

# Joining the IPA – 100 years ago

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What is reproduced here must be as rare an item as any from the early years of the IPA – an unused membership application form for the decade 1910–1919. The section to be completed by the applicant is perforated, ready to be torn along the wavy line. The form is probably a token of the systematic and meticulous approach of the young Daniel Jones (1881–1967), who became Assistant Secretary to the Association in 1910. The clerical task of keeping track of the membership must have been considerable; in 1914, numbers peaked at 1,751, drawn from 40 countries (MacMahon 1986: 31).

This particular form was found in an unbound 1926 issue of *Le Maître Phonétique* among hundreds preserved at UCL, though it may have migrated there merely as a bookmark, since the information about the President and the rate of subscription are out of date for the post-war period. Wilhelm Viëtor (b.1850), whom the form names as President, had been elected to that office in 1890, but died in 1918 during an eight-year lacuna in the publication of the Association's journal enforced by the Great War of 1914–1918. When the journal limped precariously back into life in 1923, the first article, by Paul Passy, bore the title *vi: nuvelə* [New life] (Passy 1923: 1) and mentions the death of Viëtor as one of many losses that had occurred since the last issue. It was not until 1927 that a new President – Passy himself – was elected to replace Viëtor (*Le Maître Phonétique* 1927: 24).

The preamble to the form gives a succinct summary of the aims and activities of the Association, which remained true for much of the twentieth century. It is interesting that after the alphabet, the next concern to be mentioned is the Association's examination in phonetics, which began on an official footing in 1908 and still continues in London, though this aspect of the Association's activities is probably not widely known among those members whose experience of the IPA is through the modern journal. At present, two examinations are held each year, and the Examinations Secretary is Patricia Ashby.

For much of the twentieth century, the IPA and its journal were effectively sustained by an executive and secretarial hub located at University College, so it is unsurprising that among material preserved at UCL is so much relevant to the history of the Association. Apart from runs of the journal – right back to issue 1 (May 1886) of *Dhi Fonètik Títcer* – which of course are accessible in other major libraries, are large numbers of unbound copies, some containing authors' or editor's annotations and many with ephemera such as the membership form reproduced here, conference flyers, and so on. There are also files of press cuttings, notes and correspondence concerning Council elections and votes – such as the extensive consultation that led to the choice of *Journal of the International Phonetic Association* as the modern title for the journal. In addition, there are records of examination results extending over many years.

It will be noticed that this early form refers to two categories of membership, 'active' and 'ordinary', and that active members received two copies of the journal, the second to be used, as it says, 'for propaganda purposes'. A certain proselytizing zeal was certainly a characteristic

of the early IPA, but in fact the two categories of membership survived into the 1960s, being abolished only with effect from January 1966 (Gimson 1965: 2); and the last seemingly quaint mention of ‘propagande’ seems to have been on an unnumbered page describing the goals of the Association and giving details of membership (in French) included at the back of the July–December issue in 1961 (though it is worth noting that French ‘propagande’ doesn’t necessarily have the generally pejorative sense which English ‘propaganda’ had acquired by then).

## References

- Gimson, A. C. 1965. Official decisions. *Le Maître Phonétique* janvier–juin, 2.
- MacMahon, M. K. C. 1986. The International Phonetic Association: The first 100 years. *Journal of the International Phonetic Association* 16, 30–38.
- Passy, Paul. 1923. Vie nouvelle. *Le Maître Phonétique* janvier–mars, 1–3.

# The International Phonetic Association.

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PRESIDENT—W. VIETOR, Marburg a. L., Germany.

SECRETARY—P. PASSY, Bourg-la-Reine, Seine, France.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY—D. JONES, University College,  
London, W. C.

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The International Phonetic Association is a Society consisting of persons interested in the science of **Phonetics**, chiefly professors, teachers and students of languages.

Its main object is to promote the *scientific study* of Phonetics and the various *practical applications* of that science.

The Association has devised a **Phonetic Alphabet** which may be used for the purpose of transcribing any language phonetically. This alphabet is very widely used, and there are several hundred published books in which it is employed.

The Association has instituted an official **examination** in Phonetics and grants a **diploma** to persons attaining a certain standard. Examinations are held from time to time by examiners appointed by the Council.

The Association now numbers over 1,500 members. It is governed by an **International Council** of 30, elected by the members every other year.

Full particulars of the Association and its objects, and explanations of the international phonetic alphabet (with transcriptions of various languages and a list of the principal books in which the international alphabet is used) will be found in the "**Principles of the International Phonetic Association**," published by the Society and given away to members on application to one of the Secretaries.

Persons may join the Association either as "ordinary" members or as "active" members.

**Ordinary members** receive free of charge the "**Maitre Phonétique**," the official organ of the Association (Editor:

P. PASSY; Assistant-Editor: D. JONES). The *Maître Phonétique* is issued on the 30th of January, March, May, July, September and November of each year. It contains articles in various languages, the International Alphabet being used throughout. The articles deal with all branches of Phonetics and its applications, and give information respecting the progress made by the science in different parts of the world. The best methods of language-teaching are also discussed, and special texts suitable for students are given.

•Every ordinary member is entitled to a *vote* at the election of the Council.

Every ordinary member has a right to 10 lines per annum of advertisement in the journal free of charge.

**Active members** are those who are willing to work actively in the interests of Phonetics and of the Association. They receive *two copies* of the *Maître Phonétique*, the additional copy being intended for propaganda purposes; they are *eligible to serve on the Council*, and are entitled to *two votes* at the elections.

Every active member has a right to 25 lines per annum of advertisement in the journal free of charge.

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For Ordinary Members, 3 francs 50c. (= 2s. 10d. = 70 cents = 2 kr. 50 [Scandinavian] = Rs. 2 as. 2.)

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Donations for furthering the work of the Association are also gratefully received.

Subscriptions are due on the 1st of January each year. They may be paid to D. JONES, Esq. (address above); or direct to the Treasurer, Miss S. LUND, 27, Grande Rue, Bourg-la-Reine, Seine, France.

**FORM OF APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**  
of the  
**INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ASSOCIATION.**



*I desire to become an <sup>active</sup> ordinary member of the  
International Phonetic Association, and am forwarding  
the sum of<sup>1</sup>  
being the subscription for the current year, 191 .*

*Name* .....

*Address*<sup>2</sup> .....

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*Proposed by* .....

*(Member Int. Phon. Assn.)*

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<sup>2</sup> Give here the address to which the *Maitre Phonétique* is to be sent.



*This form when filled up should be sent to D. Jones,  
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Treasurer, Miss S. Lund, 27, Grande Rue, Bourg-  
la-Reine, Seine, France.*