

## THE PLACE OF THE UNION OF INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS IN THE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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In the course of the past ten years, research into the field of international relations has shown a deep-rooted transformation both in its intensity, and in its direction and methods of work. This transformation is still in progress, so that only a summary interpretation can be put forward at this time.

In our opinion, the transformation in research in the field of international relations originates at the level of training for international careers and, as a general rule, in the teaching of international relations. We feel that this mutation does not derive from, or does not depend to a great extent on, any internal evolution in the field of such research. It was about ten years ago that it became clearly necessary to completely reform the system used in training for careers in Diplomacy, to concentrate on training for public office, to adapt those civil servants who had been trained for State administration to a type of work which was ever-increasing in diversity or in international scope.

At the same time, three other factors, all tending in the same direction, have increased in importance: decisions taken by private institutions, especially those dealing with economic questions, and which necessarily fall into the international sector, have increased in number; public information on media are witnesses of an increase in the amount of news coming from other countries and which may be of interest to the general public, or again, an increase in the amount of home news which needs to be interpreted in an international context; and the number of centres of international relations of the States (especially) and international organizations is increasing at the same time.

Whether one is considering groups which deal professionally with international relations, such as the Diplomatic Corps, or whether one is dealing with those which are more indirectly concerned, their ability to fulfil their appointed functions is highly questionable.

With a few rare exceptions, universities have not reacted with the desired flexibility to the massive demand for coverage of the field of international relations. There is taking place, however, one interesting phenomenon of adaptation of existing structures, to which there are three different aspects: in universities it is being recognized that *teaching* must always form a proportional part of, or be supplemented by, *research*; research institutes in the field of international relations are encouraged to undertake training work, even if only highly specialized or in certain sectors; and, above all, research in international relations is being encouraged to explore new paths. The crisis being lived by the universities of almost every country in the world creates a positive atmosphere of stimulation, despite the difficulties it raises on a practical level.

To put the question in a very general manner, it may be said that training for international relations only becomes possible in institutions which at the same time do research work themselves. But even this research in international relations is in its turn obliged to undergo complete revision. Institutions of international relations have not always entirely understood the transformation which was being undergone by the subject-matter with which they were dealing. Occasionally they were dealing with fields which were too circumscribed to show the change in quality which had in fact occurred. In other cases, it was even possible to believe that this was only a natural development resulting from the preceding research and implicit in it. And this may in fact be partly true.

In any case, research into the field of international relations has had to face up to three major problems of adaptation. The first and fundamental problem has not yet been completely solved. It is necessary to replace a system of thought which regards as international everything which is *exterior* to the State by a system which considers as international everything which is *internal* to the international community.

Here, more than in the other aspects, lies the great effort at conceptual revision of the philosophy of international relations. Human Rights are one aspect of the internal life of the international community, and no longer a zone of interest removed from the State. International non-governmental organizations, transnational societies and other forms of multinational co-operation exist, from a conceptual point of view, independently of the States and of the place which the States assign to them, for they are phenomena of the internal life of the international community, which are quite as "legitimate" as the States themselves. The accession to independence of territories which were previously dependencies, when considered from the point of view of fact and value, is an example of a way of internal existence in the international community.

Two other obstacles in the field of research in international relations have also had to be overcome. These deal essentially with questions of method. Several new subjects, or even subjects which already existed in the curriculum but which have fairly recently acquired a new importance, can no longer be studied within the framework of one single discipline, but should be studied by interdisciplinary means and methods. In some cases, such methods appear to be complete innovations and many universities have met with great difficulties in the practical organization of such research on any level other than doctrinal. Moreover, many subjects can only be studied when sufficient data has been collected, and in the case of a large number of topics this data increases so rapidly as to be quite unwieldy.

Still speaking in a very general manner, it may be said that if training has passed into the hands of those who can at the same time deal with teaching and research, the latter has now passed into the hands of those who are able to furnish the necessary data, but it is vital that such data be of a sufficient quantity and quality.

The switch to action in the realm of studies on international relations is due, as far as concerns field of documentation or the time spent on it, to the necessity for finding an answer to four major problems. Two of these problems go right to the roots of the topics in question.

The science of international relations can never exist without its catalogue of "subjects" for international relations. It seems now to be clear that, in order to establish a basic network within which to place any international problem, a frame of at least 100,000 subjects must be taken into account. Obviously, in practice no research will ever be concerned with all these subjects simultaneously. But it is equally obvious that, in underestimating the number of international phenomena, or in omitting to include soon enough in the reality of international fact the existence of 3,000 international non-governmental organizations, or that of 10,000 secondary bodies or subsidiaries of international organizations, a serious error was committed. The other fundamental problem concerns the "themes" of international co-operation and their number. In this case we have seen not only an increase which has altered the quality of the phenomenon, but we have had to face the problem of the dispersal of topics, most of which are dealt with under a multitude of headings, at varying levels and from different angles.

The two other problems in the field of documentation deal with methods of utilization. It is vital to establish contact between such a large mass of data and the large number of potential users of such data. This problem must be considered by realizing that *some* of this vast quantity of information will be of the greatest possible interest to *some* of the very large number of potential users. This is one of the greatest problems for the large international organizations. Finally, the last problem of documentation is that of its systematization.

Documentation on international life, that is, its exhaustive and speedy production, has passed into the hands of those who know how to "systematize" it. This means two things: namely, the classification of matter in such a way that, for every case, necessary and sufficient data can be picked out to give substance to each topic in question; and the filing of such classified information under a system of categories which are connected in a logical manner with one another. This sort of work is not always carried out consciously, but it is certain that it is a necessary preliminary to any practical use of the immense quantity of data which is typical of present-day international relations.

Other methods than those employed above might have been used to show up the main problems which institutes of international relations have had to overcome and which are to a great extent responsible for the change in their functions. The system used here has, however, the advantage of describing situations which have actually been experienced by our institutes and our centres for international relations, since it recalls conditions which the development of this research, documentation and systematization have forced upon us. Obviously, none of these institutes has been able to solve all of them completely in the order which has been rapidly described above. Such an order is in any case only a logical one and not a succession of events as they took place in time. It is also true that on the other hand no institute of international relations has been able to resist, even partially, a change of this kind in its functions and thus in its methods.

The UAI has played a twofold part in the study of international relations. First of all, it has always systematically collected and regularly published all basic information about the international community. This work has fortunately been unaffected by any varying degrees of importance which fashions in doctrine or changes in scientific policy may have attached to different levels

or sectors of international life. If the UAI has largely concerned itself with international non-governmental organizations and in general with the sociological aspect of international life — which is now being rediscovered at a doctrinal level — this is due to the fact that other research centres have not felt able to accord as much importance or effort to this sector and level of the international community.

In the second place, as a result of dealing with the basic documentation, the UAI has almost been obliged to draw up definitions or descriptions, make classifications and draw attention to various tendencies.

Both these contributions are based on a systematic use of a logical inductive method, supplied by a survey of data and producing an extrapolation of categories and tendencies.

## THE CO-OPERATION OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE ACTION OF STATES

by Etienne de la VALLEE POUSSIN,

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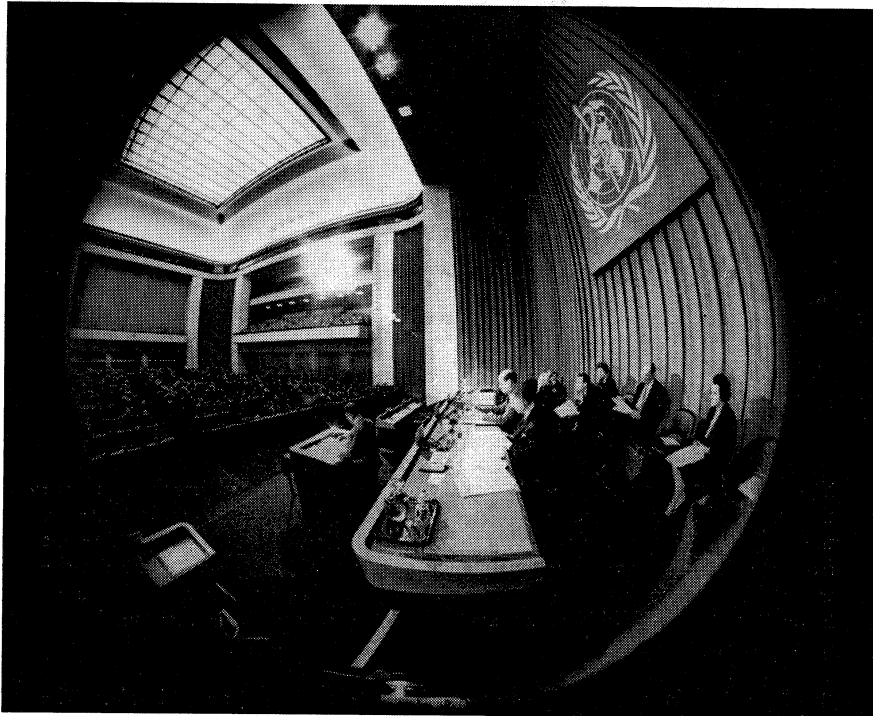
If we compare our Europe with that of Napoleon III, one is surprised to note that the constitutional frameworks have changed far less than their contents, the politico-social structures. The "Liberal Empire" is not so very different from the Gaullist government. No spectacular revolution has overturned the traditions of the House of Commons. The Belgian or Dutch constitutions have undergone no widespread amendments, except for the introduction of universal franchise.

But beneath this immovable lid, the nations are no longer recognisable. The industrialist, worker or peasant of the Second Empire would find no contemporary beings that resembled him, either in mentality, behaviour, or again in their way of life and ambitions. And the politician would be the most surprised of them all.

He would, of course, note that absenteeism is the rule in the national assemblies just as it used to be; that essentially the political game is played in the wings by a small number of initiates; that speeches do not change voting habits; that the parliamentary world still includes a few idealists who fail to understand anything, and some sharp wits that grasp everything... But once he has enumerated these constants, he is going to be astonished in various ways.

The first of these, and the most important, is the parallel disappearance of eloquence and power in the assemblies. In former times, Parliament was truly the centre of political thinking. A historian of the English Parliament has recalled that during the Fifties, "The Times" gave an almost verbatim report

of the Commons debates, covering almost one-third of the newspaper, and that as everything had been said and decided in Parliament, political articles in the press were merely by way of an extra, their interest depending almost exclusively on the personal worth of the man who wrote them. Today, the assemblies retain the legal power, but in all the industrialized States the real power has largely passed into the hands of the economic and social organizations.



A session at the United Nations

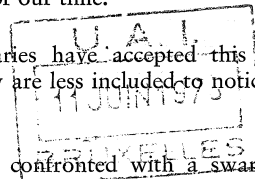
The farming vote is binding on members from farming constituencies. To a great extent the trade-unions, the leagues of army veterans or political prisoners, certain industrial interests and a thousand and one occasional trends and movements have come to dominate Parliament. These organizations confer directly with Ministers; they know how to condition public opinion; sometimes they even install some loyal friends in the top ranks of government offices. Consequently, let us say without trying to exaggerate that Parliament has lost its monopoly of representing the citizens to the government.

On the other hand, the State — faced with an increasingly complex society — can no longer uphold the common weal save by constantly extending the sphere of its activity. Its former tools — the law, ministerial decisions, and

the police — are no longer adequate when it comes to arranging credit, or dealing with public health and capital-labour relationships. Therefore it is obliged to delegate part of its authority to intermediary bodies. In our country, many of these are known as “parastatal” or State-controlled organizations, but there are hundreds of other forms in which this delegation of authority is done, and which is likely to become more widespread in Belgium under the influence of community legislation.

Taken to extremes in Belgium, rather more moderate in other countries, nevertheless the same trend is apparent everywhere. And the MP of 1870, after striving at length to grasp such a mutable reality, would probably sum up his impressions by saying: In my time, the political authorities assigned themselves tasks that were far fewer in number but perfectly clear-cut, and in that framework their sovereignty was wielded whole and entire. It left everything else to the free choice of its citizens, on condition that the latter acted on their own individual responsibility and, except in the form of political parties, that they never enter into coalitions or associations, because if they did, they would be trying to assume the role of the public authorities. Today, the frontier between public and private affairs can hardly be distinguished any more. On the government side, and on the citizen’s side as well, there is a profusion of bodies and institutions which are no longer purely public nor purely private. A vast amount of social effervescence smothers the distinctions of former days, which used to be very precise, very abstract, but which have now become increasingly foreign to the human relationships of our time.

In one form or another, all our contemporaries have accepted this as a phenomenon specific to their country. But they are less inclined to notice the international aspects of this development.



And yet, while the Nation State is no longer confronted with a swarm of individuals but does all its negotiating with autonomous organizations that are often very rich, powerful and disciplined, international affairs are also losing their individuality. Though the supranational State has not yet come into existence, the international societies are very much alive and kicking. The UAI takes a census of them each twelvemonth for its yearbook. Their number and importance are constantly growing, and the rate since the war has been impressive. They are not solely the INGOs (International Non-governmental Organizations) but also include those which a neologism has termed “transnational companies”, meaning the joint-stock companies with branches in numerous countries.

The existence and multiplication of these transnational companies is certainly a good thing, because economic development is hindered by frontiers and regulations, and consequently benefits to a growing extent from the international dynamic character of big business. On the other hand, the State’s authority may, in the long run, be undermined by the irresponsible acts of vast industrial consortia which are no longer really controlled from anywhere. Their shareholders are widely dispersed, ignorant and passive. No State can take effective action against powers that reach far beyond its frontiers, and of which in most cases the State stands in far more need than the company needs the State. This phenomenon takes on a disastrous character in the developing

countries which are not only greedy for capital investment but incapable of disciplining the transnational companies which establish themselves on their soil.

If the UN were to play its part to the full, it would be its duty to act as policeman over the host of international companies which reign over the world of today. The latter derive the maximum advantage from progress and technical advancement, the rapidity and ease of communications, the speed with which civilisation is becoming uniform. Their power is one of humanity's best trump cards in the fight against poverty and for the advent of a better world. Many INGO's have purely philanthropic and humanitarian aims. Some of them are among the best adjuncts to worldwide mutual aid. Even the joint-stock companies, founded for a purely profit-making purpose, should in principle be beneficial since the only way to raise the living standards of the backward nations is to use their natural resources, increase their tools and skills, and improve their output. Who would not hail as a great step forward in History the spread all over our planet of those enormous, dynamic sources of energy which are weaving at ever increasing speed the web of a universal society, the first that man has ever known ?

But is this society of companies which is growing up in the shadow of States and public institutions invading our planetary space under the banner of law and order, or that of anarchy ?

The INGO's are obviously a great factor in maintaining order. Indeed, they permit citizens of different States to meet together, compare notes, and define their common interest within their specific branches of activity. These relationships, which are becoming ever closer across the world's frontiers, help to attenuate national egotism and rivalries, shed light on essential problems, hold in check the tyranny of States when the latter allow themselves to be confined in narrow ideologies. For paving the way towards a world policy in all those fields where it will soon be necessary to chart one, these companies and organizations have incomparable virtues. They condition public opinion to understand the need to make certain efforts and certain sacrifices, they study technical solutions, they promote agreement and understanding between nations far more than inter-State negotiations could ever do. One of the most striking examples of what the INGO's can do is the current drive to protect nature. Under the aegis of UNESCO, the Council of Europe and other public bodies, meetings are taking place with increasing frequency at which all the national and international organizations sit down at the same table with the experts, become aware of the urgency of the problems, work out what measures should be taken, and admonish their governments. Failing some worldwide political authority to which recourse might be had, it is still necessary today to rely on the goodwill of the existing States. Individually, the latter cannot act effectively to combat all the evils which know no frontiers. The pollution of our water, and particularly our air, are physical phenomena which have spread all over our planet. Consequently, it is urgently necessary to mobilize international public opinion in order to urge the States to reach some understanding and arrive at a concerted decision as to what regulations and protective measures should be enforced everywhere simultaneously.

In the field of public health, the fight against crime and drugs, the protection of youth, the improvement of working conditions, the development of culture,

the perfecting of informational media — how many things are possible only through international action ! And when one measures the impotence of the individual governments, their aversion from getting together to examine questions which are in fact common to all, the incompatibility of their administrative methods which paralyze all attempts at concerted action, the incredible lack of flexibility in their mental structures which even prevent them from understanding each other — then one is better able to appreciate the flexibility of the INGO's which group the citizens of those hidebound, stiff-necked States in assemblies of outward-looking men between whom contact becomes easy on account of the affinities created by similar professional habits or tastes. In disarming outmoded forms of nationalism, so many of which are artificial, there is nothing better than the atmosphere of meetings organized by the international associations. The friendly warmth of congresses is a wonderful stimulant in getting nations to co-operate in disinterested ventures which affect the fate of humanity at large, whereas the coldness of the governments is a terrible obstacle.

The Communist countries are still almost inaccessible to these new forms of human relationships. But throughout the rest of the world, the developing countries are aspiring towards them ever more earnestly.

Distance has been abolished on our tiny planet. Different civilizations, which were formerly preserved by their isolation, now find themselves rubbing shoulders with those around them, with no room to move. The great industrial giants can no longer provide for expansion without seeking out their raw materials in the countries where they are to be found, and they can only balance their production by distributing it to the four corners of the earth. The foul residue of their smoke and their detergents contaminates the skies of every country and befouls the seven seas. In brief, these Titans cannot stir and grow without upsetting the whole world. But though they may be a nuisance, the fact remains that they are also the creators of immense wealth and the initiators of progress. All nations, even the most isolated and backward, benefit from their activities and will do so even more in the future as their prodigious energy and astonishing discoveries develop even more.

Thus, the human caravan is today travelling through a forest of contradictions. The governments and their diplomatists are wearing themselves out trying to restrict and lessen the conflicts breaking out on all sides. How can the humble inhabitant of a distant farming region, or for that matter even the average voter in our civilized countries, find his way through the maze ? The essential information is not available to him. His contacts with the real leaders is extremely tenuous or non-existent. Humanity is going through an extraordinary crisis of growth, and we cannot see our way for the fog.

To that lost and isolated man, the private organizations, both national and international, offer a haven of security and a means of disentangling the enigmas of the time. They are perhaps the best social tool for resolving the most difficult problem confronting our democracies : that of information. That is why they are so necessary, and why the individualism of last century has almost entirely yielded to the "society of companies" which characterizes our day and age.

It is important to ensure that the developing countries are closely associated with this process of evolution. They, more than any others, need to make themselves heard. More than any others, they are entitled to be informed. Within the INGO's, relationships are easier and more intimate than in inter-State conferences. The subjects are more definite, the facts speak louder for themselves, and friendships grow up more naturally.

Where many INGO's are concerned, there is no better or more useful task than to increase the number of their members in the developing countries so as to be better able to understand their worries and difficulties, to compare their desires and needs with those of the industrialized countries and thus, within the organization itself, to work for the conciliation of interests and the coordination of efforts. Very soon the governments will no longer be able to do without such help, because the very nature of diplomatic negotiations has the effect of underlining obstacles and difficulties — which it is, of course, necessary to know in order to be able to overcome them — whereas contacts within international organizations that are not politically committed tend more easily to highlight points of agreement and fundamental needs.

But the factor of order, of union among nations, social progress, non-governmental and transnational organizations, bodies serving particular interests but which have no general political responsibility — may not these become a kind of ferment of anarchy in this world of ours? In the absence of a State, has a society ever been known to organize itself spontaneously along the path towards the common weal?

Can it not be asserted, even at this early stage, that the proliferation of non-governmental organizations and transnational bodies postulate the existence of a valid interlocutor, endowed with full legal status?

The United Nations, UNESCO, FAO, the Council of Europe, etc. all accept the principle of co-operation with the INGO's, since they acknowledge their advisory status. But is that enough?

As for the transnational bodies, they have no international interlocutor anywhere.

It may therefore be confidently stated that the legally-established international bodies are today largely outstripped by the growth, in number and importance, of private initiatives. And if this imbalance were to last too long, it would not fail to be productive of abuses and to create dangerous tensions which neither the United Nations nor the Nation States could easily deal with.

Faced with this situation, the task of investigation and promotion which the UAI has assigned itself becomes ever more important. It must learn and analyse more thoroughly than ever before the phenomenon which is a completely novel one in our history: this growing proliferation of private international organizations. They develop on the fringe of the law, and are becoming an increasingly weighty factor in the development of peoples. The phenomenon is such a vast one that it is difficult to grasp, and one day it will be necessary to double or triple the means available to the UAI if the latter is designated to become the worldwide body dedicated to that new science: which, in the final analysis, is its true and rightful vocation.

## A GLANCE AT SIXTY YEARS OF ACTIVITY (1910-1970) OF THE UNION OF INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

by Georges Patrick SPEECKAERT,  
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### INTRODUCTION

“La Vie Internationale et l'effort pour son organisation.” (International Affairs and the drive to organize them).

That title, given to the leading article of the first issue — which came out in April 1912 — of the magazine of the Union of International Associations, is a perfect summary of the scope of action and the task assigned to the Union by the two authors of the article, Henri La Fontaine and Paul Otlet. These two, with another Belgian — Cyrille Van Overbergh, were the first General Secretaries of the Union whose 60th anniversary is being celebrated this year.

It has been said, and cannot be sufficiently emphasized, that they were the main founders and, for over thirty years, the kingpins of the Union of International Associations which I shall henceforth designate by its initials UAI.

Having discovered, read and re-read their thoughts, realized their hopes and dreams, noted their methodical outlook and their tenacity, discovered their prophetic concepts and disinterested idealism on so many occasions and in so many of their writings over the last few decades, I should like to present this historical survey as a tribute to their memories.

To my mind, this tribute would be weakened were I to disregard certain setbacks, and indeed certain errors made in the course of an otherwise remarkable work.

The backbone of any institution is constituted by human beings, as Jacques Rueff wrote one day, and consequently it is invaluable that another article of the present issue devoted to the UAI should help us, by tracing the portraits of Henri La Fontaine and Paul Otlet, to arrive at a better understanding of the spirit and quality of the men who built up the UAI.

While it is my hope to devote an entire book to this subject one day and thus pay a tribute to the whole army of great pioneers of international co-operation whose names, in so many cases, are bound up with the history of the UAI, today I must restrict myself to the limited number of pages allocated to me and therefore abandon my idea of recalling their personal contribution in order to recall merely the targets, milestones, setbacks and achievements of an institution which is unique of its kind in 1970, and was even more so at the time of its founding in 1910.