

Chapter VIII

THE UNION OF INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

THE CENTRAL OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The World Congress at Mons in 1905 had resolved that the work it had begun should be continued by similar congresses in the future and that a permanent office of some kind should be set up to organise them. Leopold II, King of the Belgians, had closed the Congress thus:

Without political ambition, tiny Belgium can more and more become the capital of an important intellectual, artistic, civilising and economic movement, can be a modest but useful member of the great family of nations and can contribute its small part to the welfare of humanity.¹

Since the middle of the nineteenth century Brussels had been chosen as the city of domicile for increasing numbers of international organisations. Otlet and La Fontaine believed that further encouragement of this trend was one way of helping Belgium achieve the eminence and influence foreseen by the King. The Commission appointed by the Minister for the Interior and Public Instruction early in 1906 to examine the Mont des Arts project had, in principle, recognised the needs of the international associations located in Belgium for a permanent center in its acceptance of a measure of government responsibility for the Collective Library of Learned Societies and for the provision of central location for their secretariats in the future Mont des Arts. In July 1906 Otlet and La Fontaine assembled representatives of a number of international associations with permanent headquarters in Brussels to discuss the kind of mutual aid they might give each other, for together, it was observed, they contributed powerfully «towards the unification and progressive organisation of the interests of the whole world — as though it was comprised of a single nation above individual nations».² As a result of these discussions a Central Office of International Institutions was created in the following year by Otlet, La Fontaine and Cyrille Van Over-

bergh with some twenty international associations its first members.

There was in the air a mounting belief in the power of international associations, a power appearing to be approaching some kind of zenith in the International Peace Conference which was to assemble in the Hague in 1907. Gradually Otlet and La Fontaine's views about international organisation had become wider and more informed, although La Fontaine, of course, had had a broad internationalist viewpoint for many years. In the very year of the foundation of the IIB, the year after he was elected to the Belgian senate, he had become active in the Interparliamentary Union. He had participated in all the Universal Peace Congresses organised by the Permanent Bureau for International Peace, of which he became President in 1908. In mid 1907 he made a statement in the Belgian senate on the importance of world organisation.³ Otlet's activities had hitherto been more limited, had been circumscribed by the IIB and some relatively minor ventures associated with it. But both he and La Fontaine were fascinated observers at the Hague Peace Conference. The first Conference had been called with much ceremony at the Hague in 1899. The second was convoked by President Theodore Roosevelt upon representation from the Interparliamentary Union at the conclusion of its conference in 1904 in San Francisco, whither La Fontaine had repaired, being one of the number to wait on the President. Now, three years later a vast and splendid assemblage of «career diplomats, ambassadors, generals and admirals» sat down with some pomp and circumstance to debate the future peace of the world.⁴ Their three month-long deliberations were a spectacular failure in Otlet's view. Met to discuss how the entire Globe might be enveloped in a well-made mantle of peace, the conference ended by adopting a threadbare convention for «the minute regularisation of war». Instead of a permanent International Court of Justice being created, which was a major aim of the conference, all that was achieved was an International Prize Court, some modifications to the Convention the nations had signed after the 1899 conference, and the recognition that the major and minor powers were unlikely ever easily to agree on methods for nominating and electing permanent salaried judges for a more general international court.⁵

Though there was an almost cynical irony in the outcome of the conference when compared with its original purpose, and though it rudely dashed the high hopes held for it, Otlet believed that it had been not without some importance. It seemed to him that this had been the first time in history that «nations spoke officially and publically to each other»⁶ without the imperatives of particular situations regulating their exchanges as had always been the case in the past in the assemblies which

had met to negotiate actual peace treaties upon the conclusion of actual wars. The conference, Otlet thought, had taken one step, but only one, towards the «irrefragable proclamation of the intellectual and moral unity of mankind». It had raised, however fleetingly, the vision of a world parliament.

Studying the events at the Hague, Otlet came to a number of conclusions. There had been, he decided, five distinct groups represented, each group trying to influence the delegates directly, or indirectly through the press, to accept its solutions for the common problems all were addressing. These groups were jurists, parliamentarians, socialists, pacifists and international associations. Each group, except the international associations, had been represented by powerful organisations. Even though each had been committed to particular interests, Otlet saw them as together constituting a vital «representation of the contemporary forces of internationalism», and as providing striking proof of a law of expansion which he saw operating across the whole world, a law of «ampliation». This law had various expressions: in the growth, dispersion and movement of populations, in the exchange of goods and services between them, in the communication links that were steadily binding them ever closer to one another, in their increasing economic interdependence, their sharing and mutual advancement of ideas in the sciences and arts, in their ever-ramifying political and social relations.

If this movement towards increasing internationalism was to be as effective as Otlet thought it could become, the development of a systematic program for expansion seemed to him indispensable. Such a programme would have to consider problems affecting the development of the arts and sciences. It would bring together and co-ordinate proposals for an international university, an organisation for international documentation, a central organising body for the international associations. Here would be spelled out the efforts necessary to develop an international language and to secure the acceptance of an international system of weights and measures. Such a program would also have to embrace the political world. It would have to indicate how the states could be grouped into a world federation governed by an international parliament and supported by an international court of justice and an international executive body with power enough to enforce its mandate.

These reflections of Otlet's on the occasion of the Hague peace conference are important because they form the background to the subsequent development of the Central Office for International Institutions and the program followed by the World Congress of International Associations. They go beyond this, however, to the whole programme of the Union of International Associations which culminated in an ultimately abortive

attempt to found an International University in 1920. Initially, however, the primary focus of the work of the new Central Office of International Institutions was seen as documentary in character. This emphasis was serious and deliberate. «The proper organisation of documentation considered in the widest sense of the term, is to-day one of the foremost functions to have devolved on international associations». Indeed, it could be claimed that their business was very largely information the exchange of which underlay all international relations. «Thus, the systematic organisation of documentation is really the instrument of the daily work of international associations». The draft constitution of the Central Office as presented to a meeting in June 1907 set down its aims as

The study of everything which contributes to the proper organisation of information and documentation, such as the preparation of collections, repertories, publications and services on a co-operative basis. The organisation of documentation involves libraries, bibliography, pictorial documentation [«iconography»], documentary dossiers and repertories and the services attaching to the publication of reviews and annuals.⁷

The first task undertaken by the Central Office was the compilation of a brief directory of international associations in Brussels.⁸ A more important task, however, was carried out in conjunction with the Belgian Sociological Association and the IIB which, between them, sponsored an «enquiry into international associations» undertaken by Cyrille Van Overbergh. A questionnaire was sent out to each of the associations that could be located to gather data about eight matters: their definition of international association, their history, how they classified the various kinds of associations, the manner in which they had been formed, how they functioned, how they had evolved and were to be disbanded if and when necessary, and their bibliographic and other resources.⁹

An important source for an initial listing of existing associations was Alfred Fried's *Annuaire de la Vie Internationale* published by the International Institute for Peace at Monaco.¹⁰ Otlet and La Fontaine were at pains to establish contact personally with Fried who had been compiling the *Annual* since 1905. The fourth volume in the series was edited by Fried, Otlet and La Fontaine and was issued in 1909 by the Central Office for International Institutions with support from the IIB and the International Institute for Peace.¹¹ This edition was nearly five times as large as its predecessor which had been a slim volume of about three hundred pages. The greatly augmented size was grounds for considerable satisfaction at the Central Office. The editors explained the phenomenal growth of the *Annual* by reference to their systematic enquiry into international associations before compiling it. The enquiry had been «a veritable

revelation» to them. They were astonished and overwhelmed by the richness and fecundity of international life.¹²

The question of the legal status of international associations was recognised as being of capital importance to their future development in general and their concentration in Belgium in particular. It was freely acknowledged to be a most difficult and perplexing problem. During the course of 1907 it was taken up, but unsuccessfully, by Emile Tibbaut who presented a Bill to the Belgian Chamber of Representatives which provided for the granting of «personnification civile» to international associations with permanent headquarters in Belgium. Provided that they were scientific, truly international and had permanent Belgian representation in their management the Bill was intended to enable them to assume a legal existence in which they could receive gifts, own property and enter into contracts.¹³

When the representatives of the associations participating in the Central Office for International Institutions met at the end of January 1908, the outlook was very bright indeed. The government appeared eager to support the Office in quite tangible ways, firstly by deciding that it should provide it with accommodation in the future Mont des Arts, and secondly by considering a law to secure the legal status of international organisations in Belgium. The project to publish the *Annuaire de la Vie Internationale* was well in hand. Moreover, by this time the program of the Central Office had received further study and had taken on an enlarged significance. The Central Office, it was now thought, should attempt

1. to establish a centre for international associations having international objectives and to facilitate their installation [in the centre?], action, study and work;
2. to study questions about their organisation, the coordination of their activities and the unification of their methods in so far as these are common or similar for all the associations or a great many of them;
3. to encourage the creation of international associations in all areas where similar organisations have not been set up;
4. to gather together and co-ordinate information and documents relative to internationalism and the international movement (facts, ideas and institutions);
5. to stimulate or organise co-operation between the services offered by the institutions, to organise the extension of international relations between groups and individuals. To this end, notably to look to the improvement of the organisation of international congresses of the international associations, to delimit their respective spheres of activity in order to avoid duplication and repetition ...;
6. to contribute to the organisation of international documentation according to the plans and methods decreed by the IIB and stimulate international institutions to contribute to that work;
7. to set down programs of action and common study between all the international associations or groups of them;
8. to search for harmony and co-ordination between various systems

of nomenclature, terminology, classification or notation in such a way that international agreements will result, but which are limited, in general, to the domains of different individual sciences;

9. to publish an *Annual of International Life* and a periodical bulletin ..., annual and bulletin summarising and condensing all the facts collected by its documentation service ...;

10. to organise periodically a general congress of international institutions where questions related to the Office will be discussed and which will provide those who are interested in the international movement with enjoyable occasions of contact which will increase co-operation and improve relations.¹⁴

At this meeting of the members of the Central Office of International Institutions it was decided to press ahead with the organisation of the congress foreshadowed in point number 10 of the statement of the Office's aims and objectives to take place at the 1910 Exposition of Brussels. The congress was to be like that of Mons in 1905, a summit congress of international congress and would have two quite distinct goals. The first, entirely new, its organisers, believed, would be to study problems of unification of methods, of co-operation and the organisation of work between various international associations. The second would be to survey recent advances in the arts and sciences «from the world or universal point of view», thereby performing an incalculably valuable synthesis complementing «the analytical work carried out by each separate congress».¹⁵ They recognised, too, that the effort of organising a congress would give a precise focus to the work of the Central Office for International Institutions in the immediate future. The provisional program of the Congress listed six major areas for discussion

1. co-operation between the international associations;
2. the juridical system of the international associations (legal recognition, civil personification, etc.);
3. the international system of measurements in sciences and in technical services (unification and co-ordination of systems; the metrical system, the CGS system [centimetre, gramme, seconde]...);
4. the types of international organisms (comparative examination, advantages and inconveniences of the present system);
5. the international associations and the organisation of bibliography and documentation;
6. scientific terminology and international languages (systematic terminology of sciences, notation, signals, international languages, scientific translations).¹⁶

Associations which wished to participate in the congress were invited to submit reports to the Central Office about their work, methods, any results obtained, and above all about «desiderata relative to increasing co-operation with other associations». The staff of the Central Office worked on the preparation of a general report which was to be distributed before the Congress and serve as the basis for discussion at the

Congress. The report presented conclusions already reached by various associations on each of the questions on the agenda. The sections of the report were described by Otlet as constituting

an attempt at codification of desiderata, principles and rules already formulated in the realm of organisation by international associations and congresses. Destined to provide a basis for concerted action to speed up and improve international organisation, they are proposed for unprejudicial adoption by the associations as a general suggestion and for orientation. It is proposed that, after the congress, these conclusions will be revised to take into account observations collected and decisions taken then. They will all be incorporated in such a way as to make of these conclusions a «code of international organisation», a code of ideas, methods, work and projects, under each heading for which will be listed the kinds of support given them and the names of the associations which have introduced or adopted them.¹⁷

Apart from the World Congress of International Associations Otlet, La Fontaine and the IIB were deeply involved in a number of others to be held in Brussels in 1910. There was, of course, that of the IIB. It was hoped that this could become the first meeting of a permanent International Congress of Bibliography and Documentation. The IIB prepared a substantial draft «General Code for the Organisation of Bibliography and Documentation»¹⁸ for submission to the Congress. Moreover it prepared similar documents for a number of other congresses. These were considered to be developments of chapters or sections of the General Code: «Code for the Organisation of the Periodical Press»,¹⁹ «Code for the Organisation of Administrative Documentation»,²⁰ and «Code for the Organisation of Photographic Documentation».²¹ Otlet himself was appointed President of special documentation sections in the first International Congress of the Administrative Sciences, the International Congress of Photography and the Congress of Accountancy and was involved in documentation work for the Congress of the Periodical Press.

At the end of 1908 a special section of the Exposition, Group XXII, was set up to co-ordinate the Congresses to be held under its auspices. Henri, Comte Carton de Wiart became president of the section. Neither Otlet nor La Fontaine were members of Group XXII, though they assisted its work in various ways notably by suggesting a conference schedule which would permit the grouping together of conferences on related subjects, and by undertaking in 1910 the publication of an *International Review of Congresses and Conferences* which would report opening addresses, programs, news and resolutions taken by various congresses, together with abbreviated accounts of lectures by eminent figures at the Exposition.²²

The planning for the Congresses which Otlet and La Fontaine were responsible for progressed apace. The King agreed to preside at the Congress of the International Associations.

Moreover, it was decided that the various congresses could participate in the actual Exposition of Brussels more actively than just by being held under its auspices. It had been customary in the past for the IIB to mount exhibits at Expositions and it was now resolved to prepare an exhibit relating to internationalism and the international associations. These were notified of this resolution and asked to submit to the Central Office documents and any other material that might be relevant for the exhibit. It was hoped that by regular updating and gradual extension the exhibit might ultimately form the kernel of a permanent Museum of Internationalism.²³ At this time, too, Otlet began to solicit material for an international exhibition of documentation related to administrative methods for the International Congress of Administrative Sciences. «It is only by the close comparative study of such documents», he wrote, «that it will be possible to appreciate the measures proposed to resolve present problems in the simplification of administrative transactions».²⁴ This exhibit was to be prepared in conjunction with and to form part of that for the Congress of International Associations.

THE UNIVERSAL EXPOSITION OF BRUSSELS, 1910

The first of the congresses of interest to Otlet and La Fontaine was the World Congress of the International Associations which began on the 9th May, 1910. Unfortunately, King Albert could not preside at the opening as planned because of the death in London of King Edward VII whose obsequies required his attendance. But by the 9th May one hundred and thirty seven international organisations had become members of the congress. Thirteen governments had sent delegates and nearly four hundred individuals representing a much larger number of associations had subscribed. Among this number were many old friends and associates of the IIB, several Nobel Laureates, a great many prominent Belgian figures — cabinet ministers, former cabinet ministers, administrative heads of government departments, senior officials, M. Max, the Mayor of Brussels. Among the barons, the half dozen counts, one duke, two princes, the dozens of doctors and professors were no more than five or six women. Andrew Carnegie's name was placed on the list of «adhérents», though he was not present. Ernest Soivay was there and so was Otlet and La Fontaine's old *maitre*, Edmond Picard, stirring the proceedings with his wit and eloquence, and Hector Dennis, to whom Otlet had not quite rallied in the formation of the Nouvelle Université over fifteen years before. And, with an irony remarked by no one, inscribed upon the list of members (though it is not clear that he actually attended) was the name Léon Bourgeois, who was

involved therefore, however indirectly, in the birth of an organisation to which later, unwittingly, he was to give the coup de grâce.²⁵

After the opening ceremonies certain procedural matters were dealt with. The officials of the congress were confirmed in their positions: Auguste Beernaert, Minister of State, as President, Otlet, La Fontaine and Cyrile Van Overbergh as Secretaries-General, and six Vice-presidents were elected, among them Prince Roland Bonaparte and Ernest Solvay. Otlet, Reporter-general for the Congress, then introduced the work of the congress at some length. He suggested that the six questions on the agenda could best be dealt with if the congress broke into three groups. This was agreed to. Beernaert and a Belgian lawyer deeply interested in the legal problems of international associations, Clunet, were appointed to preside over the first section which dealt with the question of their legal status. The second section under the Nobel Laureate Wilhelm Ostwald and Solvay was to deal with questions three and four on the agenda: standardisation generally but particularly the establishment of international systems of units of weights and measures, and the kinds and functions of international associations. The third section under General Sebert and La Fontaine was to discuss documentation and the problem of scientific and technical language. Later a fourth group was set up headed by Prince Roland Bonaparte and a M. Guillaume from the International Bureau of Weights and Measures. This section, accommodating representatives whose interest did not clearly fall into any of the other groups was to discuss general problems of international co-operation between associations and means of co-ordinating their work. Meeting in the morning of Wednesday, 11th May 1910, a time at which the other sections were not in session, section four was attended by a number of the members of other sections and was the occasion for a very wide-ranging discussion. Also, after considerable debate on the unification of weights and certain measures used in science, the second section combined with the third to consider problems in the standardisation of scientific terminology.

The resolutions of the World Congress of International Associations were extremely general for the most part, and perhaps not particularly surprising. Nevertheless, in terms of the relatively narrow context in which they are being considered here, they all implicitly or explicitly affirmed the need for continued co-operation, for the continuance of the work begun by the Congress and hence, the need for a permanent international Center.

The congress emphasised the importance of the metric system of weights and measurements and the need for uni-

form, international adoption of that system.²⁶ It resolved to appoint a committee to make known this view to all appropriate organisations. It also decided, on a suggestion from Otlet, that a general report should be prepared which would show systematically how it was possible to reconcile the existing individual systems with an international system.

The resolutions about the legal status of international associations, though Picard demurred at the neologism involved, were important:

- a) a super-national statute for non-profit organisations, which because of their nature and their purpose neither can nor want to be placed under particular incorporative legislation, should be instituted by means of a diplomatic convention;
- b) to ensure the achievement of this resolution, the Congress transforms its organising committee into a permanent committee. It gives it the mandate of preparing the draft of such a convention and the regulations for it to be sent to participating international associations for their observations.

The congress invites its committee to transmit its work, when it is finished for the approval of states.

Moreover, a need for a central office of legal documentation was recognised to exist. Such an office should collect for comparison all the forms of contracts used throughout the world. The congress's organising committee was requested to take steps to put this resolution into effect.

The documentation section stressed the need for an international documentary union of governments on the lines of the draft elaborated for the IIB's 1908 conference on bibliography. It also recognised the importance of adopting an international bibliographical code «to facilitate the diffusion and systematic collection of all printed matter». It urged the wider adoption of the Decimal Classification system, singling out particularly the International Congress of Mathematicians, which was not represented at Brussels, as one body which should adopt the classification. It and all similar bodies, it declared, should work out a concordance between their special classifications and the Decimal Classification.

The section dealing with co-operation resolved that isolated international associations or groupings of them should remain in constant contact with the Central Office

which will serve as an intermediary for all relations between them and as a source for useful information; that this office should be recognised as the permanent organ of their reciprocal relations and that it should receive the necessary subventions to allow it to carry out its useful and important functions.

This section also expressed the view that there should be greater co-operation between the international organisations studying the legal difficulties that prevented the development of such relations between them as would permit them to form a «society of nations» — the International Bureau for Peace and

its Congresses, the Institute for International Law and the Inter-parliamentary Union. It was thought that a permanent organ for diplomatic meetings with which these associations could co-operate should be set up in the Hague. Nevertheless, the section stressed the importance of free, unofficial organisations in international life, and the importance of maintaining their independence at the same time as co-operation between them and co-ordination of their work were promoted.

Before it dispersed the Congress repaired in a body to the exhibition about internationalism organised by the Central Office. The exhibition contained twelve sections covering various aspects of international life. There was a section for documentation, for example, largely consisting of the IIB's exhibit, that of the Concilium Bibliographicum and that of the Musée de la Presse. Other sections, displaying exhibits from a wide variety of sources, ranged through geographical, historical, economic, social, moral and philosophical matters. The exhibits mostly consisted of charts, tables, maps, diagrams, prints and documents published by the associations. The enormous collection of material assembled for the Congress on Administrative Sciences was part of the exhibition, the Administration Section. Otlet and La Fontaine believed that «such an exposition is... the best way of making known to the great public the totality of the facts and ideas upon which international organisation rests to-day». For them «the Exposition-Museum is the complement of the Congress of the International Associations and its primary aim is to illustrate, to comment on, to justify the code of rules which will emerge from its deliberations and the *Annuaire de la Vie Internationale* which contains the results of the vast enquiry on the work of internationalism which preceded it». ²⁷ During the course of the visit to the exhibition the delegates took a resolution that «a permanent museum» should be created from it as Otlet and La Fontaine had hoped. A notice was then prepared setting out the objectives of such a museum. The management of the museum was officially placed in the hands of the Central Office of International Institutions and all international associations who were members of the Office were regarded as having participated in the formation of the Museum. ²⁸

And so, the first great World Congress of International Associations drew to a close. M. Beernaert, congratulating the delegates on their achievements, adverted for a moment to the difficulties that had been experienced by the International Maritime Union which he had helped to form a quarter of a century earlier. He hoped that the present gathering would not make the same kinds of mistake, mistakes of excessive centralisation and the neglect of a supportive system of autonomous national organisations. Finally he hoped

that our organisation which has taken on a permanent character, the Union of International Associations that we have ratified by this congress, will provide us soon with another occasion for meeting in the same conditions as to-day, with the same desire for progress, with the same lack of any preoccupation with personal or national pride. ²⁹

Thus emerged from the World Congress of International Associations a Union of International Associations domiciled in Brussels at the Central Office of International Institutions.

Otlet had a particular interest in the International Congress of the Administrative Sciences which was held in July. He regarded its work as primarily documentary and by far the greatest number of resolutions taken at the Congress dealt with documentation. The Congress created a permanent committee to organise future congresses and to collect documents relevant to administrative science and organise them for use. It was resolved that «all the theoretical and practical knowledge relating to general documentation should be brought together and co-ordinated», that «the principles and methods of administrative documentation should be the subject of courses and of introductory lectures», and that «There should be a general method for administrative documentation. This method should embrace the various operations to which documents are submitted (creation, conservation, classification, communication, publication, retirement, transferral to archival depots)». The congress also resolved that a central office for administrative documentation should be created to study all these matters, form a library, compile an international bibliography on administration, and institute a museum. It also resolved to participate in the work of the Central Office of International Institutions and any further congresses organised by it. ³⁰

At the closing banquet, the President of the Congress raised the question of the International Museum of which the exhibits for the International Congress of Administrative Sciences formed such a large part. He urged that «measures should be taken to ensure that the necessary locations should be provided for this museum» and he addressed himself directly to the Mayor of Brussels, commending the Museum to him. A plan was put afoot immediately to secure permanently one of the Exposition buildings for the use of an International Museum around which, it was suggested, could be organised «the various permanent institutions and services that a number of the congress held in Brussels in 1910 have created as well as international bodies having their headquarters in Brussels previously». At the International Congress of Photography, drawing to a close at about the same time, General Seberty pledged the support of the International Union of Photography for this venture.

Two committees were constituted to work for the permanent creation and sustained development of the Museum. One was Belgian. Its function was to negotiate with the government and any other authorities involved for locations for the Museum. The other was international. Its task was to approach the official representatives of the various countries participating in the Exposition in order to induce them to co-operate in the foundation of the Museum. They were asked to obtain permission to donate to the Museum the documents and other objects on exhibition in their national pavilions. Eventually a suitable building was selected as a good commodious location for the Museum. Patrick Geddes, who had worked valiantly but unsuccessfully for the preservation of the buildings of the Paris Exposition in 1900, arrived in Brussels and studied the feasibility of prolonging the life of what were essentially temporary buildings. He declared that this would in fact be quite feasible and enthusiasm mounted in the Central Office. Unfortunately a sudden, substantial fire, destroyed the greater part of the building. The idea, however, was by no means abandoned for the Museum should be, its organisers declared, something independent of particular locations.³¹

On the 17th October a great fillip was given to efforts to establish the Museum. The Spanish government on that date formally handed over its exhibition of administrative documents to the Belgian government as the basis for an International Administrative Museum. Implicit in the receipt of this gift was an undertaking by the Belgian government to see that it was suitably housed. The Spanish exhibit was integral to the collections of the International Museum created by the Congress of International Associations and it seems that official protection of a part extended protection to the whole. In this somewhat indirect way, the whole of the International Museum came to have some official standing. The government gave the Central Office permission to retain part of the left-hand side of the Palais du Cinquanteaire for the housing of the Museum.

Upon the successful conclusion of the negotiations between the Spanish and Belgian governments, the International Museum issued its general catalog.³² At this time special catalogs were also issued for the section on administrative documentation,³³ and for another section, the International Highway Museum, which was composed of a series of exhibits assembled for the second International Highway Congress and donated to the International Museum.³⁴ A version of the general catalog was issued in Esperanto.³⁵ A number of Esperanto enthusiasts attended the various congresses at the 1910 Exposition. Indeed, a Central Esperanto Office was set up as part of the Center of International Institutions for the period

of the Exposition, and supplements in Esperanto were published to the *Revue internationale des congrès et conférences*,³⁶ no doubt largely prepared under the supervision of General Sebert.

Another International Congress held on the occasion of the Universal Exposition of Brussels was that for Accounting Sciences. Otlet had been interested in accountancy for some time, regarding it almost as an aspect of administrative documentation. Two very early articles of his deal with aspects of the subject.³⁷ Nor was he a stranger to the actual practice of accountancy as his struggles with his father's affairs and those of Otlet Frères amply testify.

Early in 1910 Otlet approached J. Dumon, the Secretary General of the Belgian Academic Society for Accountancy (*Société Académique de Comptabilité de Belgique*) with proposals for co-operation between it and the IIB. Particularly, he hoped to be able to participate in the International Congress for Accounting Sciences being sponsored by the Society later in the year at the Exposition of Brussels, to discuss the problem of administrative documentation and its connection with accountancy. He was made an honorary member of the Society and was invited to form and become President of a documentation section in the Congress which created an International Association for Accountancy. Otlet was informed that the Central Office of International Institutions would become the seat of the Headquarters of this Association and that the new Association would set about forming within the IIB a «Central Office of Documentation in Matters of Accounting».³⁸

The Documentation Section of the Congress at its meetings on the 20th and 21st August 1910 resolved that:

1. A body of rules for administrative documentation — this expression comprising accounting documents as well as all the other documents of a commercial organisation — should be formulated;
2. Accountancy should take the initiative in formulating these rules and for the sound organisation of documentation;
3. The study of administrative documentation should be part of that for documentation in general and particularly for the documentation of administrative organisations, which was the subject of a «Code of Organisation» in the recent Congress of Administrative Sciences;
4. All rules relative to this should be condensed and co-ordinated in a similar code.³⁹

It was decided that a Second Congress of Accounting Sciences would be held at Charleroi in August 1911 (though it was in fact postponed until September). Otlet was invited to become President of the Congress. He was also asked to preside over the documentation section once again. The program of this section bore his mark and that of the Congress of the preceding year. The following subjects were put on the agenda for discussion:

1. Code of rules for administrative documentation;
2. Schemas and diagrams as a means for graphically representing accounting phenomena and of characterising the mechanism of accounts and their functions;
3. The creation of a Central Office of Documentation in Matters Relating to Accountancy.⁴⁰

A «Code» for accountancy was drawn up, presumably at the IIB, to fulfil the requirements laid down in 1910. Its sections were closely related to the «Code for the Organisation of Administrative Documentation», now given the acronym CODA. In many instances references were made to sections of the CODA without supporting text although the sections on accountancy and the value of the Decimal Classification in administrative documentation were substantive and to some extent new.⁴¹

Otlet's interest in accountancy continued. He was made President of the Belgian Academic Society for Accountancy later in 1910, and continued for some years to be one of the Belgian representatives on the Council of the International Association for Accountancy which had been set up in 1910. This was formally affiliated with the IIB. Indeed, a note to this effect appeared on the Association's letter head as late as 1927.⁴²

For Otlet and La Fontaine, however, this year of conferences culminated in that for bibliography and documentation held from the 25th to the 27th August 1910. In the preliminary documents prepared for the International Congress of Bibliography and Documentation, as it was now called, what was to be a permanent program for future meetings was set out. This referred explicitly to the work of other congresses having some interest in elements of bibliography and documentation: those of publishers, librarians and archivists, and those for copyright, for photography and for the administrative sciences. The International Congress for Bibliography and Documentation would not encroach on any special interests:

It will try to co-ordinate their achievement according to the desiderata of the general organisation which must be given documentation, an organisation permitting more methodical production of books, more orderly collection of them, more complete cataloging of them, the integration of their elements into more systematic assemblages, their more extended use.⁴³

The specific program of the 1910 Congress dealt with four major areas of study: the present state of bibliographical organisation throughout the world, the problems and possibilities of co-operation and co-ordination of documentary work, the problems particularly associated with an international cataloging code and the Decimal Classification, and finally, the organisation of an international documentary union.⁴⁴

The documents of the congress were many and diverse.

One of the most interesting was a paper by B. Iwinski. This carried on Otlet's earlier studies on the statistics of printing in relation to the potential size of the RBU and was specifically commissioned by the IIB and conducted on a plan laid down by it.⁴⁵ It is a carefully systematised collation of figures about books and periodical production throughout the world since the invention of printing. Far more important, however, because relating directly to «the desiderata of the general organisation which must be given documentation» were the four «Codes» already mentioned, a «General Code for the Organisation of Bibliography and Documentation», and the detailed elaboration of parts of this which had been adopted by the sections for Documentation of the relevant international congresses earlier in the year. The «General Code» was described in this way:

All the resolutions concerning bibliography and documentation taken in all congresses, whatever they may be, have been brought together and analysed; similarly, all the works on this subject have been studied, together with presently existing services. From this work the principles of good documentation, of the proper organisation of bibliography, have been extracted and co-ordinated in the form of a Code. The goal to be followed by all those who are concerned with these matters is to apply the principles formulated, and to strive to reach the ideal described in the 78 pages of the Code.⁴⁶

The work of the Congress was something of an anti-climax and inconclusive in its outcome. Some of its resolutions clarified or brought to an announced point logical extensions to Otlet's thinking about documentation. It was resolved, for example, that «all information about bibliography and documentation should be co-ordinated, and a distinct brand of study created», and that the terminology of this new discipline should be standardised, carefully defined and a dictionary for it published. And a few months later one finds Otlet expounding this subject in an address to the School of Advanced Social Studies in Paris as part of a series of lectures on modern libraries,⁴⁷ a subject he had first raised and dealt with systematically in 1903.⁴⁸ Another resolution of the Congress was that an International School for the Book should be created at the IIB. Nothing appears to have come of this until Otlet himself in the 1920's set about giving purely local courses in Belgium in documentation and librarianship, for the latter of which he published a «crammer» in collaboration with Léon Wouters.⁴⁹

Apart from this, the importance of the Decimal Classification was again stressed, as was the need for the invariable use of the standard catalog card (75×125 mm) for all bibliographical purposes. The necessity for assisting the RBU towards monolithic perfection in various familiar ways was reaffirmed. The Congress resolved to appoint a commission to draw up a

standard international cataloging code based on the Anglo-American Code,⁵⁰ and the necessity for the preparation of this with the approval and participation of librarians was stressed, so that there would be only one commonly accepted code for all bibliographical purposes. It was also resolved to appoint an international commission to control translations and the further development of the Decimal Classification. National representatives and representatives from international bodies for subject disciplines were to be appointed to this commission. It appears that neither commission was appointed. The Decimal Classification, certainly, languished sadly, becoming more and more out of date until determined efforts actually to produce such a commission and make it work, were made by the Dutch representatives of the IIB after the First World War. The value of the «General Code» and its special elaborations in particular areas was formally recognised at the Conference, and it was observed that «it is desirable continually to develop this Code theoretically and practically, so that it can be of use for the work of successive sessions of the Congress and incorporate their resolutions». In point of fact, no developments appear to have been made to the Code, except to that for Administrative Documentation, and no further sessions of the Congress took place until after the War.

Nothing appears to have been decided about the Union for Documentation, at least directly in light of the rejections and lack of official enthusiasm of the states reported to the IIB in 1909 by the Belgian government. Certain changes were foreseen in the structure of the IIB as a result of attempts to involve official representation within it. But for the moment attempts actually to achieve a documentary union of governments seemed to have lapsed to be taken up again only after the War when the formation of various scientific unions and their affiliation to an International Research Council gave Otlet a push to attempt once more to do the same for documentation. Now, however, as a result of the lapse of the idea of a Documentary Union of Governments, the idea of a permanent Congress of Bibliography and Documentation related to the Congress of International Associations, and the participation of the IIB in the Central Office of International Institutions and the International Museum became paramount. The Conference resolved that

the organisation of the IIB should be enlarged to comprise representatives of the States, of regional and national interests and of the diverse scientific specialities. It should become a more and more international and interscientific federation for the organisation of the Book and Documentation, safeguarding the unification of methods and constituting central collections. The Institute should therefore be the executive body of the Congress of Bibliography and Documentation. The latter should hold regular sessions on the basis of the present

regulations drawn up for the 1910 Congress and with the same general program.

The organising committee of the Congress will remain in office, completed by the heads of foreign delegations with right of representation for countries and disciplines not now represented... It should formulate a draft revision of the statutes of the Institute, encourage the formation of groups to act as national committees, and develop affiliations with international institutes.

The Congress hopes to see realised the project to cede one of the Halls of the Exposition of Brussels to international work so that the bureaux of the international congresses, the secretariats of the international associations, an International Museum, and the services and collections of universal documentation can be grouped together in a great world institution.⁵¹

It seems clear from this that major changes in the structure of the IIB were envisaged so that it might conform to a common pattern of international association, the structure of which had been studied by Otlet, La Fontaine and Van Overbergh in their enquiry into international associations. This was the permanent Congress in lieu of the official Union which had been the initial aim. The new structure, incorporating or at least closely relating so many new elements, would have been quite remarkable had Otlet and La Fontaine been able to make it work. The IIB in 1910, had new statutes been introduced and the commissions for cataloging and the Decimal Classification set up, would have become an International Federation for Documentation, an organisation actually realised nearly thirty years later only after bitter struggle and a series of slow but quite revolutionary transformations. In 1910, however, the new IIB envisaged by Otlet and La Fontaine was really only a pious hope for the focus of their attention had shifted from documentation to internationalism. In Otlet's thinking documentation was always central, a starting point, a point of return because of its fusion in some inexplicably fascinating way with knowledge. But now he believed the IIB was a foundation strong enough to support the gigantic new and expanding structure he and La Fontaine were in the process of creating. True, he saw momentarily at the outset the need to strengthen the foundation but soon all his attention and his energies became absorbed by building.

The relationship of Otlet and La Fontaine to each other in all of this is interesting. It is almost impossible to distinguish their contributions and their names must always be linked in these ventures. Nevertheless, in some ways it appears that Otlet was the more important figure perhaps only because his hand is more visible. It was his pen that put to paper most of the rationalisations for the IIB and what was soon generally called the Union of International Associations (UIA), signed the correspondence to Belgian ministers, appeared most frequently in the bibliography of the publications of the IIB

and UIA. Always La Fontaine was at his shoulder, influencing, perhaps shaping his ideas, joining his name to crucial correspondence, pencilling in corrections to important letters, undertaking large, specific, often tedious tasks. This becomes particularly clear after the War when La Fontaine seems to have assumed the major responsibility for the compilation of the *Code des Voeux* for the League of Nations and the preparation of the index to the second edition of the Universal Decimal Classification. Nevertheless, most of the running of things, the impetus for development and later the suffering of the anguish of failure were Otlet's. La Fontaine was absorbed by his duties in the Senate, was spread a little thinly across his wider range of internationalist interests, was free of the obsession that had begun to grow stronger in Otlet through the years.

THE PALAIS MONDIAL

The consolidation and development of the various aspects of Otlet and La Fontaine's work after the Universal Exposition of 1910 was rapid. Very quickly the apparently diverse elements were rationalised to show how they formed an integrated whole. In 1911, for example a brief account of the Central Office of International Institutions was published which described its composition, services and work. A plate shows plans for the creation of a grandiose building to house the Office, a Palais Mondial. The services which the Central Office was offering or about to offer were summarised thus:

1. Management of Associations and Congresses
 - Relations between the international Associations
 - Study of questions of common interest
 - Creation of organisations of general interest
 - Carrying out of the decisions and preparation of the World Congress
 - Participation in Special international congresses
 - Organisation of international instruction
2. Management of Publications
 - Annual of International Life
 - Review of International Life
 - Co-ordinated list of the resolutions of congresses
3. Management of documentation
 - Library of Internationalism
 - Universal Repertory of Documentation
 - Universal Encyclopedia
 - International Museum
4. Management of general services
 - Book-selling service
 - Editorial services.⁵²

Of all of these services the most clearly lacking was the *Review of International Life* (*Revue de la Vie Internationale*). All of the others except perhaps that for international instruc-

tion, were now being carried out in some form or another, however rudimentary. Early in 1911 La Fontaine approached the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace for financial support for the International Peace Bureau at Berne of which he was president and for the Union of International Associations. The conjunction of the two, the case for each set out as convincingly as possible, suggest a division in La Fontaine's allegiance. Too much can be made of this. An important question raised to the Carnegie Endowment was the possibility of transferring the International Peace Bureau to Brussels, a move initially supported by La Fontaine and by the Endowment which suggested that «a larger sum of money could profitably be spent by this Bureau with Brussels as its center than at Berne».⁵³ The Council of the Bureau, however, recommended against removal.

La Fontaine's letter concerning the UIA was described as an «impressive and persuasive document». It is interesting to see reflected in the Endowment report the aims, hopes and the accomplishments that the Belgians believed they had already achieved in the Central Office. It was described as

largely the personal creation of M. Henri La Fontaine... It is as yet little more than an ambitious, finely conceived project. The scope of its proposed activities fits in excellently with that of the Bureau International de la Paix and with that of the International Parliamentary Union which has its seat in Brussels, and supplements them... The Office Central was organised in 1907, during the Second Peace Conference. The idea seems to have been suggested by the usefulness of Mr. Fried's annual volume in the form of an encyclopedia or book of reference of the peace movement. The purposes of the Office Central are to develop the spirit of internationalism, to aid individual national associations and improve their efficiency, and to create in each separate country a center of international interest with which the Office Central at Brussels shall be in close correspondence...

The aims of the Office Central are wholly constructive and suggestive. It will seek to seize upon the growing international movement as exhibited in international organisations of every kind, and to develop and systematise it. In the words of M. La Fontaine, «internationalism must be made conscious».

If enabled to do so, the Office Central proposes to send delegates to all special international congresses in order to emphasise the international influence and results of such meetings; to assist certain associations that are international in character, which if so aided, would work more effectively; to develop what is called international documentation, and to give such documents a permanent and systematic character...

Already the Office Central on very meagre resources has been able to publish the helpful *Annuaire de la Vie Internationale*... The next volume of this *Annuaire* will contain not less than 1500 pages. The entire cost of publishing the edition for 1908—1909 was 15,000 francs. The Office Central also organised the first World's Conference of International Associations... It aims also to bring together what is called an International Museum for which a small beginning has been made in a building placed at the disposal of the Office Central by the Belgian government.⁵⁴

Although this is a fair summary, it is probably not quite true to say that the UIA was «largely the personal creation» of Henri La Fontaine, though this is, no doubt, an understandable inference from his authorship of the letter and report to the Carnegie Endowment. The «small beginning» of the International Museum referred to in the report was to the quarters in the Palais du Cinquantenaire provided by the government for the permanent preservation of some of the exhibition gathered together by the Central Office for its 1910 Congress but above all for the exhibition of administrative documentation donated to Belgium by the Spanish government.

La Fontaine was successful in his approach to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace which had set up European Advisory Council in Paris in 1912. The Central Office was granted \$7,500 for the first half of 1912, and \$15,000 for the fiscal year 1912/13. The same sum was allowed for 1913/14 and a budget prepared at the Endowment's European Office for 1914/15.⁵⁵ The Central Office actually received subventions until the first quarter of 1914 when the outbreak of war interrupted its work. Though the Endowment seemed ready to continue to support the Central Office and seemed impressed by its achievements as set out in the Office's regular reports to the Endowment,⁵⁶ no subsequent attempt appears to have been made by the Belgians to obtain subsidy after the War.

With this financial assistance the Central Office became extremely active. *La Vie Internationale* appeared at once, its first fascicule containing an article by La Fontaine and Otlet on «International Life and efforts for its organisation».⁵⁷ The second *Annuaire de la Vie Internationale* also appeared, nearly twice as large as had been estimated by La Fontaine in his report to the Carnegie Endowment.⁵⁸ After 1912, however, most of the work at the Central Office was vigorously conducted along three lines: the development of the International Museum, the organisation of a second World Congress of International Associations, and the creation of a World Palace in which could be housed together all the contributory elements of the Central Office so that it could truly become a World Centre. Otlet constantly pressed the government for support in the form of material for exhibition and for more and more space in the Palais du Cinquantenaire. The Museum was now seen as consisting of three parts: a general part devoted to man, society and internationalism generally, a part in which subject sections were grouped, and a part grouping national sections. By 1913 the Museum occupied sixteen rooms of the Palais du Cinquantenaire and was being visited by almost 13,000 people a year.⁵⁹ The Musée de la Presse, which was logically part of the larger Museum and which had grown quickly through the donation of a number of private collections remained in the IIB offices in the

center of Brussels.⁶⁰ A number of new Catalogues for the Museum as a whole and for its special sections were issued.⁶¹ In 1914 a Child Welfare section was created from a travelling exhibit donated to the Museum.⁶² Considerable collections about aeroplanes, the telegraph and telephones were formed with help from the Belgian government, and in 1914 it was proposed to amalgamate these collections and expand them into a Technical Museum.⁶³ By 1914 a number of national sections, (Spain, Belgium, Argentina, for example) had also been formed.

The rationalisation of the structure of the Museum as then conceived took this form:

According to its general conception the Museum should comprise both National and Comparative Sections.

In the National Sections are assembled according to didactic and synthetic methods, all possible objects and documents showing the general aspects of the various countries or ethnical groups and facilitating comparative study: political and social organisations, natural and artistic wealth, economical appliances, civilisation and culture, participation in the universal life, material and intellectual exchanges, participation in international agreements whether of official or private initiative.

The National Sections will be organised by each government aided by an Executive Committee and the associations of the country. Their aim is to realise permanently at the International Center what has already been accomplished temporarily at the great Universal Exhibitions. Taken as a whole, the halls of the Nations Sections should form a vast geographical and ethnographical museum, a museum of the earth and men.

The comparative sections of the Museum are formed by the International Associations, and each will there organise, with the help of the Union, the didactic and intuitive demonstration of the progress realised in the various branches of science and practical activity. It is at the same time a Universal Museum and a Technical, Educational, Geographical, Economic and Social Museum.

The Comparative Sections will take up all that is general, universal and really human: man, his physical and psychical being, the place he occupies amongst his fellow men, on the planet, in the universe; the history of ideas, creeds and philosophical systems; the transformation and actual state of the organisation of the sciences and their application co-operation in research and in the diffusion of knowledge, the guiding principles for intellectual and material work; the chief facts of universal history and the various phases of civilisation; the laws of the formation and development of human societies; the mechanism of production, circulation, and distribution of wealth throughout the globe; the success of the great inventions, the struggle against diseases and plagues; the great undertakings that have transformed the human abode and given men power over nature; the means of transport and of communication; the immense development of railways; the progressive constitution of the great transcontinental railway lines, and by the junctions of these, the creation of what one might call the transmondial system; the present state of maritime transportation, interoceanic canals, maritime routes; the origin, history and diffusion of the universal postal service, telegraphs, submarine cables, telephones and wireless telegraphy.

It must be a museum of the best types and standards ...

The museum will be a world in miniature, a cosmoscope allowing one to see and understand Man, Society and the Universe; it will give a vision of the future, formed by the combination and synthesis of all the factors of past and present progress ...

The Comparative Sections will become, in time, special International Museums, which each International Association will form for its own field. Different museums created separately by International Associations have already combined with the International Museum—such as the International Administrative Museum and the International Museum of Highways.⁶⁴

This was an extraordinarily ambitious program for a Museum initially in sixteen rooms. But these were to grow to nearly a hundred after the War. Moreover, the second World Congress of International Associations was such a success as to make the whole internationalist program of the UIA appear not only possible but on the point of fulfilment.

The second Congress was held in Ghent and Brussels from the 15th to the 18th of June 1913. Invitations were once again made by the Belgian government through the Department of Foreign Affairs. Its form was similar to the first Congress and a «General Report» was again prepared as the basis of the Congress's work. The number of associations participating in the Congress rose from 137 to 169 and the number of governments rose from 13 to 22. The proceedings of the Congress were issued in yet another enormous volume.⁶⁵

A special meeting was held between the representatives of governments at the Congress and the directors of the Union of International Associations. «The purpose was to set out in some detail the co-operation that the Union is requesting from governments and to gather any indications or suggestions which will increase the usefulness of its work to the States.»⁶⁶ The problems of legal status were once again debated and the question of an International Union for Documentation suddenly resurrected.

The Congress formally resolved that «the general publication of the resolutions of the Associations and International Congresses» should be undertaken, and the associations were asked to inform the Central Office of all decisions and resolutions taken by them.⁶⁷ This was undertaken after the War with League of Nations support and called *Code des Voeux*. Above all it was decided that

The International Center should be developed on the basis of co-operation, neutrality and practical usefulness... on the lines laid down by the Central Office... headquarters of associations, library, bibliography, archives, museum, study and teaching, common bookselling, translative and secretarial services ...

The services and collections of the International Center should be installed in a building worthy of the importance of the associations which have created it by their efforts, a building able to become the

point of departure for groups of other international edifices (an International City). It should make appeals to this effect for aid from government and industry as well as the Associations.⁶⁸

This International Center the Palais Mondial, set in an International City, became an all-absorbing preoccupation of Otlet's. A document, *La Belgique et le mouvement international*, was prepared at the Central Office in 1913 and was devoted exclusively to arguments for increasing the support of the Belgian government and the erection of a suitable Palace in Brussels for the international associations. In sum:

The Union of International Associations has asked the Belgian government to accord it legal status and to grant it a loan for the building of a Palais Mondial in order to help constitute the International Center at Brussels.⁶⁹

A MEASURE OF SUCCESS

The few years between 1910 and the outbreak of war were the years of greatest success for Otlet and La Fontaine. Their organisations flourished. They were confidently preparing for yet a third great World Congress of International Associations to be held in 1915 in San Francisco.⁷⁰ They were secure, happy and relatively prosperous. Otlet and La Fontaine had become widely known and had some influence in government circles. «My dear Paul», wrote the Minister for Sciences and Arts, «I hasten to get after my colleague for Public Works to support your request.»⁷¹ This was a request for more space in the Palais du Cinquantenaire for the International Museum. In 1911 Otlet was created a Commander in the Civil Order of Alfonso XII. The Comte de Torre-Velez, with whom Otlet had worked closely in the setting up of the Spanish documentary exhibition in 1910, had sought this honour for Otlet. «We have given Belgium more than Belgium has given us for a change», he wrote somewhat ambiguously.⁷² «It is a very important decoration», Otlet's half-brother Raoul wrote from Soria in Spain, explaining the decoration. «Alfonso XII is very sought after because it is awarded for personal merit. It is the principal Spanish decoration. There are Member Officer, Commander, and Grand-Cross. The Commander and Grand-Cross have the right to the title 'Illustrissimo Senor'».⁷³

In 1911 Berwick Sayers led a party of English librarians to Brussels to examine the bibliographical work that Henry Hopwood had been so enthusiastic about in 1908 Hopwood, in ill health, could not accompany the party and a «Marconigram» was sent «to gladden [his] heart».⁷⁴ They all had tea with La Fontaine and Madame La Fontaine and for four mornings Otlet «discoursed to us with a fluent enthusiasm and clarity, which were equally memorable, on the organisation of the Institut International de Bibliographie»,⁷⁵ which in ret-

respect, Sayers thought «quixotic enough as an enterprise». Andrew Carnegie, however, who came triumphantly into Brussels in 1913, seemed to be troubled by no doubts. Otlet described his visit to the International Museum and afterwards thus:

He summarised his impressions in these terms in our *Livre d'Or*: «André Carnegie — never has a visit given him so much pleasure and so astonished him at what he found.» At the banquet of the same evening Mr. Carnegie responded to the address presented to him by expressing his great satisfaction at being able to come to Brussels, how profoundly sensible he was of the marks of attention and good will shown him by His Majesty, the King, and by his ministers, what a revelation Brussels and Belgium had been to him, and finally, what importance the work of the group of international associations had in his eyes.⁷⁶

Moreover, Emile Tibbaut, whose 1907 attempt to have a law brought down governing the legal status of international associations domiciled in Brussels had been unsuccessful, decided in 1913 to try once again. He was spurred on by the success of the 1910 World Congress of International Associations and the evidence following it of the enormous growth of the international movement as it affected Belgium. It seemed that the Chamber of Representatives was receptive to Tibbaut's new proposals.⁷⁷

In 1913 La Fontaine was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Not only did this prize give the two men an enormous sense of recognised accomplishment (for the one figured prominently in the citation of the other), it was also good publicity. Moreover, it gave the continually flagging finances of their institutes a boost, for La Fontaine sank the money accompanying the prize into them.⁷⁸ Early in 1914 Otlet visited America where he attempted to interest the United States Government in his work. His way had been paved by letters from Theodore Marburg, then a United States representative in Brussels. The Secretary of State had expressed interest. It was a question of the United States Government joining the UIA. It was soon made clear that the United States Government could only belong to organisations formed by official conventions. There was some confusion about the status of the organisations belonging to the UIA and the nature of the UIA itself. The United States Government would gladly consider supporting «any international agreement which the governments supporting these organisations may agree on».⁷⁹ There was, of course, no time to pursue any of these matters for the First World War swiftly enveloped Europe.

SOME EVALUATIONS

A number of scholars have been aware of the potential value of the UIA and its Central Office in Brussels as it seemed

to be developing before the War, saw it as an important step in international organisations unhappily cut short. Before the War, according to White, international nongovernmental organisation was in its infancy.

Compared with the work of the post-war period, it was visionary rather than practical; it existed more for the sake of being international than for the sake of getting something accomplished; debate rather than action was the rule, and consequently in the pre-1914 period the organisations on the whole exerted less influence than they did after 1919. Likewise, the structure of these organisations was not as highly developed as that of their post war counterparts. They were willing to get along with little in the way of permanent headquarters and few of them saw the need of setting up permanent committees for continuous study. Their members met in international conferences, many of which were held at irregular intervals.⁸⁰

Though much of this is true of the UIA and the Central Office of International Institutions or Associations in Brussels, White recognised

that one of the «isolated instances of research which had begun... to break down the rigid frontiers between law and politics by embarking upon studies of international organisation and the practice of the machinery of diplomacy» was the *Union des Associations Internationales* whose publications «contained an impressive body of work of this kind».

Established in 1910 at Brussels, the *Union*, representing the most ambitious effort to group international organisations, had an impressive early history.⁸¹

For Lyons, indeed, the UIA was «the culmination» of the pre-war internationalist movement

Despite the widespread tendency of national organisations within particular fields to expand into international organisations in the latter years of the nineteenth century, there had been little attempt to unify these international organisations in their turn. International associations, societies, unions and federations had developed haphazardly, often overlapping and often in ignorance of each other. It was to remedy these defects that the *Union of International Associations* was founded...

The practical expression of this super-internationalism was the creation of a permanent agency in Brussels...

The «centre» thus established regarded itself from the outset as a kind of powerhouse for the «unofficial» international movement as a whole and to this day it remains a focal point for non-governmental internationalism...

It is clear then, that in the decade before 1914 the most strenuous efforts were being made both to develop a wider awareness of the international movement as a whole, and also to introduce into it some much needed coherence and simplification. Yet, though these efforts were impressive, it would be easy to over-estimate their importance. By the time the War broke out the attempt to bring the various specialised organisations into the super-organisation, the *Union of International Associations*, was hardly five years old and although the new *Union* had a great deal of support, it could not in the nature of things achieve very much in the short time allowed to it...

What was being brought to birth was indeed the logical extension of the internationalism of the later nineteenth century, but the tragedy was that because the nineteenth century movement had been so slow and gradual, the logical extension came too late. So that these larger and more imposing schemes were not the perfected forms of a new society, but only the portents of the society men might have wished to build if they had been left in peace.⁸²

And, finally, for Walters, formerly a Deputy Secretary-General of the League of Nations, Otlet and La Fontaine were «two gallant Belgians — names that hold an honoured place in international history» who anticipated much of the program of the League of Nations' Committee on Intellectual Co-operation.⁸³

FOOTNOTES

1. Quoted in «Rapport parlementaire», *Notices sommaires sur les institutions internationales avant leur siège en Belgique* (Publication No. 87; Bruxelles: IIB, 1907), p. 35.
2. «Rapport lu à la réunion des représentants des institutions internationales, le 4 juin, 1907», in *Notices sommaires sur les institutions internationales avant leur siège en Belgique* (Publication No. 87; Bruxelles: IIB, 1907).
3. «Rapport sur les travaux de l'année 1907», in Office Central des Institutions Internationales, *Bulletin No. 1, Mars 1908* (Bruxelles: l'Office, 1908), p. 29.
4. Paul Otlet, *La Loi d'ampliation et l'internationalisme* (Bruxelles: Polleunis et Ceuterick, 1908), p. 7.
5. *The Permanent Court of International Justice* (revised ed.; Geneva: Information Section, League of Nations Secretariat, 1926), pp. 5—6.
6. Otlet, *La Loi d'ampliation*. These and following quotations are from this pamphlet without separate citation.
7. The quotations in this paragraph are all from «Rapport lu...», pp. 29—30.
8. *Notices sommaires... , op. cit.*
9. Cyrille Van Overbergh, *L'Association internationale (Le Mouvement Sociologique International, enquête No. 3 sur les structures sociales; Bruxelles: Albert de Wit and IIB, 1907)*.
10. A. H. Fried, *Annuaire de la Vie Internationale* (3^e année; Publication No. 6; Monaco: Institut International de la Paix, 1907).
11. *Annuaire de la Vie Internationale, 1908—1909*, publié avec le concours de l'Institut International de Bibliographie et l'Institut International de la Paix, par A. Fried, Henri La Fontaine et Paul Otlet (n. s. vol 1; Publication No. 3; Bruxelles: Office Central des Associations Internationales, 1909), 1370 pp.
12. «Annuaire de la Vie Internationale», *L'Office Central des Institutions Internationales; son organisation, ses services, ses travaux* (Publication No. 15; Bruxelles: Office Central des Institutions Internationales, 1911), pp. 41—43.

13. «Rapport sur les travaux de l'année 1907». Office Central des Institutions Internationales, *Bulletin No. 1, Mars 1908* (Bruxelles: l'Office, 1907), 15—16. The Bill was not passed and lapsed upon the dissolution of the Chamber.
14. «Rapport sur les travaux pour l'année 1907», pp. 41—42.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
16. «Programme of the Congress of 1910 [in English]», Congrès Mondial des Associations Internationales, première session 1910, *Actes: documents préliminaires, rapports, procès-verbaux, code* (Publication 1911), p. 15.
17. Paul Otlet, «marche proposée pour les travaux», Congrès Mondial... *Actes... , pp. 997—998*.
18. *Code général pour l'organisation de la bibliographie et de la documentation* (Congrès International de Bibliographie et de Documentation, Bruxelles, 1910, Document préliminaire No. 3; Bruxelles: Secrétariat du Congrès, 1910).
19. «Code pour l'organisation de la presse périodique», *IIB Bulletin*, XII (1910), 86—111.
20. «Code pour l'organisation de la documentation administrative», *ibid.*, 112—132.
21. «Code pour l'organisation de la documentation photographique», *ibid.*, 133—155.
22. «L'Organisme des congrès et conférences à l'exposition de Bruxelles», *Revue internationale des congrès et conférences*, No. 8, 23 July 1910, 84, and «Procès-verbaux des seances», Congrès Mondial... *Actes... , p. 1160*.
23. Henri La Fontaine, «La Documentation et l'internationalisme», *Annuaire de la Vie Internationale 1908—1909*, pp. 180—181.
24. Paul Otlet to various ministers, unfiled carbon copy with the note: «aux Ministre de l'Intér. (sic), des Sciences, de l'Agriculture. 1908—12—08, 1908—12—22, 1908—12—22» Mundaneum attics.
25. «Liste des membres, participation des gouvernements étrangers, liste des adhérents», Congrès Mondiale... *Actes... , pp. 831—874*.
26. «Résolutions et vœux», *ibid.*, pp. 825—830 (the quotations in the following pages are all from these pages and no further reference will be made to them).
27. «Exposition-Musée des associations internationales à Bruxelles: préface», *ibid.*, pp. 243—244.
28. «Visite au Musée des Associations internationales», *ibid.*, pp. 1202—1204.
29. «Clôture», *ibid.*, p. 1194.
30. «Le Congrès des Sciences Administratives», *Revue des congrès et des conférences*, No. 10, 22 Août, 1910, 108—110.
31. «Editorial: pour conserver à Bruxelles le Parc de l'Exposition et en affecter l'un des Palais aux oeuvres internationales», *Revue des congrès et des conférences*, No. 10, 22 août, 1910 (3 pages unnumbered). This reports on the efforts to secure locations for the Museum and on the fire which temporarily set them back.
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Chapter IX

THE WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH

EXILE IN FRANCE AND SWITZERLAND

The invasion of Belgium by the Germans in August 1914 at once broke down the fragile structures of institutionalised internationalism that Otlet and La Fontaine had created through the Union of International Associations, the International Institute and Office of Bibliography and the International Museum. The earliest days of the War brought great personal tragedy to Otlet. In September Marcel, his older son, was taken prisoner by the Germans at Antwerp. His younger son, Jean, was reported missing in the Battle of the Yser in October. Otlet himself searched the battlefield for the boy's body.¹ It was not until several years later that Jean's death was confirmed by information given in a prisoner-of-war camp to his brother. Even so, Otlet continued to hope for a time that somehow Jean had escaped and that this information was false.²

As the Germans occupied Brussels, Otlet and La Fontaine, like so many of their compatriots, fled. La Fontaine went to America and during the voyage thither drafted his *The Great Solution: Magnissima Carta*,³ a work in the form of a treaty, exploring the setting up of a world organisation of states. Otlet went with his wife, Cato, first to Holland then probably for a short time to England.⁴ He spent most of the War, however, in Paris and in various Swiss cities.

On the eve of his departure from Brussels and under the noses of the Germans, Otlet published his *La Fin de la Guerre*.⁵ This work set the keynote for his activities in France and Switzerland. In it he presented a World Charter of Human Rights as the basis for an international federation of states. Both he and La Fontaine, at the very beginning of the War, were passionately convinced that a lasting peace could be obtained at its conclusion only by the creation of what was later