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JØRGEN JØRGENSEN AND LOGICAL POSITIVISM

“I believe that, of all of us, he alone does his worst as a critic of our era.” Otto Neurath characterised the new co-editor of the series *Einheitswissenschaft*, the Danish philosopher Jørgen Jørgensen (1894–1969),1 professor of philosophy at the University of Copenhagen (1926–1964) with these words in a letter to Rudolf Carnap in November 1934.2

At the time, Jørgensen was already a close acquaintance of both Neurath and Carnap. They met in 1930 at the Seventh International Congress of Philosophy in Oxford, at which Moritz Schlick had spoken of “The Future of Philosophy”,3 and Jørgensen himself gave a lecture on “The Principal Metaphysical Implications of Recent Physical Theories and Points of View”.4 He cut such an impressive figure that he was elected to the International Permanent Committee for Congresses of Philosophy, of which he remained a member until 1950, and was encouraged by


4 “Some Remarks Concerning the Principal Metaphysical Implications of Recent Physical Theories and Points of View”, ibid., pp. 1–8.
Schlick, Léon Brunschwig and Federigo Enriques to contribute to their respective journals. A year later, Carnap sent his *Abriss der Logistik* (1929) to Jørgensen, whose letter of thanks mentioned that he had already read Carnap’s earlier work, *Der logische Aufbau der Welt* (1928). In March 1932, at Hans Reichenbach’s invitation, Jørgensen gave a lecture in Berlin at the *Gesellschaft für empirische Philosophie* entitled “Über die Ziele und Probleme der Logistik”. Later that year, he arranged for both Carnap and Neurath to visit Copenhagen and hold guest lectures. In advance of the meeting in Berlin, Carnap sent Jørgensen parts of his manuscript for *Die logische Syntax der Sprache*, which they had discussed in both Berlin and Copenhagen. According to a first-hand account given by Jørgensen to the author of this article, it was he who suggested the title for Carnap’s book. Following the book’s publication, Jørgensen wrote an enthusiastic review of it in *Erkenntnis*. Jørgensen had thus been accepted into the logical positivists’ circle, a movement that supporters called “our circle” or “our movement”, and within a short time he was involved in both editorial and organisational activities. At the 1935 *Congrès international de Philosophie Scientifique*, held in Paris, a motion was passed that future congresses would sponsor a project to compile...