects of these initiatives became evident in subsequent decades, as countries that adopted such programs saw increased public support for animal protection policies and higher engagement in advocacy efforts. For example, educational campaigns in Scandinavia during the 1960s, inspired

by the congress, led to widespread awareness of humane farming practices and stricter animal welfare legislation. These outcomes underscore the transformative potential of early education in shaping societal values and advancing the goals of the animal protection movement.

The involvement of figures such as Queen Juliana and Dr. W. Hugenholtz significantly shaped the outcomes of the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming*, lending both legitimacy and vision to the event. Queen Juliana's presence at the congress's opening ceremony elevated its prominence, drawing international attention and underscoring the Dutch monarchy's endorsement of animal welfare as a global issue. Her participation not only reflected the cultural significance of the congress within the Netherlands but also helped attract influential figures and organizations from around the world. By aligning herself with the congress, Queen Juliana symbolized the moral and ethical importance of animal protection, giving the resolutions and discussions a level of gravitas that would have been difficult to achieve otherwise.

Dr. W. Hugenholtz, as a key organizer and advocate, played a critical role in shaping the congress's agenda and ensuring its impact extended beyond mere discussions. His progressive views on animal welfare, which framed animals as deserving of dignity and protection akin to other marginalized groups, resonated with contemporary ethical debates. Hugenholtz's leadership in proposing actionable resolutions, such as the establishment of an international animal protection association, demonstrated his strategic vision for transforming the congress into a launching point for sustained global collaboration. His ability to connect philosophical ideals with practical measures ensured that the congress's outcomes were not only aspirational but also implementable. Together, the influence of Queen Juliana and Dr. Hugenholtz provided the congress with both symbolic authority and operational direction, amplifying its impact on the global animal protection movement.

3.2 Progressive Ideas on Animal Protection and Congressional Resolutions

Before the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming*, global animal welfare efforts were fragmented and often limited to localized initiatives. During the early 20th century, animal protection laws existed in several countries, but they varied significantly in scope and enforcement. For

example, while the United Kingdom had implemented the Cruelty to Animals Act as early as 1835, other nations lagged in legislating against animal cruelty. The lack of international consensus on animal rights and welfare left many issues unaddressed, particularly in industries such as entertainment, transportation, and scientific research. Moreover, public awareness of animal welfare as an ethical concern was minimal, with most societies viewing animals primarily as resources for human use. Against this backdrop, the congress marked a significant turning point by bringing together diverse stakeholders to address these gaps and laying the foundation for global collaboration.

The congress's impact is further underscored when considering the socio-political context of the post-World War II era. The war had highlighted the interconnectedness of nations and the need for collective action to address global issues, a sentiment that resonated in the animal welfare movement. The establishment of the United Nations in 1945 had set a precedent for international cooperation, and the congress mirrored this approach by creating a platform for dialogue and policymaking on animal protection. By adopting resolutions on issues such as vivisection, circus animal exploitation, and pet mutilation, the congress not only raised awareness but also created a roadmap for future international standards. These efforts bridged the gap between localized activism and the emerging global movement, emphasizing the moral and practical importance of protecting animals in a rapidly modernizing world.

At the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming*, several key resolutions were adopted with the aim of enhancing global animal welfare standards. One of the main recommendations was the use of anesthesia or mechanical stunning for animals prior to slaughter. This resolution underscored the congress's commitment to minimizing animal suffering in the food industry and slaughterhouses, which at the time often disregarded animal welfare. This decision was intended not just as a local measure but as an international standard that could be adopted by various countries. The recommendation also reflected an understanding that slaughtering animals for human consumption could be conducted in a more humane manner, aligning with a fundamental principle of animal welfare (Reporter, 1950a).

Additionally, the congress proposed eliminating the use of blindfolds for animals, commonly applied during transportation or other potentially stressful activities. This resolution marked an effort to consider animal comfort and welfare more broadly, even in minor aspects of their lives. In another

session, Reverend J. B. Th. Hugenholtz delivered a speech on the importance of international legislation protecting animal rights. He suggested that the United Nations establish a declaration of animal rights equivalent to the Declaration of Human Rights, as a formal recognition of animals' existence and their right to live free from cruelty (Reporter, 1950i). This proposal reflected the congress's ambitious vision to incorporate animal protection into a more established international legal framework, reinforcing the urgency of protecting the fundamental rights of animals as living beings.

Religious institutions have historically played a role in shaping ethical perspectives on animal welfare, and their influence was notably highlighted during the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming*. For example, Christian doctrines emphasizing stewardship over creation have often been interpreted as a moral imperative to care for animals. Reverend J. B. Th. Hugenholtz, a key figure at the congress, used religious rhetoric to advocate for the ethical treatment of animals, suggesting that human responsibility extends beyond other people to all living beings. His speech cited theological principles that frame humanity as caretakers of the Earth, arguing that animal welfare is an extension of this divine duty. This perspective resonated with religious organizations that supported humane treatment as part of broader moral responsibilities.

In other religious contexts, Hinduism and Buddhism have long emphasized nonviolence (ahimsa) as a core value, which extends to animals. For instance, in India, these principles have inspired policies such as bans on cow slaughter and the protection of sacred animals. While not directly connected to the congress, these practices reflect the broader alignment between religious teachings and the goals of the animal protection movement. During the congress, delegates from countries with Buddhist and Hindu traditions brought these perspectives into discussions, highlighting the compatibility of religious values with modern welfare initiatives. By incorporating these case studies and religious viewpoints, the congress demonstrated a universal ethical framework for animal welfare, showing how religious institutions could be powerful allies in advancing the movement globally.

The congress's efforts to establish an international animal protection association marked a significant milestone in the history of the animal welfare movement. This association was envisioned as a platform connecting existing animal protection organizations worldwide, creating a collaborative network that would facilitate consensus in policy formulation and more effective implementation of resolutions. With this international body, animal welfare issues could be addressed in a structured and

sustainable manner, encouraging countries to adopt more humane regulations for the treatment of animals. This resolution reflected not only the congress's aspirations but also laid a vital foundation for building global awareness of the need for animal rights protection and internationally recognized animal welfare standards.

At the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming*, a series of critical resolutions was adopted to strengthen animal protection and welfare across various sectors. One resolution highlighted the practice of tail docking in horses and dogs, as well as ear cropping in dogs. The congress proposed a ban on these practices in all countries, deeming them inhumane and unnecessary for the animals, driven instead by aesthetics without regard for animal welfare. Additionally, the topic of vivisection—scientific experimentation using live animals—was a focal point of the congress and drew significant attention from participants. A majority supported the establishment of an international association dedicated to overseeing this practice, signaling that vivisection was a controversial issue requiring regulation and special attention to protect animals from unnecessary exploitation.

The congress also proposed an ambitious resolution to adapt the best animal protection laws from various countries to form an international charter safeguarding animals' fundamental right. This resolution affirmed that animals should not be regarded as property to be sold or destroyed at will. In this context, the congress urged a total ban on the use of animals in circus performances, which were often criticized for neglecting animal welfare in pursuit of commercial profit. The congress further recommended the immediate closure of all non-scientific and commercial zoos, stipulating that scientific zoos be limited to one per fifteen million people (Reporter, 1950b). This resolution reflected the congress's efforts to establish a global, more humane standard for animal treatment and to eliminate the exploitation of animals in entertainment that fails to support their welfare. Over time, nations like Germany and Austria introduced partial or complete bans on wild animals in circuses, demonstrating the resolution's influence. These outcomes highlight the congress's role in not only shaping public opinion but also prompting legislative action that aligned with the ethical standards promoted during the congress, setting a global trajectory for advancing animal welfare.

Additionally, special attention was given to bird protection, as many birds were subject to exploitation through illegal capture and trade. The congress called for an international agreement prohibiting the capture, killing, and sale of wild birds, with exceptions made only for certain game bird species

under strict regulations. This recommendation included the protection of natural habitats and restrictions on enclosure sizes for caged birds, with a minimum standard of one cubic meter per bird. The goal of this recommendation was to ensure that captive birds receive not only adequate physical care but also sufficient space to support their natural behaviors. By addressing a range of specific issues and broad protections, these resolutions underscored the congress's aim to enhance animal welfare comprehensively and to create regulations that reduce exploitation across various sectors, from entertainment to the wildlife trade.

The 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming* produced a range of progressive resolutions that reflected a strong commitment to improving global animal welfare standards. One of the key resolutions proposed was the establishment of national quarantine laws, seen as crucial for disease prevention and animal protection (Reporter, 1950d). However, the congress also recommended shorter quarantine periods in certain cases, hoping that an international agreement could allow this flexibility without compromising animal safety. This resolution highlighted the congress's understanding of the need to balance animal safety and comfort during quarantine procedures. Additionally, in a broader effort to support animal welfare, the congress advocated for a reduction in global meat consumption, reflecting the view that human consumption habits have a significant impact on animal life and exploitation.

The congress also marked the beginning of the International Society for Animal Protection, with The Hague chosen as the headquarters for the new organization. This society aimed to unite 108 international organizations represented by 300 delegates, creating a strong network to promote the implementation of resolutions and the development of consistent animal protection policies across various countries (Reporter, 1950c). The decision to establish the headquarters in The Hague demonstrated that the congress focused not only on discussion but also on tangible action through a structured organization that could more effectively advocate for animal rights.

Additionally, figures like Dave Boon, a writer and commentator known for his satirical takes on social and environmental issues, including animal protection, added a humorous yet poignant commentary. Boon noted ironically that animals were now protected by laws offering them security equivalent to humans, even jesting that animals might "run to the wilderness" if they faced the same challenges as humans. Although satirical, his statement underscored the heightened public

attention brought to animal rights issues by the congress on a larger scale.

The congress was widely praised in various publications, which regarded it as an important post-war step for animal protection. One commentator expressed hope that an ideal society, in which humans coexist without injustice toward one another, would also encompass fair treatment of animals. Resolutions concerning the prohibition of vivisection, animal circuses, and pet mutilation underscored the congress's perspective that humanity's treatment of animals reflects society's moral progress (Reporter, 1950h). Another critique, highlighted by *The Calgary Herald*, pointed out the exploitation of animals for food and entertainment, drawing parallels to the ways humans treat each other (Reporter, 1950e). These reflections indicate that the 1950 congress initiated an ethical discourse that questioned the nature of humanity's relationship with animals, where the desire to end injustice toward animals was seen as part of the journey toward a more just world for all living beings.

3.3 Congress's Legacy for the Global Animal Protection Movement

The 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming* left a profound legacy for the global animal protection movement, which has continued to grow through subsequent congresses and the strengthening of international policies. The third congress, held in Zurich in 1958—eight years after the first meeting in The Hague—demonstrated the continuity and expansion of this movement at the global level. Dr. Mr. W. Hugenholtz's speech, delivered as he presided over the World Federation for Animal Protection, affirmed that animal protection had transcended national boundaries and evolved into an international movement. His slogan, "Animal protectors of the world, unite," (Reporter, 1958) encapsulated the collective spirit that bound countries together to collaborate in reducing animal exploitation and enhancing their protection. This statement reflects the pivotal role that the 1950 congress and subsequent meetings played in establishing a well-organized, globally oriented movement that has reached across nations and fostered awareness of animal welfare.

The legacy of the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming* has continued to grow within the global animal protection movement, even as balancing economic interests with conservation remains a primary challenge. The ongoing discourse on limiting the commercial exploitation of animals while safeguarding their rights and welfare has remained a central theme in international congresses,

such as the World Congress in West Berlin in 1978 (Reporter, 1978). Attended by approximately 200 animal protection organizations from 45 countries, this congress adopted the theme "Animal Protection: Ethical Demands and Economic Reality." It focused on finding solutions to the conflict between the moral imperative to protect animals and the economic reality that often regards animals as resources. The congress chairman, Jong Schouwenberg of the Netherlands, emphasized the importance of international solidarity in mitigating the negative impacts of human activity on animal welfare. This indicates that while the aims of animal protection have broadened, the tension between ethics and economics remains a significant obstacle to achieving comprehensive animal welfare worldwide.

The legacy of the 1950 congress is also reflected in subsequent environmental and nature protection policies, such as the 1964 Wilderness Act in the United States. While this law primarily focuses on protecting wilderness areas rather than directly addressing animal welfare, its core objective—to preserve certain regions free from human interference—aligns with principles advocated by animal protection congresses. As reported by *The Dispatch* in 1984 (Reporter, 1950g), 83 million acres of land were designated as wilderness sanctuaries, where life is safeguarded from destructive human intervention. This type of protection offers space for flora and fauna to thrive naturally, reducing the risk of human exploitation that often threatens animal habitats and biodiversity.

However, the implementation of such policies has not always been seamless. Although the Wilderness Act describes these lands as places where “man is a visitor who does not remain,” reality has often diverged from this ideal. Some recreational activities, such as hiking and horseback riding, are allowed but sometimes conflict with strict conservation principles. This highlights the challenges faced by the animal protection and environmental movements: despite significant progress, policy implementation frequently encounters the need for compromise between habitat preservation and human demands. The legacy of the 1950 congress remains a source of inspiration for the ongoing movement to maintain this balance, emphasizing the importance of consistent, global protection for animal welfare and the environment.

The tensions between conservation and business interests, as seen in debates surrounding the U.S. Wilderness Act, illustrate that these challenges extend beyond animal welfare to the broader management of natural resources. Industry executives, such as David S. Holland of the American Petroleum Institute, voiced opposition to restricting economic activities on federally protected lands, citing the need to boost

oil and gas production. This perspective prioritizes economic considerations over conservation efforts, indicating that although protected lands and conservation systems have been established, their implementation and use remain subjects of intense debate. The conflict between economic demands and conservation underscores the ongoing challenges faced by the global animal protection movement to ensure that the advancements in protective legislation are not merely symbolic but effectively implemented in practice.

The 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming* was a significant milestone in the history of animal protection, distinguished by its international scope and collaborative approach. Compared to earlier milestones, such as the establishment of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) in 1824, the congress expanded the framework for animal welfare from national advocacy to a global platform. While the RSPCA focused on domestic legislation and education in the United Kingdom, the 1950 congress sought to harmonize animal welfare standards across nations, addressing global challenges such as vivisection, circus animal exploitation, and pet mutilation. This shift from localized action to international coordination represented a critical evolution in the animal protection movement.

Similarly, when compared to the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare (UDAW) decades later, the 1950 congress can be seen as a foundational step that laid the groundwork for such global agreements. While UDAW, introduced in the 2000s, emphasized the integration of animal welfare into international development policies, the 1950 congress pioneered the idea of creating a unified framework for animal protection through resolutions and the establishment of an international network. The congress's emphasis on collaborative efforts and its actionable resolutions provided a model for subsequent milestones, demonstrating its unique contribution as a precursor to modern global animal welfare initiatives. By comparing the 1950 congress to these key events, its role as a transformative moment in the history of animal protection becomes even more apparent.

These animal protection congresses addressed not only practical issues but also the philosophical dimensions of human responsibility toward animals. The theme of solidarity emphasized by Schouwenberg underscores that animal protection requires collective support and international resolve to mitigate the negative impacts of human activity. The adverse effects caused by commercial exploitation and industrial activities are not just legal or policy issues; they are also a matter of moral responsibility that the global community must

acknowledge. Thus, the legacy of the 1950 congress endures as a call for international solidarity and recognition of animal rights as living beings, reinforcing the idea that animal welfare is an integral part of a sustainable and ethical vision for the world.

The influence of the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming* is evident in several contemporary laws and movements that reflect its resolutions and advocacy. For example, the European Convention for the Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes, adopted in 1976, echoes the congress's call for humane treatment in animal farming. This convention established guidelines for housing, feeding, and care that minimize animal suffering, directly aligning with the congress's resolution on reducing cruelty in slaughterhouses and farming practices. Similarly, the Animal Welfare Act enacted in the United Kingdom in 2006, which consolidated and modernized various animal protection laws, can be traced back to the growing global awareness and legislative momentum inspired by the congress's initiatives.

Beyond legislation, the congress also influenced the creation of international advocacy organizations, such as the World Federation for Animals (now merged with World Animal Protection), which was founded in the years following the congress. This organization continues to champion many of the principles first discussed at the 1950 congress, including ending the use of animals in circuses and advocating for humane scientific practices. These modern initiatives illustrate the congress's legacy, bridging its historical resolutions with ongoing efforts to enhance global standards for animal welfare. By fostering international collaboration and setting ethical precedents, the congress laid the groundwork for many contemporary movements that continue to address the complex challenges of animal protection today.

These findings expand the understanding of the application of welfare state theory in animal protection by emphasizing the importance of public policy that involves the responsibility of both the state and society to safeguard animal welfare. This approach aligns with the utilitarian principles proposed by Bentham and Singer (Singer, 2004), which hold that the morally correct action is one that minimizes suffering and maximizes well-being. In this context, the state is expected not only to implement policies that prevent animal exploitation but also to establish proactive regulations that enhance animal welfare. These findings are consistent with previous research by Francione and Regan (Regan, 2016), who argue that animal protection should include the right to live free from unnecessary suffering, reinforcing animal welfare as part of global ethical responsibility and social commitment.

In addition to welfare state theory, this study also employs social movement theory to explain how the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming* became a launch point for the international animal protection movement. The congress succeeded in creating a strong network of cross-national collaboration, bringing together key figures and international organizations committed to animal protection. This aligns with Tarrow's (Tarrow, 2022) view of effective social movements, which require solidarity, a clear agenda, and a shared strategy to achieve sustainable structural change. This study demonstrates that the congress's success in building a global network focused on animal protection underscores the importance of international collaboration in achieving significant social change, as supported by previous research on the impact of collective organizations in advancing animal rights.

Previous research also shows that steps in animal protection, such as those exemplified by Singer in *Animal Liberation*, aim not only to reduce exploitation but also to raise ethical awareness in society. Education as a tool for social change, as emphasized in Singer's research, serves as a foundation for changing public perceptions of animal rights from an early age. This study reinforces the concept that the animal protection movement plays a crucial role in shaping global policy and understanding of animal rights, reflected in the long-term influence of the 1950 congress. These findings support the argument that an education-based approach and international collaboration can create a broad impact in advancing animal welfare.

4 CONCLUSIONS

This research reveals that the 1950 *Wereldcongres voor Dierenbescherming* played a significant role as a foundational milestone in the international animal protection movement, marking a shift from national animal protection initiatives toward global collaboration and agreement. The congress produced several key resolutions, including bans on various forms of animal exploitation, proposals for the establishment of an international association, and the formulation of consistent animal welfare standards across countries. These resolutions not only reflected a moral commitment but also demonstrated practical efforts to build a more humane foundation for international animal protection policies. The congress succeeded in creating a global network and raising public awareness of animal rights, which has continued to grow and influence animal protection policies to this day.

The implications of this research suggest that the impact of the 1950 congress remains relevant and continues to evolve in modern policy and the global animal protection movement. The resolutions embodied ethical values that underlie animal protection policies in various countries, inspiring the establishment of international associations that support animal welfare regulations and foster inter-country solidarity. This research also offers insights for policymakers on the importance of public support and societal awareness in implementing animal protection policies effectively. Additionally, this study can serve as a reference for further research on the relationship between social movements and the formation of international policies, showing how ethical values and animal welfare issues can be aligned in policies with a broad impact.

This study has several limitations. First, the primary data used is derived from historical newspaper sources and archives, limiting the scope of data to the media perspectives of that period. Second, the lack of direct interviews or participant records from the congress restricts a deeper understanding of certain decisions and internal dynamics of the congress. Furthermore, this research focuses only on the immediate impact of the 1950 congress resolutions without a comprehensive longitudinal analysis of animal protection policy changes across countries post-congress. Further studies with a broader approach and a more diverse range of data sources would help to supplement these findings and strengthen the analysis of the congress's long-term contributions to the global animal protection movement.

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