

W. BOYD RAYWARD

THE UNIVERSE  
OF INFORMATION

THE WORK OF PAUL OTLET  
FOR DOCUMENTATION AND  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION

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Paul Otlet as a Young Man (Undated)

# THE UNIVERSE OF INFORMATION

## THE WORK OF PAUL OTLET FOR DOCUMENTATION AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION

by W. BOYD RAYWARD  
(University of Chicago)

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## PREFACE

Paul Otlet was a pioneer both of international organisation and of documentation. He and his colleague Henri La Fontaine, created two international organisations which continue to flourish: the International Federation for Documentation and the Union of International Associations. He also had some impact both in the movement to create the League of Nations and on its Committee for International Intellectual Co-operation. He was something of a visionary whose ideas were at least fifty years ahead of his time in laying the foundations for what has become known as Documentation, then Information Science in the United States of America, and now Informatics in Europe, especially in the USSR. His pioneering efforts in creating and elaborating the Universal Decimal Classification laid a firm foundation for the continued cooperative development of that Classification. His speculations showed him sensitive and imaginative in anticipating technological innovation, such as microfilm, and many of his wider schemes may be considered to have failed mainly because the computer had not been invented, though another reason must not be neglected: the indifference of governments to problems of co-operation in the dissemination and bibliographic control of information. Nowadays, with the computer and the work of UNESCO and the International Council of Scientific Unions, Otlet's visionary schemes may yet be realised through UNISIST.

The present work is a first study with all the faults on its head that this involves. It has been prepared by relying heavily, almost exclusively, on masses of original documentation kept in an institution in Brussels (a kind of Otlet archive) called Mundaneum. It is carefully, perhaps overly,

documented, and much of the documentation is quoted at length. This has been deliberate and stems from a fear that some of this original material, already much disorganised, in a fragile condition and hitherto maintained in appalling physical surroundings, might disappear.

Special thanks are offered to Georges Lorphèvre and André Colet, the former for his freely given permission to use the documentation of the Mundaneum, the second for his enthusiasm for the idea of the study. Three other persons to whom I owe debts of deepest gratitude for advice and encouragement are Leon Carnovsky and Howard Winger of the University of Chicago and K. V. Sinclair formerly of the University of Sydney now of the University of Connecticut. Nor would these personal acknowledgments be complete without warm recognition of the work of Ishbel McGregor on the typescript.

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Paul Otlet at the World Congress of Universal Documentation, Paris, August, 1937

## ABBREVIATIONS

ALA	American Library Association
CD	Classification Décimale
DC	Dewey Decimal Classification
IIB	Institut International de Bibliographie
LC	U. S. Library of Congress
OIB	Office International de Bibliographie
RBU	Répertoire Bibliographique Universel
UDC	Universal Decimal Classification

## *Chapter I* **THE EARLY YEARS**

### **BRUSSELS, SCHOOL, LOVE**

Paul Marie Ghislain Otlet was born at Brussels on the 23 August 1868 of a very comfortable Belgian family. His father, Edouard Otlet, embarked on a political career after a successful financial one, and eventually entered the Belgian Parliament as a Senator when Otlet was a high school student. His mother died in 1871 at the age of 24. Through her he was related to the family Van Mons, another prosperous Belgian bourgeois family, and to the Verhaeren family, which in Otlet's generation produced one of the most important Belgian poets of the day, Emile Verhaeren.<sup>1</sup> His father married again some years after the death of Otlet's mother. This marriage, to Valérie Linden, brought to the Otlet circle the family from which Otlet was to take his first wife (her mother was a Linden). All of these families were of the solid burgher type—stout men of affairs, many of them lawyers. They provided the context for Otlet's youth. It was a somewhat stifling, for they were all exceedingly closely knit. They shared common business interests; they took long holidays together at the seaside at Ostend and elsewhere; they dined frequently together in Brussels. In many respects they were a Belgian family Forsyte according to money, possessions and gave each other, as first things first, a grave and sustained attention.

It is perhaps a little too easy to speculate that Otlet inherited from his mother that same temperamental streak which may also have produced Emile Verhaeren, a streak leading him, though tormented by conflict, into the quixotism of his career as bibliographer and internationalist. In any case it is the members of these families, together with a few school acquaintances and dinner guests, who emerge and recede like shadows, imprecise and ill-defined, in the obsessive introspective world of Otlet's youth, a world reflected

in a diary he kept systematically from his 11th to his 27th year. This diary provides us with an invaluable detailed account of his intellectual and emotional development.<sup>2</sup>

It appears that though Otlet's childhood was in some ways oppressive it was also rather charmed. His only notable companion until he went to the Collège Saint Michel in Brussels when he was 14, was his brother Maurice. The two brothers amused each other with such precocious pursuits as drawing up in elaborate and formal detail the statutes of a Limited Company for Useful Knowledge. This was early experience for a task at which later practice was to make Otlet particularly adept. It was from lack of friends in his childhood that Otlet turned, he believed, to a diary in order to relieve the burden of impressions and feelings which, otherwise unexpressed, threatened to grow too violent within him. Indeed, the prolonged isolation of his childhood led him to develop early in life a taste for solitude, for study, which he felt as he grew up interfered with his ability to make the friends in the stead of which the diary had originally stood, though, as he breasted the wave of adolescence, the need for friendship grew more and more strong.

Despite his sense of isolation, he received a good though somewhat intermittent formal education. He went first at the age of eleven to a Jesuit school in Paris, whither the dissolution of a business association leading to a sudden but temporary decline in his father's fortune, had sent the family. Here, precocious intellectually, inexperienced and out of sympathy with others of his own age, he developed habits of piety and hard work which, when he transferred to a Brussels day school three years later, made him easy bait for the mockery of his more irreverent, less studious companions. After three months of this school, whose professors he described rather priggishly, for he was no more than 14 years old at the time, as «lazy» and only «more or less Catholic», he was sent as a *demi-pensionnaire* to the prominent Jesuit Collège Saint Michel. He was as happy there as could be expected of a youth so introverted, so afflicted by a sense of isolation, so prone to despondency. He graduated from the school in the middle of a thunderstorm in August 1886 after a not undistinguished but by no means brilliant career.

The charm of his childhood, at least for those approaching it through the sometimes laconic entries of his diary, lay in its relative freedom, its carefree though structured existence and in the travels on which he was so often swept away. At eleven he had travelled widely in Italy and France. Later, at the Collège Saint Michel, he accompanied his parents on several business trips to Russia for quite extensive periods. The family spent much time at Ostend and exploited real

estate at Westend, also on the Belgian coast, as a holiday resort. In the moments of despair to which he was susceptible as a child and which quickened and deepened with adolescence, he would contemplate travelling in remote countries of the world for several years before settling down, a romantic and escapist phantasy perhaps, but also a quite realistic possibility.

In 1880 or 1881 Otlet's family bought for its pleasure part of a Mediterranean island, the Ile du Levant, sold when its fortunes declined, the island nowadays being given over to a nudist colony. Long holidays were spent there. He looked back upon these holidays when he was a young man with a pleasant nostalgia, for, though there were lessons and frequent drill in dancing and the piano and gymnastics, there were also much fishing, hunting, horse-riding and agreeably solitary study on rainy afternoons of the literature about the island. The winter of 1882 seems to have been spent on the island and on excursions in the family's yacht, *Nora*, to Nice for the Carnival, and to Monaco. A charmed, indolent, slightly unreal, and as it happened, impermanent existence, indeed. To it we owe Otlet's first publication, a rather unpropitious piece of juvenilia, *Ile du Levant*<sup>3</sup>, which he anxiously saw through the press. It was privately printed and distributed to the members of the family, and he proudly anticipated a second edition when the first was expended.

His Jesuit education, allied with his own studious and solitary temperament, was a powerful formative influence in his life. It probably increased and certainly gave direction to his tendency to introspection. To a contemporary eye he seems to have had few moments of that gay unself-consciousness one associates with childhood, though as a major source of information about these years is his diary, we have without doubt a picture in which the questing and despair are over-emphasised. Yet it seems that from his earliest years he was burdened with an almost morbid sensitivity to the problem of finding a goal for his life and of following rules of conduct proper to it and to his station. He had very early to come to terms with an ascetic morality that forbade pleasure and led him to reject and express guilt about innocent diversions. From his earliest days at school in Paris he had been placed under the rule of the Jesuits, and his diary bears repetitive evidence of their influence, of dutiful examinations of conscience, of the tutored recognition of the transience of earthly things, of the pious practice of devotions. All of these years of childhood and youth were instinct with a sense of preparation which hung at times like a pall over him because he could not decide where his vocation lay.

A child of his time, temperament and education, he turned



when quite young to forming a natural history collection. He was fascinated by science in general. He became soon convinced of the necessity of performing in life some magnanimous and useful task for society. He was obsessed by religion. At the age of seventeen he declared that he had examined Christianity, philosophy and the problem of science and had decided that, to fulfil his duty as a citizen and a man he would study law, and would become a lawyer. For his own satisfaction he would become a philosopher. Bold words, these, written after talking with Edmond Picard, an eminent lawyer and *littérateur*.<sup>4</sup> Bold words because, though to a degree prophetic, his life was reaching a kind of crisis:

My life is more and more closed in on itself. I reflect that I cannot tolerate the vanity of the world. I desire to lead a life given over completely to the abstractions of science. On the other hand there is a great emptiness in my heart which I must also fill. God alone is capable of filling this and it is what I ask of Him. To improve my life—this is what I want to live for and I must battle against myself and my innate weakness. The most beautiful virtue I can acquire is resignation to the holy will of God.

At this time, on the point of leaving school, confronted with the secular world lying indifferent yet forbidding beyond his school's walls, he became confused and intensely unhappy. In great conflict as to whether he should follow a religious life, he sought advice, went into a retreat, and, almost distracted, finally turned from the cloister. With all his intellectual and spiritual forces in apparent disarray, he fled to another Jesuit stronghold to continue his studies—the Université de Louvain. There, a fish out of water like most freshmen beginning their university careers, he looked back at his inability to commit himself to the Church as a weakness and lamented his lack of holy fire.

Though he could no better explain than as a weakness his reluctance to become a priest, a sympathetic observer might cautiously attempt it. For one thing the great emptiness in his heart was more apparent than real. He had made at least one good friend at the Collège Saint Michel, Armand Thiéry, who met the rather stringent requirements for friendship he set forth in his diary.<sup>5</sup> With Thiéry he could discuss much that before he had had to consign to the privacy of its pages. Though admiring his father, Otlet had little sympathy or understanding from him. One day he had spoken to his father «about certain questions of general science together with the question of the proved existence of God. He said to me: 'don't go into all that'». Dutifully Otlet had tried to obey, but a stream cannot be made easily to run uphill. With Thiéry he could discuss all of that and more, for Thiéry also went to Louvain as a student. Later he became a professor there and discovered a real vocation for the priesthood.

Moreover, Otlet's heart was not empty for an even more cogent reason. Some years before, he had seen his cousin, Fernande Gloner, take her first communion. By the summer of 1885 and 17 years old, he had fallen in love with her, deeply, insensibly, by the slowest of slow degrees, for she lived at a distance in Germany, and came only infrequently to Brussels where he saw her in their grandparents' garden.

At this time, then, he was embroiled in a powerful conflict between science to which he had long been attracted, and religion in which he had long been steeped. He was not original in this by any means, for it was a conflict which caused great anguish to many intelligent and sensitive men of his and later generations, accustomed as they were at once to hope for some absoluteness in belief and to be sceptical of it. Amongst the brilliant company that were to be found frequently entertained at his father's house, were Edmond Picard and Otlet's uncle, Paul Héger, a physiologist at the Université Libre de Bruxelles.<sup>6</sup> These two were of great importance in Otlet's early intellectual development. In their conversations, into which they seemed to have been careful to draw him (Otlet sometimes reported the conversations at length in his diary), the contemporary world of art, letters and science must have come vividly alive. Héger, particularly, holding the positivist attitude of the practising natural scientist towards faith and morals, presented Otlet with concepts of the limitations of speculative philosophy. To the arguments advanced by these two older friends, Otlet replied that all that mattered was «the ultimate morality to do good», and despite them, that the only real remedy for the social ills incisively diagnosed on occasion by Picard, was Christianity. But their evident admiration and sympathy certainly permitted him no blind faith.

His initial feelings at Louvain of having been a failure, of disorientation, of being wrenched into manhood by the abrupt transition from school to university, soon faded. He worked hard studying philosophy with Thiéry and fighting off the periodic descent of enervating depression. He flirted with the idea of playing the game of student politics. For a moment he was tempted by the idea of working for the university periodical *Progrès* and of formulating for its pages his views on the large philosophical, scientific and social questions which interested him. But the whole of his nature rebelled against these impulses. His character led him «to an interior life» not to a public one, to some great work of science, not of politics. He struggled with these conflicting feelings, took a vacation in Russia so that distance and time might sever any compromising ties he might have formed inadvertently in the university, and returned more determined

than ever to study alone, to resist his Jesuitical leanings, to be independent.

He returned from Russia by way of Berlin where he stopped to see Fernande for whom he had brought a present. After he had given it to her, she played the piano and sang for him. «Her eyes shone with happiness when she thanked me... That she loves me I no longer have the least doubt, and for myself, I love her with all my heart».

He did not see her again for more than seven long months. At Easter-time in 1888 his father asked him to accompany him to Spain but Otlet refused and went with his step-mother to Berlin instead. His parents understood. «Oh well!», his father said upon hearing his answer, «Go to Berlin, then», but he said it without any sign of annoyance. He even seemed to approve the idea. In Berlin, Otlet, now nearly twenty, screwed up his courage one evening to declare his love for Fernande. She, though no doubt not taken by surprise, made no immediate reply. That night Otlet slept fitfully, filled with anxiety, an agonising doubt about the wisdom, the timing of what he had done. The next morning, as he waited to see her, he feared that he might not be able to look at her without blushing. She descended to breakfast but still with no sign. «Joy ineffable!», he wrote later, «she has written me the words I so much desired to hear». Saying nothing she had demurely eaten her breakfast, but just before slipping from the room, she had handed him a small envelope of the size used for acceptance cards. Folded tightly in one corner of it was a scrap of paper just large enough for the three words minutely printed on it: «I love you».

Otlet was a passionate, earnest young man, caught up in an absorbing struggle to reduce his feelings, his ideas, his perceptions of the world to some satisfactory order. Fernande was a mix. Certainly she was no student and she absolutely refused to regard Otlet with the same gravity with which, contemplating his intellectual problems, he contemplated himself. In Brussels early in June 1888 a few months after his visit to her in Berlin, Otlet wrote ecstatically in his diary: «She is coming, tomorrow, another 24 hours; my dreams, my thoughts, my desires, all turn towards her; she is coming.» But suddenly, after the rapture of their initial meeting, she became reserved and aloof. He could not understand her behaviour. She would not speak of what had made her angry. She merely suggested that they should take up their relationship in three years' time when both their parents might more actively approve it, although there seems to be no evidence that they then disapproved. Bewildered and hurt, Otlet struggled through his examinations at the University and went off, desolate, to Ostend to wander alone and unhap-

py in the woods there. After a bleak fortnight or so, a kind of truce was arranged between them. In July, however, hostilities broke out again with renewed vigour:

«Tomorrow, Fernande, I will be waiting for the post for something important.» «What is it?» Silence, distractions, chatter of other things. I came back to it in order to enable her to take part in the great pleasure I expect to have... «You see, I experienced certain feelings... about the Congo... I had written up my ideas for a newspaper, but Papa decided that I should have them printed in the form of an actual brochure. He wanted me to sign it, too. This will have many implications since the work is addressed to Léopold II». Great silence. The conversation flags; there is nothing; not a word.

Gradually he managed to bring her round to expressing some interest in his pamphlet, but he sensed how hollow it was. The rest of the month was intolerable for she let fall not a single comforting, understanding word. Eventually, with the aid of his step-mother, Fernande's aunt, the tensions were broken and smoothed away and lovers were reconciled.<sup>7</sup>

From all of this Otlet became aware of something important about himself. It taught him to feel that he had «a great capacity for love, a great need for loving». He was, he decided, someone characterised by «a powerful resolution towards sacrifice», who would respond deeply «to the least indication of affection». The quarrel, however, left him with a deep sense of insecurity, a fear that his heart might become «a tomb, closed to all of this».

Otlet's father was at this time a financial magnate who had interests in both Africa and South America. He had equipped an expedition to the Congo in 1886 under the leadership of Auguste Linden, a prominent naturalist and explorer (and, through his second wife, member of the family) not long returned from New Guinea. «Papa is the first Belgian organising a personal expedition», Otlet wrote. The expedition was not very successful and the museum of Africana that Otlet and the family had looked forward to forming from the collections made by Linden, did not materialise. It was to have complemented a number of other collections, notably of paintings, formed by Otlet's prosperous father. Edouard Otlet had built railways and tramways in most of the countries of Western Europe. He formed a Société de Gaz de Rio de Janeiro in 1886 in which he had an interest of several million Belgian francs. In September of 1888, Otlet reported that in that financial year alone his father had made 3 million francs from this company — «it is without precedent».<sup>8</sup>

In the midst, then, of nineteenth century industrial and colonial expansion (his father's world of high finance), living in a bastion of Catholic thought (Louvain), besieged by the liberalism and scepticism of Brussels' intellectuals (Picard, Héger and their confrères), it is little wonder that Otlet's

thought began to polarise, and that he should turn from the inevitable conflicts engendered by these different milieux to the image of a beloved.

His problem, as he formulated it to himself, was to find some way of reconciling three polarities of interest: love, science, action. In a schema drawn up in his diary in April 1888 under the heading *Quod Faciam* he examined them. Somehow he had to reconcile a career in which his special aptitudes were properly exploited with his love, but neither could be allowed to interfere with his social and religious duty to do good. His aptitudes he described revealingly as:

- a) a taste for the general — the study of reality; b) a synthetic mind; c) a taste for literature and eloquence; d) a distaste for the practical and a skepticism of action; e) a horror of doing itself — a love of the law.

He had, he tells us, begun to examine things «as constitutive or destructive forces, as generative elements of universality — [it is] rare to study ideas as forces in themselves, to suppose the individual as a sentient machine guided by them». He decided that what he must do was to study civilisation and its social mechanism, law. While he was doing this he would attempt «to unify and synthesise... our knowledge in its present state»; he would attempt to complete «a vast explorative synthesis of law and political action...» To satisfy his need to become active in the world he was still resolved to become a lawyer.

After some months of study he began to realise that he could not successfully carry out his program at Louvain. It was, he decided, dedicated to old-fashioned ideas. He recognised that he had accomplished a whole evolution of thought there, but it now seemed necessary to go elsewhere. His heart at once turned him to Fernel and Berlin, but his head turned him to Paris. Characteristically, after much anguished indecision, he followed his head.

Before leaving for Paris, he reviewed in great detail why he had come to Louvain, and where he stood intellectually on the eve of quitting it. Between the two great philosophical traditions of his time — scholasticism and «positivistic evolutionism», he had been brought to the point of choosing the latter as more «positive», more fecund of possibilities for future development than the former, as combining both a scientific and ontologic character. He saw in the notion of force some sort of mystical explanatory power, as something persisting through all phenomena and providing a formula for action and not merely speculation. He had adopted the positivist notion of society as a vast organism and saw in law «a great deductive and logical force for constructing a whole social state on the basis of primitive data». In fact

he was led to envision, partly under the influence of Picard, an historical sociology in which the «real image» of society was law. At Paris he determined to embark on the enormous work of synthesis he had been contemplating, a universal history.

One of the last tasks he completed before leaving Brussels was to put his botanical and geologic specimens and his papers in order. Classifying and reclassifying his papers was something he had been in the habit of doing since he was fifteen. As a boy he had given much thought to the problem of how to study, or had, at least, listened attentively to his tutors. He regularly took notes:

In taking notes from authors one has the incontestable advantage of making a compendium; that is to say, a small abridged treatise which contains useful passages for one's own particular use... To gain time, instead of immediately developing a thought that one has read, one simply makes a note of it on a piece of paper which is put in a folder. On Saturday, for example, these papers can be taken up one by one for classification and also for development if this is necessary... Rather than classifying the loose leaves of the same format each week, one can write all the subjects in the same exercise book, taking care to give a whole page and its verso to each new subject. Once the notebook is filled, the leaves can be torn out and classified. However, lots of things are difficult to classify and these one gathers together *ad hoc* in a notebook without recopying them.

Otlet's first classifications were simple dispositions of his notes into two main categories and a number of diverse sub-categories. He listed them, for example as:

- Material** — memoranda, notebooks  
— resums of books read  
**Intellectual** — personal (myself) — myself (intellectual material)  
— journal (intimate thoughts)  
— pocket books with witty sayings, amusing ideas  
— others — different dossiers  
— studies on separate shelves  
1. File — to hold all that should be classified  
2. Papers with the same format, different things going into cartons  
3. Boxes for things (... souvenirs)  
4. Drawer for literature (others)  
5. Drawer for me (personal)

At the end of 1883, this classification was changed. The first heading at this time, LITERATURE was subdivided into: titles of different works (1882—3); *mélange* (different things thought); *Ile du Levant* proofs; snatches of verse; stenography; concerning school classes; various things begun (1881, 2, 3); literature (theory of style), Essays on Society (a scientific journal); Physical exercises; incidents from my college life.

Under the next main category, PERSONAL, were: «memoirs and travels (physical life); Infinity (resolutions, personal thoughts); intellectual life (Journal — 3 notebooks (1881—2))». A third heading was added now, SCIENCES: «elements of natural history; museums (work-room, collections, history of



my room); and Science (plan of study, *mémoires* of my observations.)»

Perhaps more than anything else, these classifications reveal the young Otlet to the curious eye. Twelve years later, having continued to search, he was to find a powerful bibliographic classification which was to become in his eyes a tool for organising notes and papers into a giant compendium of universal knowledge, and the techniques for creating this compendium or encyclopedia and its significance for society exercised his thought until his death at the age of 76. Even as a child, then, he strove for an order and wholeness that comes from the application of an established system of classification to disparate items. Once he had been «frightened» by the diversity of the things he had written. «My God!», he had exclaimed when he was fifteen, «what a feather brain I am, always on to something new, beginning and never finishing anything. I write down everything that goes through my mind, but none of it has a sequel. At the moment there is only one thing I must do; that is, to gather together my material of all kinds, and connect in with everything else I have done up till now. I do not have enough yet to do anything much with it. I must wait and leave all this aside for the moment.»

Five years later as he set off to study in Paris in 1888, to prepare his historically oriented, universalist synthesis of knowledge, he was much further along. His papers now fell into seven groups corresponding to large subject areas and were listed in his diary as: «Philosophy (...syntheses of a kind, deep studies of the present); social sciences (the past, the present); writing (...articles, social works); Diary (intimate notes); Law; Scientific facts; Politics and moral questionings.»

#### PARIS, SPIRITUAL DISILLUSION

And so twenty years old, in love, eager for the experience of a new stage in his intellectual odyssey, he arrived in Paris ready to chart the seas of late nineteenth century positivist thought. But Paris itself, to which he brought his «synthetic formula» which he assumed would illuminate new contexts without being itself modified by them, proved to have a confusing, shocking complexity of its own. To a degree it drove his formula out of his head. Paris was so much larger than Brussels. The populace was cosmopolitan, witty, elegant, given to swift, allusive conversation. It lived for pleasure. It was the Paris that a few years later was to fascinate Marcel Proust. A place where the world «comes to take notes», it puzzled, charmed and perhaps appalled him. In every way it

was different from Brussels with its small, comfortable bourgeoisie. Picard had introduced him to the Belgian poet Lemonnier, who was often in Paris. His grandfather had introduced him to another Belgian poet, Rodenbach, who had given up law and the Palais de Justice in Brussels and Belgium itself for Paris and the Symbolist Movement in French literature. In the literary circles to which his acquaintance with these men gave him entrée, he made a few acquaintances — he met Mallarmé, for example, and attended dances, dinners and reviews. He observed the décolletage of the women and their jealous and petty ways with a caustic tongue and disapproving eye. He was attracted and repulsed by the prostitutes in the streets. More completely than ever before he was alone. And with his family and his small circle of friends no longer about him he decided in one of the depressions that settled like the Paris winter on him: «I am not made for solitude».

During the months of his stay in Paris, his father several times raised the problem of his future career and of his probable marriage. Who was to succeed this formidable man who had developed the family fortunes to the peak they had then attained? That was a question no good son of the nineteenth century might ignore. That fortune, as the product of the effort of one man, was an admirable and enviable *grande oeuvre* and for Otlet there was a compelling duty to see that it and the spheres of family interests were maintained and extended. After long and painful soul searching he eventually decided to enter the world of business with his father when he completed his studies, and to sacrifice for Fernande, whom he was determined now to make his wife, all his ambitions in science. «If I can't have Fenny», he wrote, «I shall be a desperate man.»

It should be understood, however, that this was not an easy surrender. During his stay of about six months in Paris, Otlet worked as hard as ever at his studies. Sociology, law, political economy and some history continued to be the subjects of his speculations. But they seemed now to chase their tails in his head without going very far forward and this may have led to an easier renunciation of them. In February of 1889 he went to pay his family a visit in their newly purchased and elegant villa at Nice the villa Valère, named for his stepmother. Here, finally, he capitulated to agnosticism. Indeed, he began to realise when he returned to Paris after brooding through the long, wearying days of his stay at Nice, that metaphysics, which had once meant so much to him, was actually a snare and a delusion. When he applied it to life «I come everywhere to irreducible antinomies». Chance, he decided, not design, presided over the development of ideas, «the develop-

ment of all institutions, of all theories of all political and social organisation». On the eve of returning to Brussels once again, at the end of his short unsatisfactory odyssey in Paris, he enunciated a *credo*:

I believe in the great principles of positivism and evolution: the formation by evolution of things—the relativism of knowledge and the historical formation of concepts.

As for religion, he had come to believe, along with Spencer, that there was some great Unknowable which we reach forward to in the dark. And as for the great work of synthesis so confidently begun:

I am no longer anything more than a curious amateur who finds it interesting how things are formed, how ideas grow and develop (without some superior idea taking precedence) by the simple conflict of forces (blind, I think) from brute nature up to the world of psychology and sociology, necessarily taking all sorts of different arrangements which emerge from the others in an evolutionary fashion. And I no longer torture myself about a life of intellectual antinomies... I merely note them.

At Nice he had realised that

the pleasure of having an absolute goal in life, a noble career, a great task to perform wasn't possible. It was necessary that my thoughts should plunge to the bottom of the abyss. The ease of despair isn't possible to one with illusions remaining. Now, with nothing prejudged, no illusions, no factitious duties—I am free.

#### BRUSSELS AGAIN, GRADUATION, MARRIAGE

He was, of course, not free, but had matured a little in Paris. In May 1889 he made a trip to Berlin. His few ecstatic days there were like a «symphony of love» and Fernande at last promised to become his wife. But important examinations were looming up in August. His loss of faith aroused scruples in him about continuing his studies at the Université de Louvain. He decided to transfer to the Université Libre de Bruxelles. The last months of 1889 were occupied with some of the examinations remaining before he could take his degree. August was enlivened by his father's electoral campaign in which he seems to have taken some part. Afterwards he visited Paris again and then Fernande in Berlin. Eventually, his uncle, Paul Héger, warned him sternly that he could not expect to pass his examinations by spending a winter in Paris, as he had resolved to do, and in travelling. Chastened, Otlet returned to Brussels and the Université Libre for the winter term. Early in 1890 he passed two of three examinations that were left before he could take his degree.

The final examination was in October 1890 and the year dragged slowly on towards the critical moment with letters from Fernande occasional bright spots in it. In April he spent several weeks in Italy. He had learned Italian as a boy and

was fluent in it. In July he went to Norway where he was sad and introspective. Gloom settled more and more heavily on him as the year advanced towards the final struggle. There was a «returning sadness and melancholy». «I am like a fish in an aquarium», he wrote, «separated from the great ocean by strong glass». He longed for the solace of a life with Fernande and the intellectual ease of broad, general, abstract studies. Though he must have a career

money doesn't mean anything to me. I am interested in the universal, the good of all. In business it is necessary to defend one's own interest to the detriment of those of one's neighbours. Without doubt I like the advantages of fortune, natural advantages, but I cannot see in them any claim to glory for me.

The grandiose picture he had had of the law in his younger, more innocent days of unconfined speculation was replaced by another—«what a horror I have of this law, of these particulars, so dead, so detailed». But drawing himself forward on what he described as the knees of his «black pessimism», almost consumed by his belief in «the final uselessness of effort», feeling himself no more than the square root of a soul divided by zero, he brought himself to sit for his final examinations and to make a decision to begin a legal career after he left the University, to go to the Palais de Justice and become, as he had planned years earlier, a lawyer. Picard as so often before, was the determining influence. «Come to the bar», said Picard, «the bar isn't the law, but there is there an élite, a great confraternity and agreement on great principles. Listen for your 'voice' there». In October 1890, his *Doctorat en Droit* completed he became a *stagiaire*, an articulated clerk, to Picard. On December 9, 1890 after so many years of courtship, he married Fernande. In the New Year of 1891, twenty three years old, he began his career in the world as business-man and lawyer according to the resolutions he had taken as a youth.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. The formal documentation of Otlet's family is available in a number of legal documents, the most important of which is that related to Otlet's divorce in 1908. This may be described as *Etude de Maître Taymans, notaire, De la 1<sup>ère</sup>-4<sup>e</sup> comparution 14 Avril 1908—15 Janvier 1909; Demandes de Divorce, par M. & Mme. Otlet-Gloner*. In this document are set out a detailed evaluation of Otlet's household effects, his marriage settlement, his sources of income, together with notarised documents of birth for himself, his wife and children, of his marriage, and of the birth and death of grandparents and so on.
2. The diary consists of seven volumes, each made up of 4 notebooks, each notebook numbering 50 pages. There are also a number of notebooks not part of volumes. On occasion, Otlet pasted into the notebooks pages of

scribbling completed when he was without them, together with small pocket notebooks filled with accounts of his travels—to Russia, to England—the sort of thing done in trains and carriages to while away the time. The manuscript is in general very difficult and at times quite illegible, especially where he has made jottings in moving vehicles. No separate reference is made to entries in the Diary in this work.

3. *Ile du Levant*. Bruxelles: E. Guyot, 1882. 39 pp.
4. Edmond Picard, 1836—1924, was a striking character. After three years at sea he took a brilliant *Doctorat en Droit* at the *Université Libre de Bruxelles*. Then as barrister, legal scholar and innovator, traveller, militant socialist, patron of the arts, member of the Belgian Senate for the worker's party and social critic, he became an outstanding figure in Belgian intellectual circles.
5. Armand-Auguste-Ferdinand Thiéry, 1868—1955, went to the *Université de Louvain* in October 1886. He became a protégé of Cardinal Mercier, professor in the *Institut Supérieur de Philosophie* set up at Louvain by the Cardinal, worked under Wundt in Leipzig in psychology and then directed a laboratory for experimental psychology set up by Mercier. In 1894 he was attached to the faculty of medicine. He was ordained in 1896.
6. Paul Héger, 1846—1925, eventually became Rector then President of the University.
7. The pamphlet in which Fernande showed such a resolute disinterest was *L'Afrique aux noirs*, Bruxelles: Ferdinand Larcier, 1888. It contained a plea to return American Negroes to Africa.
8. In an anonymous pamphlet on the occasion of his father's death, Otlet described his father's career. His father had had a hand in establishing 19 tramway systems in such diverse places as The Hague, Munich, Moscow, Madrid, Alexandria and Naples. The 8-page pamphlet is entitled *Edouard Otlet* and has no formal imprint details. It was printed in Brussels by Oscar Lamberty, the printer of the International Institute of Bibliography.

## Chapter II

### FROM UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE TO SYNTHETIC BIBLIOGRAPHY

#### ANXIOUS DIRECTIONLESS, POSITIVISM

Marriage proved, at least at the beginning, a delight, though it resolved none of Otlet's intellectual conflicts. Fernande seems to have been a feckless, childlike woman, apparently meek and demure, but wilful and not much interested in his work. As he became busier in his daily affairs, Otlet would sometimes note only a chance remark of hers in his diary: «Darling, I am not developing. I will always be a little nothing—nothing at all». Though she ran up enormous bills at the haberdashers and her sojourns in Berlin with her family seemed to him sometimes too long, she was anxious to please him, and he tenderly anxious to protect her. «Darling, you must love me, just as I am. I am naughty girl, aren't I? I make you cry».

In the first few years of marriage he discovered that while he still often lacked energy, the acute depressions of his youth had gone. Yet now he was a prey to a frequent and nostalgic sadness, disturbing in its unexpectedness and not easily to be explained. His little Fenny, as he called her, had displaced something deep inside him whose absence he found it in himself to regret. She, on her part, was obscurely aware of this and encouraged him to cultivate more earnestly his former friends, to go out in the world more in order to combat these vestiges of old feelings welling up so anachronistically in him—«look up your successful friends and think a little bit about me, but don't be lonely». Perhaps this it to say only that marriage, upon which he had set so much store, could not be, given Fernande's character, the panacea for his long felt need of congenial intellectual companionship, of some great task to do in life.

Nor did the law prove satisfactory. At the bar he was indeed at the intellectual and social hub of Brussels. One of



his fellow *stagiaires* and later Belgian statesman, Henri Carton de Wiart, has described those lively days in his reminiscences of their *maître*, Picard.<sup>1</sup> Brussels was a self-consciously provincial town moving towards the international eminence it enjoys today. Along the fashionable Avenue Louise, on the heights of the town, all the young, the wealthy, those rising in society, those received into it, carried out the ritual of seeing and being seen. The world of commerce and the world of the poor lay, as it still does, below. At the head of the Avenue Louise, ponderous and vast and towering above the city, stood the Palais de Justice. In its corridors echoed all the rumours and scandals of the city. The encounters of lawyers, clients and clerks as they went about their affairs offered opportunity a thousand times a day for the airing and promotion of the controversies of the time. Here Otlet circulated with Picard and his fellow clerks. Inevitably his acquaintance extended. He joined various clubs and associations such as the Cercle du Jeune Barreau de Bruxelles in whose journal, *Palais*, he began to publish articles,<sup>2</sup> the Groupe de Ligogne, and the Association et Compte Rendu du *Journal des Tribunaux*, the legal newspaper appearing twice weekly, with the premises of which all of the *stagiaires* of Picard, a founder-editor, soon became familiar.

But his attitude! «The Bar — what misery! Our time goes by in scraps; our seven years of humanities, our four years at the university employed in stupid acts of procedure...» And again, «no case or the practical study of law gives me the least satisfaction». Always Picard stood by as an intellectual catalyst, articulate, perceptive, encouraging. One day he said: «A Barrister for me is not someone who has a lot of cases. That is incidental. He is a man who always and in all things and everywhere follows the idea of Justice.» But, after a year, Otlet, struggling with a sense of failure, could take no comfort in this. Though he detested his work, he felt that many of his companions had already become successful by pushing themselves forward while he had fallen behind. And the admirable Picard, fiery and influential as he was, could not convince him that adequate compensation for limited advancement was to be found in the disinterested pursuit of a legal ideal. Surrounded by those with whom he would later have constant dealings in the Government and elsewhere, he experienced, like the onset of a disease, an increasing sense of isolation and loneliness. The urging of his wife that he should go about more and cultivate these men was of little help; nor was the birth of his first child, Marcel, as proud as he was of him, and grateful to be assured of a successor.

The problem, the basis of his rankling discontent, was, as

always, that of finding an occupation «where there is much intellectual life... where there will be great diversity which will lead to something real for myself and society». He looked vainly for some end, some goal, however vague it might be, which could become a basis for «attacking everything». He yearned for «a guide, to be involved in some company of work under the direction of some leader who will bring me to the conquest of a great ideal». In a moment of introspection, he observed that he was a man

who has little need for the society of appearances, of public opinion, but only for the society of some few good friends, and above all of their ideas. A man who loves unanswerable questions. A man who desires to effect an *oeuvre*, something continuing, grand and absorbing.

Yet when he looked around him, all that could be observed abroad was the spectre of intellectual anarchy. «It seems that facts are too complex to be embraced by our brains.» Everywhere new ideas were appearing but they seemed to him «too general, too contradictory, too confused yet to guide vigorous action». For himself, he had developed such an awareness of their complexity that he had been led away from a belief in their «absolute systematisation». His own ideas, indeed, had become in some way fluid and shapeless. «I don't have any fixed ideas, but embryos of different ideas, never pushed to conclusions, like a vague sentiment that holds them grouped». Perhaps he could not say so clearly and surely in 1892 what he had asserted so boldly only the year before, that his interest was above all «in the universal life» whose «synthetic expression at each moment of its evolution» it was his abiding pleasure to discover. Nevertheless he continued to cultivate, could not escape a preoccupation with, the notion of a «unifying, grouping sentiment» which demanded that he study «the whole, the laws of the progress of society, of psychology».

In attempting to understand Otlet's intellectual dilemmas and the solutions he was on the brink of discovering for them one should stand back a little to see him in the context of his times. His thought was by no means original. He had absorbed and rejected the religious teaching of the Jesuits for Positivism. The essence of Positivism as developed in the middle of the nineteenth century by Auguste Comte, lay in the Law of Three Stages and the Classification of the Sciences. The Law of the Three Stages asserted that as the mind developed, it passed through a stage of theological explanation of the world, to a stage of metaphysical explanation, to the final positive stage where all could be explained in terms of scientific truth. As the mind progressed through these stages, it did so in a definite order of disciplines which became increasingly interdependent and complex. At the first level stood mathematics, followed by physics and chemistry, then came

biology, and everything that came before culminated in psychology and sociology. Sociology, the queen of sciences, was viewed as a «unifying» science. What was of primary importance for the positivist philosopher was the formation of a «subjective synthesis» of positive knowledge as a way of envisaging and directing the development of society.

Having worked his way up the ladder of the sciences by the appropriate objective methods, the philosopher having scaled the heights of sociology, could then travel down the ladder again and construct a synthesis of them in the light of the unique and essential insight into the inferior sciences afforded by sociology and bearing in mind the requirements of humanity revealed by it.<sup>3</sup>

The enduring importance of Positivism for the nineteenth century lay in its emphasis on the scientific method, in its rejection of metaphysics, in its utilitarian ethic of good for Humanity, in its claims for sociology, a word coined by Comte, and in its belief in the possibility, the necessity, for synthesis. This last, the notion of synthesis, is an essential feature of Positivism. For Comte «positive generalities» were able to organise all of human reality as manifested in history and would lead it gradually towards some kind of unity. One commentator, Pierre Ducassée, has put it this way:

The positivistic mind coordinates all that is certain, real, useful, precise, but from a relative and organic point of view relative to man considered in his intellectual history, and relative to man conceived of as bearing social values; organic by virtue of the continuing preponderance of the sociological point of view, the source of the conception of *ensemble*, the veritable synoptic centre of positive knowledge and moral action.<sup>4</sup>

In Ducassée's opinion the whole of Comte's life and work was a battle against dispersive specialisms, for Comte emphasised, above all, «the art of coordination, of the correlation of analysis with synthesis, the prudent, precise, generalising assimilation of the results of contemporary sciences».<sup>5</sup>

Positivism enjoyed some popularity in England, as elsewhere, both for its own sake, and as something in opposition to which other positions could be defined. Herbert Spencer saw his position as opposed to Comtian Positivism.<sup>6</sup> Yet it showed many points of similarity. Spencer firmly believed in the possibility of obtaining positive knowledge and in the value of synthesising it. Indeed, for him philosophy was no less than «completely unified knowledge».<sup>7</sup> He was led from considering the essential phenomena of Matter and Motion to the problem of the persistence of Force, and from there to the Laws of Evolution in terms of which all knowledge could be unified. The Laws of Evolution hold true, he asserted, for each order of existence and he went on doggedly in the decades after his *First Principles of a New System of Philosophy* to «interpret the detailed phenomena of Life, Mind and Society

in terms of Matter, Motion and Force» (that is the elementary particles, as it were, from which all evolves) in a series of volumes forming his *Synthetic Philosophy*. These began to appear in 1864 and the entire work after many reprintings, revisions and additions was finished in 1893. Spencer was widely read on the Continent and was, indeed, one of the most highly regarded philosophers of his time.<sup>8</sup>

Otlet read Spencer very eagerly. When he declared his faith in 1889, it was in Positivism and Evolution. He had gone to Paris in 1888 with a synthesising formula based on the notion of Force. He saw the disciplines as rising in complexity and importance to Sociology. Knowledge he recognised as relative. The slogans of Comtian Positivism and Spencer's «Synthetic Philosophy» all intertwined in his mind, together with those of Alfred Fouillée, eminent in his day but now almost forgotten. Fouillée's synthetic principle was that of the *idée-force*. While in Paris Otlet had noted in his diary that he was never bored when studying modern philosophy with its «large classes and synthetic theories», and that

It's Fouillée whom I hold in most affection. He is even more modern than Spencer, more comprehensive than him, he completes him. He gives — as little as I can judge it — the most general formula, the *idée-force*, against naturalism and idealism.

Ideas Fouillée endowed with force because of the way they could persist and influence behaviour. For him, to think about the world was not passively to observe reflections in a mirror. Ideas were active, able through their activity to contribute to the realisation of their object.<sup>9</sup> He also attempted in the face of positivistic skepticism to reinstate metaphysics to a position of philosophical respectability. It has been suggested that his notion of the *idée-force* «is ultimately a merely verbal concept or device, seeking to bridge the gap between internal and mental processes and physical actions, as it were, by inserting a hyphen between them».<sup>10</sup> Like Spencer, Fouillée was convinced of the importance in philosophy of evolutionary theories of development and borrowed elements of his own psychological explanation of evolution from Lamarck, Darwin, Spencer himself, and others. Another of the comprehensive nineteenth century synthesists, though avowedly non-positivist, in a later work he explicitly took the world in itself as his subject.<sup>11</sup> His philosophy generally had an enduring influence on the development of Otlet's thought.

One should not, however, overestimate the importance of such influences. Otlet seems to have adopted now one, now another philosophical position on the positivist spectrum, to have rejected one aspect of a system for an aspect of another, if not capriciously yet without too much intellectual difficulty. His criterion seems to have been congeniality. He was himself

no philosopher, but an earnest man distressed by the triviality of his life as student and lawyer, floundering amid the debris of his daily affairs or some kind of meaningful activity. He took meaning where he found it. What was important to him seems not to have been a philosophy in itself, but the certitude it afforded him, the feeling of the world being brought within his grasp. The philosophies of the Comtian Positivists, and those of Spencer and Fouillée were all rooted in the exploding world of science, in which they saw a dynamism impelling man forward to variously conceived utopias of social organisation. A belief in science, a rejection of traditional metaphysics not so complete as to prevent the retention of Spencer's Unknowable, for example, whence all thought springs and whither all thought tends, a conviction as to the possibility of and necessity for a synthesis of knowledge, of the knowable — this is what appealed most strongly to him in the work of these philosophers.

For Otlet, science, during these early years of his intellectual development, was a magical word. Science did not merely involve investigation of a world of concrete facts, was not simply empirical. It was something reassuring, diffuse, a milieu of «principles and ideas». After his stay in Paris, he began to recognise more clearly, however, the complexity and apparent contradiction often inherent in facts and ideas, especially in the social sciences. To some extent he began to abandon the reductionist struggle by which one hopes to simplify and order such facts and ideas by the application to them of a principle of synthesis derived from them but which does not have the explicative, predictive or organising power of good theory. While he never lost his belief in the necessity for discerning order in the world and gathering up observations about it into some comprehensive system, when confronted by the intransigence of fact, the contrariness of ideas, the subtle conflicting transformations worked in observations of the world by the webs of theory cast over them by each thinker, Otlet was gradually led to acknowledge the preeminent place of empirical investigation as a precursory to speculation. Facts, he was finally and firmly led to declare, must «take possession of all our being».

Despite such assertions, in his first few years at the Bar, he continued to write legal articles and took up again a project begun several years before at Nice which in no uncertain way exhibits the generalising, synthesising tenor of his mind. It involved putting «political economy into formulas», and with some satisfaction he observed, «I've obtained certain results. The work is very grand.» It gave him confidence that «I can hope a little to follow up my scientific work». But when he considered his «horror of the practical», his compulsion to

achieve something large and socially valuable, his fascination by sociology, he was led to conceptualise his aim in life as that of creating «practical theories», of becoming absorbed in some task of «applied sociology». The reduction of political economy to formulas seems only partly appropriate to such an aim, and the venture seems gradually to have lapsed as his interests became channelled in another direction.

#### THE OFFICE OF SOCIOLOGICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Towards the end of 1891 a Société des Etudes Sociales et Politiques was formed in Brussels by a number of prominent Belgian scholars. Otlet observed its emergence with considerable interest, and at the end of the year he confessed to having two particularly serious subjects on his mind. The first was the familiar but haunting «ambition not for myself but for a great new continuing work», the second, the former apparently given some focus by the recent foundation of the Société des Etudes, was «a sort of institute for the synthesis of sociology and psychology».

Henri La Fontaine directed a section for bibliography within the Société des Etudes. There appears to be no account of the beginning of Otlet's collaboration with La Fontaine but social and professional acquaintance must have soon quickened and deepened with the discovery of strong mutual interests. The two men belonged to similar learned and other societies; they were both lawyers, though La Fontaine was fifteen years older than Otlet and had gained some eminence as a jurist in the area of international arbitration. Like Otlet, La Fontaine had been a *stagiaire* of Picard's and had worked on Picard's monumental compilation of Belgian jurisprudence, the *Pandectes belges*. It was clear that the strengthening during 1892 and 1893 of his friendship with La Fontaine was of the utmost importance for Otlet, for it was to provide him throughout most of his life with that close intellectual companionship the absence of which he had so often lamented in his diary.<sup>12</sup>

All of Picard's clerks presumably did their stint of work on the *Pandectes belges* which grew steadily in size throughout the last part of the century and on into the twentieth. By 1920, indeed, it consisted of over 100 weighty volumes.<sup>13</sup> Some knowledge of the underlying philosophy of this work is useful in understanding the foundation in 1893 by Otlet and La Fontaine, on the basis provided by the Bibliographical Section of the Société des Etudes Sociales et Politiques, of an Institut International de Bibliographie Sociologique. In this philosophy one may locate the source of the narrowing of Otlet's attention from sociology and psychology, from the universalist



synthesis of knowledge, to bibliography. «The point of departure for the *Pandectes belges*», wrote Edmond Picard and Ferdinand Larcier in the preface to their *Bibliographie générale et raisonnée du droit belge*, a compilation of sources used to 1882 for compiling the *Pandectes belges*

was the application to law of the procedures common for many years in the natural sciences. The dominating rule of these procedures, as one knows, is the substitution of direct observation for purely intellectual and theoretical preconceptions. The basis [of the compilation] was the collection of all decisions of our jurisprudence and of the opinions of our national authors... Today metaphysics has been banned, rightly, from Law, as it had been from the natural sciences, and one no longer attempts to formulate in *a priori*, all of a piece, by intellectual effort, as one no longer proceeds thus for chemistry, or physics, or social philosophy. Facts, observations, then more observations and facts, to deduce afterwards general truths is the way to proceed, a procedure which, formulated by Bacon, has gradually established its Domain and has become the rule for all serious study. The human mind is no longer considered as an organ which produces the sciences, but rather as an apparatus for enregistrement, whose unique role is to observe the laws which emerge from carefully collected facts and from scrupulously carried out experiments.<sup>14</sup>

In 1891 under Picard's guidance Otlet and a group of his colleagues began to publish a journal called *Sommaire périodique des revues du droit*.<sup>15</sup> In the compilation of this work was further practical bibliographical experience for Otlet to add to that already derived from his labours on the *Pandectes belges*. In 1892, his ideas about bibliography began to crystallise, and he wrote an article for *Palais*, the journal of the Cercle du Jeune Barreau de Bruxelles on the subject.<sup>16</sup> This article suggests his debt to the «positivist bibliography» of Picard as well as to positivist thought more generally.

The social sciences, he observed in this article, can be approached only through a flood of publications. For those who are interested in quality and not quantity, the variety and volume of these publications is a subject of deep concern:

All these books, all these brochures, all these periodical articles the publication of which is announced each week by booksellers' catalogs and notices in special periodicals—what do they contribute that is new, and what is just a matter of phraseology, repetition and inadequate editing.

After a little reading one might be led to the belief that everything in sociology has been said already, that everything is, in any case, simply a matter of opinion, «that the facts are too complex for formulation, formulation being always too exclusive and too tyrannical.» In effect, the social sciences present themselves to the student not as «one science in terms of materials and conclusions, but as a grouping of personal appreciations based on documents gathered together almost without order or method». Sociology calls itself positive, but it is so more in name than in reality, for though rich in data of one

kind and another, it lacks «a sure method of investigation and control, and a good method for classifying its materials».

The natural sciences, Otlet suggested, provide an illuminating point of comparison. Their conclusions have been rooted in millions of carefully observed facts which have been integrated in such a way as to lead to laws of gradually increasing generality. There seems not to be in the natural sciences that duplication of effort everywhere present in the social sciences. The student works in an orderly way from what is known, and what has been newly discovered is recorded immediately so that it is accessible to others as the basis for further development.

The problem to which Otlet now addressed himself, a problem which was to provide the foundation for his life's work was:

To examine whether facts once stated and consigned to publications (becoming in this way part of science), it would be possible by means of some special classification, to group them into laws. How could one give to the social sciences the positive and documentary character of the natural sciences? How could all the activities of individuals be made to contribute to the elaboration of a definitive synthesis, gradually established from facts and results, not from the speculations of a single thinker, but from the research of all?

Would it be too difficult, he asked, to achieve a «registration of sociological facts and ideas similar to that required in every industrial country for the patenting of inventions»? His answer was a carefully reasoned no, not if one could secure the cooperation of scientists in a program of increasingly complex and analytic bibliographic activity.

The exterior appearance of a book, its form, the personality of its author are ultimately of little importance, he contended. What matters is its substance which should be conserved and become part of the «organism of science», something impersonal created by the work of all. «Science, indeed, is only the grouping of all observed facts and of all probable hypotheses suggested to explain the facts and reduce them to laws.» How to co-ordinate the efforts of individual scientists so that their work could become part of a rational collectivity above and beyond them, and yet not circumscribed by it—this was the problem.

The first step in the bibliographic program designed by Otlet to give to the social sciences «the positive and documentary character of the natural sciences» was to establish a «scientific» classification of sociological source materials and then to publish a catalog of them. Such a catalog should be organised alphabetically by authors' names, and systematically by subject. The materials listed in this catalog should be indexed and abstracted to provide access to the information in them.<sup>17</sup> Subsequently each book, each article

could be partitioned from a purely formal point of view according to what was fact, interpretation of fact, statistics and sources. In this way whatever was deemed an original contribution to the field, could be isolated and recorded on cards either directly or in the form of references. These cards could be intercollated day by day and arranged systematically to form either an encyclopedia or a bibliographic repertory of the subject, something which could be described as a «kind of artificial brain». Such a work would be possible only with a great deal of co-operation from scholars and learned societies.

Otlet necessarily touched on the problem of classification, of preparing some detailed schema of the subject areas falling within the province of the social sciences, but it obviously presented great difficulties. On the analogy of what St. Thomas's *Summa Theologica* had done for learning in the Middle Ages, Otlet reasoned that what was now required both from the point of view of the preparation of a bibliographic repertory and of its consultation, was a «very systematic, very precise synoptic table» of the social sciences. Such a table should employ a standardised nomenclature which would contribute towards the creation of a much needed scientific language for them.

A model of what was contemplated could be sought in the terminology of law which, Otlet observed, through centuries of use, had acquired almost as much precision as that of chemistry. In law, a term not only evoked the object named but by «logical association» all of its characteristics and attributes. Further, the «argument» preceding notices of decisions in judicial compilations comprised five or six terms of decreasing generality permitting one to arrive logically at an indication of a particular fact. Ideally, on this model, each card in a bibliographical repertory would have its own «argument» composed of terms from the «synoptic table» arranged so as to proceed from the general to the particular. What Otlet was describing, though not very clearly, was the creation of an indexing vocabulary limited, ordered, and controlled by its use in a detailed classification of the social sciences. He did not as yet consider in any detail the actual mechanics of classification, vocabulary creation or term assignment, nor particularly, the problem of a notation for coding the classification so that some systematic physical arrangement of the cards in the repertory could be obtained.

This paper, *Un Peu de Bibliographie*, does not represent any great departure from Otlet's earlier thought, as important as it is as a milestone in its development. It shows him still concerned with sociology, Positivism, and synthesis, and with discovering a way to surmount the glaring inadequacies of their contemporary state. Now, however, he seemed to believe that it was in bibliography rather than in some synthesising

formula such as that provided by theories of biological or social evolution or the *Idée-Force*, that the panacea for the multitudinous indispositions afflicting the body of the social sciences was to be found. Bibliographic organisation, as he saw it, could systematically gather together the scattered literature of the social sciences so that bibliographic analysis could reach into it and extract from it for synthesis what was hard and bright as fact or useful observation.

On a practical level, the paper gives ample evidence of the scope of Otlet's acquaintance with actual bibliographical materials. He was familiar with a great many contemporary catalogues, indexes and «abstracting» services, and with practical problems of bibliographic co-operation and standardisation. In fact, the paper was an interesting restatement and development of the bibliographical program underlying the work of the Bibliographical section of the Société des Etudes Sociales et Politiques with which, through his friendship with La Fontaine, he was becoming increasingly involved. In 1893 the Section changed its name to become the International Institute of Sociological Bibliography under the joint direction of Otlet and La Fontaine.

A notice of the Office issued in 1894 provided a rationalisation for its creation and described the work it had pursued for a year.

Because the methods of observation and co-operation have produced unceasing progress, and the internationalisation of science has enlarged the field of action of investigators, a rigorously scientific classification has become necessary. In truth, the synthesis of knowledge about society which it is possible to achieve, will rise only from the accumulations of individual efforts. There is no single man, be he a genius, who will create any particle of the sociology of to-morrow and elevate it to the status of the positive and exact sciences. This work will be the natural result of studies carried out at the same time throughout the whole world by thousands of thinkers and investigators. Thus, individual work will more and more appear as chapters, as paragraphs, nay, even as single lines in the great book which one day we will be able to call the Science of Society. Sociological Bibliography is only the table of contents of this book, the analytical index elaborated day by day, which permits one to perceive the general structure of the work up to the present and to be informed at each moment of its state of development.<sup>18</sup>

The Office proposed to achieve its aims through bibliographic publications, bibliographic repertories, a collection of social «facts», and a library. It took over the *Sommaire périodique des revues de droit*, begun under Picard's guidance in 1891 and now called *Sommaire méthodique des traités et revues de droit*. A similar publication, similarly titled was begun for sociology and its first volume appeared in 1894. Five major repertories were contemplated: a universal legal repertory, a repertory for the Social Sciences, classified repertories of comparative legislation and of comparative statistics and a general

repertory by author's names. The Office also assumed the task of publishing the journal, *Revue sociale et politique*, begun at the time of its inception in 1891 by the Société des Etudes Sociales et Politiques. Through this journal and separately at the Office, Otlet and La Fontaine believed that they could build up a bank of objective sociological data. Some of this they were already publishing as compiled in a section of the *Revue* called «faits sociaux», with reference from it to the *Sommaire... de sociologie* and *Sommaire... de droit* for further, more extensive documentary information. A library would emerge naturally, they thought, through exchange of publication, and from materials sent for indexing and incorporation in the *Sommaires* and the repertories.

La Fontaine explained the general program of which he conceived the International Office of Sociological Bibliography to be part with reference to an International Intellectual Union. That science had become increasingly International, he argued, could not be denied—witness the increasing number of international scientific congresses:

What we would like to see founded is a federation of all these special nomadic federations which is what the Congresses are... A world federation would simply assure to all a permanent, unique headquarters where their archives, their documents, and their libraries could be centralised and conserved. This would be the passive aim of the federation. But we foresee also an active aim... It would constitute, moreover and above all, a scientific cooperative which would render admirable, incalculable services... It is no less than a question of creating a world depot where all human ideas can be automatically stored in order to be spread afterwards among people with a minimum of effort and a maximum of effectiveness. It is no less than a question of creating a central institute where all those who hope to collaborate in the progress of humanity, will be able, immediately and mechanically, to obtain the most detailed and complete information. It is no less than a question of bringing about the foundation of an international university where those wishing to devote themselves to advanced study can find all the documents and all the books they might want, and where the most competent would be willing to come to teach and spread the latest results of their research and meditations.<sup>19</sup>

The services which he hoped a central federation would set up, La Fontaine examined in detail: an international library, an international Office of Bibliography of which the International Office of Sociological Bibliography was a type, an international Statistical Office, and a central service for Congresses. To such general and basic services could be added others depending for their success on these most basic ones: an International Council of Teaching, an International Council of Hygiene, an International Office of Work, a Central Bureau of Comparative Legislation, an International Patent Office, and a Service to deal with the nomenclature of Botany and Zoology. Here was an early formulation of what was later an important part of the program of the League of Nations, and,

later still, of the United Nations, of which the formation of the Central Office of International Institutions and the Union of International Associations in Brussels in 1910 were immediate precursors.

The work of the International Office of Sociological Bibliography, especially when put in such a context was perhaps grandiosely conceived. But it was publishing two bibliographic journals and a large body of collaborators for the Office had been assembled through the *Revue sociale et politique* which the Office was publishing for the Société des Etudes<sup>20</sup> and by 1894 the repertories contained over 100,000 cards. For the hopeful Directors of the Office, this augured well for future and greater success.

## FOOTNOTES

1. H. Carton, Comte de Wiart, «Souvenirs sur Edmond Picard», *Revue générale* (15 janvier 1937), pp. 59–77.
2. For a list of Otlet's publications see the Bibliography at the end of this work.
3. W. M. Simon, *European Positivism in the Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1963), p. 6.
4. Pierre Ducassé, «La Synthèse positiviste: Comte et Spencer», *Revue de synthèse*, XXVI (1950), p. 161.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 63–64.
6. Herbert Spencer, *The Classification of the Sciences: to which are added reasons for dissenting from the philosophy of M. Comte* (N. Y.: Appleton, 1864), pp. 27–48.
7. Herbert Spencer, *First Principles [of a New System of Philosophy]* (N. Y.: De Witt Revolving Fund, 1958), p. 531.
8. Pages 323–24 of Jay Rumney, *Herbert Spencer's Sociology* (New York: Allerton Press, 1966), contain a bibliography of «Selected Translations» of Spencer's works.
9. Elisabeth Garne de Beaucoudry, *La Psychologie et la métaphysique des idées-forces chez Alfred Fouillée* (Paris: Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, 1936), p. 233.
10. W. H. Simon, «Alfred Fouillée», *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, III (1967), p. 215.
11. Alfred Fouillée, *Esquisse d'une interprétation du monde* («Bibliothèque de philosophie contemporaine»; Paris: Alcan, 1913).
12. As with Otlet, there is no full account of Henri La Fontaine's life. The best we have is Georges Lorphèvre, *Henri La Fontaine et Paul Otlet...* (Bruxelles: Editions Mundaneum, 1954), 16 pp. It is interesting that the two men did not share other interests. La Fontaine was a fine amateur musician, an enthusiast for Wagner, and an alpinist. He was keenly interested in the Inter-Parliamentary Union, in which he long held office, and in other juridical international organisations.
13. Jean Limpins, *Répertoire bibliographique de droit belge, 1819–1945* (Liège: Les Presses Universitaires, 1947), pp. 5–6.



14. Edmond Picard and Ferdinand Larcier, *Bibliographie générale et raisonnée du droit belge* (Bruxelles: Ferdinand Larcier, 1882).
15. *Sommaire périodique des revues de droit*, Pierre Blanchemanche, Joseph Cassiers, Max Hallet and Paul Otlet, éditeurs, avec une préface de M. Edmond Picard. Table mensuelle de tous les articles et études juridiques publiés dans les périodiques belges et étrangers (Bruxelles: Librairie Générale de Jurisprudence, 1891).
16. Paul Otlet, *Un peu de bibliographie*, extrait de *Palais* (Bruxelles: Vromant, 1892), 20 pp. Quotations in the following paragraphs are from this publication without separate citations.
17. Otlet does not use the word «abstract», but it is clear from the discussion of «compte-rendu» on page 11, and the «noticé-judiciaire» on page 12, that he is, in effect, describing what today we would call a substantive abstract.
18. *L'Office International de Bibliographie Sociologique...* (Bruxelles: l'Office [1894]), 8 pp.
19. Henri La Fontaine, «Organisation internationale et collective du travail intellectuel: Union Intellectuelle Internationale, esquisse sommaire», *Bibliothèque Internationale de l'Alliance Scientifique Universelle* (publié par le Comité de Bruxelles), fasc. IV (1894), pp. 322-43.
20. The verso of the title page of *Office International de Bibliographie Sociologique* lists collaborators, nearly all of whom were lawyers. Among the names appear those of the prominent positivist scholars, De Greef and Hector Dennis, together with Picard, Emile Vandervelde, and representatives of most of the countries of Western Europe, the United States and Japan.

### Chapter III

## FOUNDATION OF THE IIB

### HARD TIMES

Though he had begun what was to be his life's work by 1894, Otlet was to experience constant interference with it for a number of years to come, to have his attention and his energies diverted from it by chronic difficulties in his family's affairs. His decision in Paris at the end of 1888 to assist his father in business, a decision taken only after a great struggle between his sense of loyalty to his family and his penchant for an independent life of scholarship, proved to have far-reaching consequences. It committed him to a wheel of fortune which seemed to govern his father's business life. Not long after his marriage, Edouard Otlet, building tramways in association with the House of Lebon, had become a millionaire.<sup>1</sup> But in 1874 legal and financial difficulties connected with the dissolution of that association forced the Otlets to leave Brussels for Paris where Paul first went to school. In 1882, the family returned to Brussels, and, not long after, Edouard Otlet's flourishing South American investments brought them a gratifying and dramatic prosperity. From this zenith, however, their fortunes soon declined. Edouard Otlet was in a precarious financial position from 1893 to the time of his death in 1907. Paul, having pledged himself to help his father, was plunged into the difficult and frustrating business of attempting to keep the family solvent and the patrimony of the children, of whom he was the oldest, intact.<sup>2</sup> A lawsuit initiated by Edouard Otlet with the assistance of Picard had two million francs at stake. Should they lose it, Otlet observed in his diary, «the family is ruined, and the eventuality of this disaster is imminent». His father was forced to sell a considerable art collection. The Ile du Levant, scene of so many pleasant childhood memories for Otlet, for which his father had once spurned an offer of a million francs, was sold for just over 41,000 francs. The Villa Valère in Nice, the scene of Otlet's renunciation of faith, having been closed for a number

of years, was also sold, though Edouard Otlet resisted this for as long as he could.<sup>3</sup> It brought a quarter of a million francs in 1903. Above all, father and sons manipulated stock, and in these dreary, never ending transactions Otlet took a major share of the burden.

He was soon acutely aware of the changes in his own situation. His was now no life «strewn with flowers» as it had once seemed to him as a youth. As early as 1892 he was sometimes without change for a newspaper or a tram ticket in his pocket and he was forced to walk to the Palais de Justice or home from it. He was obliged to borrow money in 1893 and again in 1896. In 1891 he assessed the price of an independent life of scholarship at 25,000 francs a year. Indeed, it became clear that the annual income of 12,000 francs he had been assured by his father upon his marriage, was no longer certain, and the disparity between what he had and what he thought he needed grew ominously great. It seemed that he might have to leave Brussels for the country. «With a character not adapted to battle, disdainful of the little things of which life is made up, scrupulously and stupidly *grand seigneur*», afflicted by «a continual need of money», facing the prospect of the economy and obscurity of life in the country, he was in no situation to be lightly contemplated by one, as it seemed to him, so little suited to coping with it. «Money!» he exclaimed

the symbol of the battle for existence... I am continually preoccupied with it. Never did I conceive of the tyranny of money. Weren't we rich? And, without being extravagant, wasn't the security given by this richness one of the conditions for my disposition toward speculative work. Now all our fortune is gone, perhaps momentarily, forever perhaps... It is necessary to work, to have a gainful position. In fact, it might become necessary to sacrifice all the fine projects that I could have carried out. But these sacrifices are themselves called into question ten times a day according to the news which comes in from Nice, from the Procès Normand... the mines of Sorla, from Rio, from South American upsets. It is slow poison.

In the middle of all these difficulties and uncertainties, he was presented with yet another which brought into sharper focus than ever before the unresolved dilemmas of his life. The Université Libre de Bruxelles had grown more and more reactionary in the course of its history, a group of increasingly vociferous adversaries alleged. Protest against its repressiveness and intellectual stagnation reached a peak in the 1890's and boiled over when the university authorities attempted to muzzle the eminent geographer, Elisée Reclus, who had a reputation as an anarchist. The Rector was dismissed. The students staged a strike and the university closed down. Guillaume de Greef, a lawyer and sociologist whose teaching had become increasingly influenced by the philosophy of Comte, and increasingly less acceptable to the University authorities, spoke out violently against the university's actions.<sup>4</sup> As de Greef

told his supporters after he had been suspended, «I am for free, positive science», and the University had gone out of its way to find as a replacement for him someone who could declare that «M. de Greef detests metaphysics as much as I love it... while he loves Positivism as much as I abhor it.»<sup>5</sup> In October 1894, taking what seemed the only course remaining open to them, Picard, de Greef and a number of colleagues broke with the Université Libre and founded a new university, the Nouvelle Université de Bruxelles. The Faculties of Law, and Philosophy and Letters were the first constituted, together with an Institute of Higher Studies. This last was an innovative addition to the traditional university structure of faculties by which it was hoped that this university, in contrast to the Université Libre, might become responsive to the exigencies of contemporary society.

Today positive knowledge tends to have a more and more considerable action on all the branches of human activity, from industrial production to the elaboration of laws and political organisation of societies, and the links uniting all the individual sciences appear more and more clear. A view, at the same time speculative and practical, of the synthetic whole of the intellectual domain is therefore indispensable... It is the acquisition of synthetic knowledge that the new university wished to facilitate by its Institute of Higher Studies... the teaching is therefore at the same time encyclopedic and practical.<sup>6</sup>

To the banner hoisted above the New University by Picard and de Greef flocked many of Otlet's friends and acquaintances. The request to Otlet to join this group came from La Fontaine: «Well then! Have you decided to give us a subscription and a course at the New University? You know our goals, what we hope for, you approve of our ideas... There it is, a 'yes', or a 'no'! Why conditions, distinctions?» But conditions and distinctions were the stuff of life to Otlet's cautious, reflective character. As he probed the consequences of a decision he exposed the toils of the conflicting attitudes in which his will to decisive, irrevocable action was so strongly caught. On the one hand lay his duty towards his family, their business affairs and the law. On the other lay his independence, his desire for the cloistered isolation of a life of scholarship. If he refused La Fontaine's request, he felt he turned his back on all that he had dreamed of doing in bibliography and in other aspects of the social sciences. Yet to accede to it would commit him to a particular group, a party, and his nature rebelled against the idea of partisan confinement.

Further, if he joined the New University, what would happen to his own family? How could he ensure their security against the future. What would he be able to leave as a patrimony to his children, once he was committed to the comparative poverty of a professorship?<sup>7</sup> And then there was his father struggling to reconstitute the unexpectedly diminished family

fortune. How could he leave him to this alone when all the children including himself would inevitably receive great benefit from it upon its reconstitution? Moreover, there was only one way of making a fortune for himself, that fortune which he hoped would give him the freedom necessary to follow some work of science of his own devising, and that way was to work with his father. He was himself, he believed, too anxious, too scrupulous, too passive, too little able to battle and struggle to succeed independently of his father. Although he continued to detest the law, how could he abandon it, even though now he could imagine no one more «anti-scientific» than a lawyer? Yet, always, there stirred painfully and urgently within him a sense of creativity which demanded his recognition, demanded immediate expression. «When I am confronted with a book, an article, after every conversation I have, there surges within me the desire to write, to undertake an investigation. A little evokes a world.»

He weighed the pros and cons of joining the New University again and again, exclaiming impatiently, «Aere I am twenty six years old and not having made a decision! To be scattered, to be as nothing, to be rushing after everything and not to know how to follow anything, an education to improve, to complete, to resume after six years in which it has been so poorly continued.» He let himself be persuaded by La Fontaine to support the New University and to give a course at it. But then he changed his mind, and wrote to de Greef that the responsibility of becoming a professor was too great.

He had characteristically formulated the alternatives as though they were in some way mutually exclusive and had then vacillated agitatedly between them. But the moment of decision passed. The status quo was shaken by it but maintained, and he continued to act as though in fact the life of lawyer, business man and «practical» scholar were not entirely incompatible. During 1894 and 1895 he worked on his father's affairs, reported regularly to the Palais de Justice and collaborated with La Fontaine at the International Office of Sociological Bibliography, which they soon took to calling simply the International Office of Bibliography. During this time, too, he also wrote a number of substantial legal studies which must have given some satisfaction to his need to study and write.<sup>8</sup>

#### THE DEWEY DECIMAL CLASSIFICATION

In August of 1894 he took his annual vacation. There were several congresses in which he wished to participate being held at Ostend, and then a meeting of the British Association at Oxford. After two or three days in London, he set out on a bicycle trip around the south eastern coast of England. This was cut short by indisposition and he returned through Bel-

gium to Toulon in France where he collected the money from the sale of the Ile du Levant property. Inconsequential as it seems, this holiday has a particular importance, for, during its course, Otlet first attempted to obtain the Dewey Decimal Classification. While he was at Ostend, he had met a friend just returned from England who told him of a new system for the classification of books invented by an American. The friend had read about it in an English daily newspaper, but, unfortunately, could remember neither the name of the newspaper, nor that of the author of the classification. Travelling poste-haste to London, Otlet asked for it at the British Museum, but no one there seemed to know of it. Eventually, however, he learned that what he sought was something called the Decimal Classification devised by a Melvil Dewey of New York. He wrote at once to America that it be sent to him.

This story, told in later life to Georges Lorphèvre, who joined Otlet as his assistant in 1927, is not literally true, of course.<sup>9</sup> Otlet had known of the Decimal Classification for several years, though it is clear that he had never seen it, and he had intended to go to England that August in any case. Looking back over the years his memory had played him false in a way that suggests the significance he attached to the steps which led to the first examination of the Classification.

Sometime early in 1895 a copy of the Classification arrived and he and La Fontaine eagerly set about studying it and translating the main divisions, the subdivisions for sociology and the extended tables for some of these subdivisions. La Fontaine had fluent English and Otlet was able to read it. On March 24, 1895, Otlet wrote to Dewey to ask formally for permission to use and develop the Decimal Classification:

Being very much occupied with all that can contribute to the progress of bibliography and classification of books, I have made the acquaintance of your work with the keenest interest. Your Decimal Classification is truly a masterpiece of ingenuity. I have studied it for several weeks with the intention of making it the basis for our bibliographic office, and on this occasion I take the liberty of addressing to you the following questions:

1. In your opinion would the Decimal Classification be applicable to a bibliographic arrangement, and what modifications should it undergo for this application?
2. I send you with this letter a notice on the Office of Sociologic Bibliography which we have founded in Brussels, and specimens of two bibliographical reviews that are published regularly. These reviews have adopted a classification entirely conformable to European ideas for law and sociology. According to your idea how would it be possible to apply your system to these subjects? Your work scarcely furnishes enough subdivisions in law and sociology. If our Office adopted your system... which would result in acquainting Europe with your idea — could you put yourself to the task of introducing into your classification, with our collaboration, all the divisions and subdivisions for law and sociology which are now lacking?
3. Could we proceed to a French translation of your Decimal Classification, and on what terms?...<sup>10</sup>



Dewey did not reply immediately, and when Otlet wrote again it was to tell him of the plans he and La Fontaine had conceived for a universal bibliographic organisation which would rest on the corner-stone of the Decimal Classification. When Dewey replied to Otlet's overtures at the end of June 1895, it was to give the Europeans the right to translate the Decimal Classification.

In the meantime Otlet and La Fontaine ordered more copies of the Classification from Cedric Chivers of the Library Bureau Office in London, a subsidiary of the office originally set up in Boston by Dewey and others,<sup>11</sup> from which they also requested a variety of other kinds of information, particularly about Cutter's Classification, interest in which they had expressed to Dewey also. Early in March of 1895, Chivers wrote to them that Cutter had completed many of the divisions of his Classification but that it had not all yet been published. In the months that followed he kept them informed of its progress. From Chivers they also obtained a copy of the sales catalog of the Library Bureau's main office in Boston, examples of card stock, information about prices and processes, and the Perkins's Classification.<sup>12</sup>

Gradually, their ideas about the future of their own bibliographic work began to crystallise in their minds. It became clear to them that the Decimal Classification was not only an improvement over other classifications, but that it must become the veritable source and centre of their own endeavours.

As they saw it, the Decimal Classification had these striking advantages:

It provides first of all a nomenclature for human knowledge, fixed, universal, and able to be expressed in an international language—that of numbers. It provides unity of method in the classification of all bibliographies and permits an exact concordance between the classification of libraries and that of a bibliographic repertory. Finally, it provides an unlimited system of divisions and subdivisions of subjects in which all connected parts are grouped near each other.<sup>13</sup>

Before the advent of the Decimal Classification, it was customary to arrange bibliographic materials under a variety of subject headings related either through the arbitrary conjunctions of the alphabet or related by an invariably incomplete, to some extent idiosyncratic and tendentious classification of subjects expressed in verbal terms often too long and too complex for practical use. The development of schemes which combined classification with a non-verbal, alpha-numeric code seemed to obviate some of the difficulties presented by other schemes. But the terms, the «indices» such schemes produced were «indecipherable hieroglyphs that no larynx can pronounce, such as for example—Djkm, or-Zwr, or even -3y3cd».<sup>14</sup> In the Decimal Classification the agreement, dependence and subordination of ideas were all clearly indicated, Otlet and La

Fontaine believed, by the order of the figures making up a particular decimal number.

In effect, the figures which represent the classes and divisions of each subject unite into a single extremely simple numerical expression. The affiliation, the genealogy even, of the ideas and the objects, their dependence and subordination... find an adequate representation in the bibliographic sign so formed. This representation nearly excludes the conventional and the arbitrary. Not only does each figure express in its fashion an essential idea, but the combination of figures, that is to say, their order in the series and their place in the number, are actually produced according to the laws of scientific logic. In this sense they constitute a true new language in which the phrases (here numbers) are formed according to constant syntactical rules from figures (here numbers). It is a kind of synthetic language: the figures are the predicative and attributive roots in it—purely verbal roots in the sense that they are neither substantive, nor adjectives, nor verbs. They are placed above and outside grammatical categories, in that they express abstractions, pure scientific categories. Under this double head, the Decimal Classification constitutes a veritable international scientific language, a complete symbology of science, susceptible of to-day bringing to intellectual workers, help analogous to that which they received in the Middle Ages... from Latin.<sup>15</sup>

Apart from the linguistic and logical aspects of the classification, the fact that an index to its tables could be compiled in any language, meant that it could be used by anyone anywhere. As it had decimal numbers, it could also be extended indefinitely without confusing the order of the numbers or complicating the procedure for the arrangement of material by them. «It responds to the essential principle of bibliographic order, as of all order: a place for each thing, and each thing in its place.»<sup>16</sup> It was not a classification of science, Otlet and La Fontaine were quick to point out. «It is merely a complex statement of the various subjects dealt with by the sciences with a grouping of these subjects according to the most generally adopted order, each being given a set place.»<sup>17</sup>

There is much in Otlet and La Fontaine's original account of the Decimal Classification to which one might object today, and much that is obscure. The distinction, for example, between a bibliographic and a scientific classification is by no means convincingly stated, especially as the bibliographic numbers are said to respond to the «laws of scientific logic». Nevertheless, it is clear that to the Europeans it was something novel and full of possibility. It extended Otlet and La Fontaine's horizons indefinitely. It seemed to them feasible, now that they had discovered an appropriate classification, to develop the work, as yet restricted in scope, that they had begun at the International Office of Bibliography. It seemed to them now not an idle dream to attempt to go beyond the various kinds of specialised bibliographic repertories in limited subject areas such as law and sociology that they had already begun. They could hope to produce a universal bibliographic repertory

embracing all subjects whether existing at the moment or yet to be discovered. Here to hand was that «very systematic, very precise synoptic table» with a standard nomenclature that Otlet had described as necessary several years before in *Un peu de Bibliographie*.

In order to publicise the classification and the work that they had already done and to obtain support for the extensions they had already done and to obtain support for the extensions national conference on bibliography. For the information of those who would attend the conference they drew up a document setting out their ideas about requirements of organisation for a universal bibliographic repertory which was assuming increasingly large proportions in their eyes as the mode of bibliographic organisation of the future.<sup>18</sup> A universal bibliographic repertory, they declared, would be complete, organised by both subjects and authors, and would exist in multiple copies distributed throughout the world. It would be exact and precise and would allow for easy correction of errors and omissions. It would make full use of existing bibliographic work, and would serve as a union catalogue for the material included.

Of the necessity for the repertory, Otlet and La Fontaine were fully convinced; and they set out in detail the use that scholars, librarians, editors, publishers, authors and ordinary members of the public could make of it. They pointed out that though bibliography had a glorious past, its development had been limited by lack of agreement and co-operation amongst bibliographers. But with the Decimal Classification and an appropriate organisation to co-ordinate international effort, they were convinced that agreement and co-operation could be encouraged and extended. They described the work already under way on the repertory at the International Office of Bibliography in Brussels and suggested that with the Decimal Classification and movable cards permitting intercalation of entries, the major technical difficulties apparently inhibiting its completion were removed. They stressed that it was important to move ahead quickly, now that the work was begun, and in order to bring it rapidly to some advanced stage where it could begin to be useful, to tolerate an error factor of 25 to 30 per cent.

They drafted the following proposals for the consideration of an international conference:

1. That an **International Bibliographical Institute** be created having as its object the study of all questions connected with bibliography in general, and more specifically, with the development of the Universal Repertory...

2. That a great extension be made in the work begun by the **International Office of Bibliography** which should become the executive organ for the decisions of the Bibliographic Institute. This Office whose present organisation is quite provisional, should be definitely

constituted on the basis of a vast co-operative society whose members should be all those interested in the creation of the universal repertory: states, public administrators, scientific associations, libraries, publishers, authors and men of letters. This Office should publish a universal repertory on cards classified by the Decimal Classification. All existing bibliographic material should be fused in the repertory; local bibliographic centres open to all should be created in all cities and in all intellectual centres, and should receive continuously from the Central Office all the bibliographic notices printed on cards. These local offices should be set up in all large libraries where soon they would be merged with the catalog department, today so costly to maintain and of such incomplete usefulness.

3. A Bibliographic Union should be formed between governments who will encourage the development of the repertory by subscribing to copies of it proportional in number to their respective populations and the amount of their annual literary production.<sup>19</sup>

The conference was rather hurriedly organised. A little more than six months after they had first examined the Dewey Decimal Classification, Otlet and La Fontaine had decided on what was to become, for Otlet at least, a lifetime program, and they pressed ahead with it with their utmost dispatch. In that six months before the end of July 1895 when the invitations went out for an international conference to assemble in Brussels on the 2nd of September, barely one month later, they had studied the classification, translated parts of it, begun to modify it, alerted many of their colleagues in Belgium to their enlarged bibliographic ambitions, and had set about classifying the bibliographic notices already collected at the Office of International Bibliography, notices which they suggested should become the basis of the proposed universal repertory. By the time they had finished their note, «On the Creation of a Universal Bibliographic Repertory», presumably printed in time to accompany the invitations to the conference or not long after, they had classified 200,000 notices.<sup>20</sup> By the time the conference closed they had brought the number to 400,000.<sup>21</sup> They were assisted in this work by La Fontaine's sister, Léonie.

Above all, in this period the two friends set turning that machinery of acquaintance and influence which, socially and professionally, they were in such a good position to exploit. The eminent financier, Ernest Solvay,<sup>22</sup> was prevailed upon to give financial support. The Belgian government offered its patronage through the Ministry of the Interior and Public Instruction, and Edouard Descamps, a distinguished politician and lawyer, undertook to preside at the Conference.<sup>23</sup> As a result, the invitations were endorsed by the Belgian government and the conference assumed a semi-official character calculated to give its deliberations, directed with authority and held in comfortable surroundings in the Hotel Ravenstein, a weight they might not otherwise have had.

The conference pressed with almost breakneck speed upon the invitations to it. In the normal course of events, such a conference would have been given wide publicity, and the learned world would have been able to take its time in considering the issues raised before preparing to attend. That there was not enough time between invitation and conference for delegates either from England, so near at hand, or from the United States to make arrangements for the journey to Brussels, and that others from Italy and France felt harried and rushed, created some suspicion of Otlet and La Fontaine's bibliographic enterprise that it took time to dispel.<sup>24</sup>

There was, however, good reason for haste. A movement was gathering force in the Royal Society of London to undertake a venture of international bibliography similar to their own. For more than 30 years the Royal Society of London had been issuing its *Catalogue of Scientific Papers*. Increasing in size with every year, only meagerly subsidised by the government, still lacking the subject index that it had been hoped could one day be provided for it but which was becoming ever more difficult and expensive to compile, the *Catalogue* at last became a burden too great for the resources of the Society. In 1893 the Council of the Society appointed a special committee to investigate ways of continuing the *Catalogue* by means of international co-operation. Having received favourable answers to a circular addressed to scientists and scientific bodies throughout the world, the committee recommended, in a report dated June 1895, that the Council call an international conference in July 1896 «with the view of discussing and settling a detailed scheme for the production by international cooperation of complete author and subject catalogues of scientific literature».<sup>25</sup>

As the time of year for such gatherings in Europe is the summer months, had Otlet and La Fontaine wished to give more notice of their intention to call an international conference of bibliography, they would have had to hold it at approximately the same time as the International Conference on a Catalogue of Scientific Literature was meeting in London. They could not hope to compete with the Royal Society in any way — an organisation then, as it is now, of unassailable authority and prestige. The assembly it was sponsoring was to be called by the British government as a conference of governments with official representation. The assembly at Brussels represented merely a gathering of interested individuals under the benevolent surveillance of the Belgian government. By holding their meeting in 1895, Otlet and La Fontaine had a chance to establish without competition the organisation they wished to see develop their own venture, to obtain international approval of it and participation in it, and time to publicise any apparent

success it might enjoy. They could then hope to take advantage of the opportunity for propaganda presented by the meeting in London in 1896, and attempt to draw the Royal Society and the International Conference on a Catalogue of Scientific Literature into supporting, perhaps actively collaborating with them, in the development of the Decimal Classification and the Universal Bibliographic Repertory. By holding their conference in 1895, rather than being put in the invidious position of declaring an intention in 1896, they were given the advantage of announcing a fact.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BIBLIOGRAPHY

The International Conference of Bibliography assembled on the 2nd day of September, 1895 as planned, broke into study groups, examined the matters placed before it for three days and closed in a plenary session with resounding applause by the delegates at what they had been able to accomplish. As a majority of the delegates were Belgian the conference could hardly be called representatively international, as a number of commentators pointed out with some asperity.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, an independent body of men, with representation from a number of countries, had formally taken up the points set out in the invitation to the conference<sup>27</sup> and in its «working paper» had debated them and had passed a series of apparently unanimous resolutions on them. The work of two Belgians was therefore given a form of international sanction, and they had got in ahead of the Royal Society. «Decimal Classification unanimously adopted. International Bibliographical Institute proclaimed you honorary member», cabled Otlet to Dewey.<sup>28</sup>

The resolutions of the conference were as follows:

1. The conference considers that the Decimal Classification gives fully satisfactory results from an international and practical point of view;
2. The conference observes the considerable applications already made of Dewey's Classification and recommends its adoption as a whole to facilitate an agreement between all countries with the briefest delay;
3. The conference resolves that the governments should form a universal bibliographic union with a view to the creation of an International Office of Bibliography. It charges its Bureau to carry this resolution to the Belgian government and respectfully asks that it take whatever steps it thinks would be useful;
4. The conference has settled on the creation of an International Institute of Bibliography;
5. The conference, considering that any systematic classification presupposes the existence of complete, accurate national bibliographies, points out to the government the importance of uniform legal deposit laws;



6. The conference resolves that publications resulting from individual effort, and more particularly, collective catalogs prepared by booktrade organisations, should likewise adopt the Decimal Classification.<sup>29</sup>

The Statutes of the International Institute of Bibliography were drawn up in considerable detail.<sup>30</sup> Essentially, the functions of the Institute were to provide encouragement for the study of classification in general and to promote a uniform and international system of classification in particular. The members could be individuals, institutions or associations, and there would be no limit placed upon the size of the Institute's membership. A Bureau would consist of a President, a Secretary-General and a Treasurer to serve for a term of six years. The Institute would publish a bulletin periodically. A special temporary provision waived the requirement that members be admitted only upon formal nomination and after secret scrutiny by the General Assembly, until such time as the Institute was stronger. The permanent Bureau was given power to admit members and to take whatever urgent measures were necessary to develop the Institute. This temporary provision was not formally rescinded until after the War of 1914-18. Baron Descamps became President, Otlet Secretary-General and La Fontaine Treasurer.

Less than two weeks after the conference closed the influential connections of the members of the Bureau of the International Institute of Bibliography together with the thoroughness of their preparatory work were clearly revealed. A report on the International Office of Bibliography signed by the Minister for the Interior and Public Instruction appeared in the *Moniteur belge* for 17 September, 1895.<sup>31</sup> The same issue of the *Moniteur belge* contained a Royal Decree formally assuming governmental responsibility for the International Office of Bibliography. Its mission was described as «the establishment and the publication of a universal bibliographic repertory, the servicing of this repertory, and the study of all questions relating to bibliographical work». The executive membership of the Office was to be appointed by the Crown and would consist of effective members. Associate Belgian and foreign members would constitute the rest of the membership. Associate members were not to be limited in number but were to be nominated by the effective members and approved by the Crown. The Government agreed to place suitable accommodations at the disposal of the Office and to offer a subvention in a manner to be determined, to help defray the costs of the Office. Baron Descamps, Ferdinand Van der Haeghen of the University of Gand (Ghent), Michel Murlon of the Belgian Geological Commission, Otlet, and Maurice de Wulf of the University of Louvain were appointed as the effective members of the Office.<sup>32</sup> La Fontaine, admitted the year before to

the Belgian Senate as a Socialist member, was politically suspect and was excluded from the government of the Office.<sup>33</sup>

The results of the International Conference of Bibliography must have been gratifying to Otlet and La Fontaine. The International Institute of Bibliography was founded. The creation of a universal bibliographic repertory and the adoption and development of the Decimal Classification were approved. The International Office of Bibliography was placed under the aegis of the Belgian government and was assured of permanent support within its Department of the Interior and Public Instruction. It is true that this created some confusion, for the functions of the Office formally included those of the Institute. The original notion recommended by Otlet and La Fontaine, resolved upon by the Conference, and reported to the King by the Minister, of a documentary union of governments with the International Office of Bibliography as its permanent bureau, was lost sight of for the time being. No doubt that seemed of little importance at the time. It would have been pessimistic to anticipate conflict between the bureau of the Institute, an international organisation, and that of the Office, a national one, for while the inter-governmental treaties were lacking, neither the Institute nor the Office, as private international organisations, had any identity under Belgian law. The Office on the other hand, by virtue of its Royal Decree being both local and governmental, could assume a protected and responsible legal existence. In any case Otlet was the dominant figure in both organisations and La Fontaine was soon drawn into the formal administration of the Office by the creation of the position of Director, a staff position requiring only ministerial approval rather than the more formal approval by the King.

#### WORK BEGINS

The tasks confronting the two friends after the Conference of 1895 were prodigious. But there was already a basis for giving the OIB a satisfactory institutional shape. In the years before the Conference, the Office had been set up first in La Fontaine's study and then in the Hotel Ravenstein. A group of collaborators had assisted Otlet and La Fontaine with the development of the bibliographical repertory for law and sociology, classified so hastily according to the Decimal system for the Conference. This repertory was housed in specially designed catalog furniture which, in a sense, constituted a foundation for the physical existence of the Office. Yet there was something tentative about it before the Conference. Its work appears to have been primarily focused upon its published bib-

liographies for law and sociology which were now called the *Bibliographie internationale des sciences sociales* and not upon some institutional service based on the repertory itself.<sup>34</sup>

After September 1895, as part of the Belgian government, the Office was now expected to carry out a much larger program than it had had before. It was to become a center of bibliographical planning, co-operation, information, supplies and expertise. It faced the translation and development of the Decimal Classification, and the rapid expansion for direct public use of the Universal Bibliographic Repertory. To ensure an orderly division and performance of the multitudinous tasks that would devolve upon it and a systematic allocation of them among a staff assembled to perform them, some kind of formalised, bureaucratic structure had become necessary for it.

The assumption by the Belgian government of some considerable measure of responsibility for the Office contributed strongly to its bureaucratisation.<sup>35</sup> In 1895 the Office received 10,000 Belgian francs from the government and this amount was increased to 15,000 Belgian francs the following year and was later increased again.<sup>36</sup> But in order to continue to obtain this subsidy the Office was required to provide the government with a detailed accounting for all money received and spent by it. Moreover, the drawing up and publication of the internal regulations by which the Office was to be administered was also mandatory in terms of the Royal Decree of 14 September, 1895. These regulations were submitted in due course to the Minister for the Interior and Public Instruction for approval, and were gazetted in 1898.<sup>37</sup> They defined the tasks that the Office was legally obliged to perform, set the hours during which it would be open to the public, indicated what the budget was to contain and precisely when it should be submitted, what kinds of extraordinary expenses were to be reviewed by the Minister and so on. They also recognised that the services of the Director and Secretary-General would be freely given, but that other personnel could be employed as necessary and as circumstances permitted. The Secretary-General was clearly acknowledged as head of the Office, and set apart for him was the responsibility of seeing that the decisions of the Committee of Direction were carried out, and that the minutes of its meetings were kept. He was to be held ultimately accountable for all general correspondence in the Office and for the disposition of its funds.

As laid down, these rules divided authority in the Office between the Ministry, the Committee of Direction, the Secretary-General (and Treasurer) and the Director. They were designed to maintain a certain consistency of action at the Office and to ensure a permanence of function. They brought the Office into the realm of governmental bureaucracy as a physi-

cal, structured entity designed for public service and assured of public support. This distinguished the OIB at the outset from other kinds of international organisations of a non-governmental, scientific kind. Other, but private international organisations of the time, by no means lacked structure. There was usually the permanent commission of a scientific congress, and a bureau and a secretary-general. Sometimes there was a library, and a regularly published journal. But the organisations existed for the congresses and the journals. The secretary-generalship often rotated at regular intervals from country to country, either for reasons of equal distribution among members of the power and responsibility considered to lie in the hands of the secretary-general, or because of legal difficulties in setting up the organisation permanently in any particular country. Where these problems did not arise, the secretary-general, usually unpaid and busy with other matters, arranged conferences, maintained a store of congress and review publications, often in his own office or library, and generally existed in an administrative vacuum. Compared with these organisations, the OIB was given an unusually secure foundation by the Belgian government.

Two days before the Royal Decree of 14 September 1895 brought the Office under the Belgian government's wing, a letter was sent out from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Belgium's representatives in forty-three countries instructing them to bring the creation of the OIB formally to the notice of these governments, to acquaint them with its adoption by the Belgian government, and to request bibliographical publications from them for its use.<sup>38</sup> Many encouraging replies were received together with a great many documents of one kind and another.<sup>39</sup> There were also some rebuffs, notably from France.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, a way had been paved for the official contact between the OIB and foreign governments. This was made yet easier by the signing of an agreement between the OIB and the Belgian Service for International Exchanges, which undertook to send OIB documents abroad and to act as a central receiver for foreign documents destined for the Office.

Within Belgium, the government proceeded as it had done abroad. In July 1896 a dispatch was sent to the various Belgian ministries requesting that the Office be placed on the deposit lists for their publications. Another request in August 1896 led to the Office receiving the publications of Belgian provincial and city administrations.<sup>41</sup> The Library of the Office was in this manner placed in the position of receiving much useful material free or by exchange, and its collections began to grow rapidly. But above all, the existence of OIB as a semi-governmental agency was widely acknowledged both within and without Belgium, and a number of automatic steps had been

instituted to ensure the steady, regular development of aspects of its work.

Under Article Six of the Royal Decree of 14 September 1895, the Belgian government had undertaken to provide the Office with more spacious and appropriate accommodations than had been at its disposal at the Hotel Ravenstein. Accordingly, part of the Palais des Musées Royaux in the Rue de la Régence in Brussels, was made available to it in July 1896. At this time, too, a paid secretary, Charles Sury, was appointed to supervise the internal activity of the Office. It should not be forgotten that both Otlet and La Fontaine continued to be occupied extensively outside the Office during this period, the one by complicated and distasteful business affairs, the other by his Parliamentary duties and international juridical interests.

Sury took charge of the move from the Hotel Ravenstein to the new quarters. In the summer of 1896, having gone to London in the company of La Fontaine and de Wulf for the Royal Society's International Catalogue of Scientific Literature Conference, Otlet went to Westend, the family holiday resort, for a vacation. During the months of July and August, Sury wrote to him every several days reporting on the progress of the Office, the setting up of which seemed to advance «rapidly and normally», dispatching letters and acknowledging and performing Otlet's instructions.<sup>42</sup> While Otlet was still away a number of the requests previously made of the Ministry of Finances and Public Works and its Administration of Public Buildings were finally met. The rooms in the Palais des Musées received two coats of paint. Arrangements were completed for office furniture to be supplied, and special catalog furniture for the repertories was ordered from a firm of cabinet makers, Dammon—Washer. A number of women had also been employed, and they worked industriously under Sury's watchful eye dismembering the volumes of the Royal Society's *Catalogue of Scientific Papers* for inclusion in the Universal Bibliographic Repertory. Four women averaged about 2,000 cards a day in the period August 25 to 28. «It's not very much!», Sury exclaimed impatiently when they completed fewer than 2,000. Nevertheless, this activity represented a drastic expansion of the Repertory which had hitherto been confined to the literature of the Social Sciences. Sury reported the receipt of a number of interesting publications to Otlet, and mentioned visits and correspondence. John Shaw Billings called,<sup>43</sup> for example, and General Hippolyte Sebert, who became one of OIB's staunchest supporters, began what was to become a regular, voluminous and indecipherable correspondence with Otlet.<sup>44</sup> The Librarian of the Ministry of the Interior and Public Instruction, heralding things to come,

wondered if the Office would be disposed to classify the 20,000 cards of the catalog of the Library of the Ministry and of the Statistical Commission. Sury answered yes.

Above all, during these first few months of the OIB's official existence the word went out into the learned world about the conference, the Classification and the Universal Bibliographic repertory. They were described, discussed, criticised, scorned and praised in a way that could only augur well for the work of the two Belgian bibliographers.

## FOOTNOTES

1. The actual state of Edouard Otlet's financial affairs at any one time is rather difficult to determine. A number of documents throw some light on the not very substantive comments in Otlet's diary, Part II of a deed: *Liquidation et partage de la communauté des biens [de M. Ed. Otlet] et sa défunte épouse et de la succession de cette dernière, 1877* is a property inventory and shows Edouard Otlet to be worth about 1½ million francs. Chapter 14 of Part II of this deed sets up the Patrimony of Paul and Maurice Otlet for ½ million francs. The main account of the fluctuation of the family's fortune is a largely illegible manuscript note in the Otletaneum in Otlet's hand dated Brussels, 7 July, 1893. The latter part of this note reads: «1874 crisis. Father gets the bullet of the Lebon liquidation (?). Hard times. We leave for Paris; 1882 return to Brussels; the splendour of Rio; the decadence of the Spanish affairs. The future? The mines of Soria, the Procès Normand: demand for 2 millions».
2. Edouard Otlet, as well as having Paul and Maurice by his first wife, had four sons and a daughter by his second. They and the tangle of their financial affairs were to be thorns in Otlet's flesh for nearly twenty years after their father's death.
3. In the Otletaneum in Brussels are various MS letters and notes of the negotiations for the sale of the Villa Valère to a Mr. Wilson. Edouard Otlet kept interfering, though the Villa officially belonged half to Paul and Maurice, and half to their stepmother. The notaries dealing with the matter reached an absolute frenzy of exasperation, and the notary, Max Ectors, an old friend of Otlet and his father, intervened to ensure that Otlet's share in the villa would not be overlooked through a disagreement between Maurice and his father. (Max Ectors à Edouard Otlet (copie à Paul) 27 avril, 1903, Otletaneum).
4. W. H. Simon, *European Positivism in the Nineteenth Century*, 151.
5. Edmond Picard, *La Nouvelle Université de Bruxelles*, Extrait de la *Société Nouvelle*; 1894, p. 2. De Greef, 1842—1924, was interested in achieving social, political and financial reform as well as being an influential academic of the period.
6. Edmond Picard, *La Nouvelle Université de Bruxelles* (Bruxelles, 1895), 4—5. (The University still survives in the form of the Institut des Hautes Etudes).
7. Another son was born to Otlet and his wife in 1894. He was named Jean Jacques Valère Otlet.
8. See the Bibliography at the end of this work for a list of the studies written at this time.



9. Georges Lorphèvre to John Metcalfe, 3 April 1950, Otletaneum.

10. Quoted by John Phillip Comeromi, *A History of the Dewey Decimal Classification: editions one through fifteen, 1876-1951* (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Department of Library Science, University of Michigan, 1969), pp. 228-229. The copies of early letters to and from Dewey are missing from the files in the Mundaneum in Brussels.

11. The Library Bureau was organised by Melvil Dewey in the 1880s after a similar venture which had had an initial success and had then declined. It was taken over by H. E. Davidson and a colleague, Dewey retaining a large holding in the company, and became a thriving business dealing not only with library equipment but later and to a larger extent, with office equipment, supplies and methods generally. (Fremont Rider, *Melvil Dewey*, Chicago, American Library Association, 1944).

Cedric Chivers, 1854-1924, was most noted as a commercial book binder who developed a new method of stitching. He operated a large factory in Bath and opened an American factory in 1905. He was well known in the United States. He was supposed to have crossed the Atlantic 120 times in the course of his life and to have been in more public libraries there than any other man. Towards the end of his life he was Mayor of Bath for six terms. His connection with the Library Bureau and its agency in London is rather obscure and only very scattered information is available on him.

12. The first six expansions of Charles Ami Cutter's *Expansive Classification* were published between 1891 and 1893. The seventh expansion, about which Otlet and La Fontaine were curious, was intended for extremely large collections. It was issued in parts, but Cutter died (1903) before it was completed.

Frederic B. Perkins, 1829-1899, published a *Rational Classification of Literature for Shelving and Cataloging Books in a Library* in 1881. He devised this classification owing to his dissatisfaction with Dewey's system which he had found in use at the San Francisco Public Library which he joined as Librarian in 1880. He had had previous library experience at the Boston Public Library.

See also various letters from Chivers to Otlet and La Fontaine for the period from 5 March 1895 to July 1895 - Dossier No. 239, 'Library Bureau. Boston - Londres', Mundaneum.

13. H. La Fontaine and Paul Otlet, *Sur la création d'un répertoire bibliographique universel: note*, Conférence Bibliographique Internationale, Bruxelles 1895, Documents (Bruxelles, 1895), p. 7.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 16. Otlet and La Fontaine are here referring to a scheme developed for a bibliography of mathematics by the Société Mathématique de France and adopted in 1889.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

21. The first fascicule of the *Bulletin* of the International Institute of Bibliography reproduces Otlet and La Fontaine's note 'On the creation of a universal bibliographic repertory'. The title is altered and it is stated that the question of bibliography had been under study in Brussels for 6 years (not 3), and the number of notices classified by Dewey for the conference was 400,000 (not 200,000). 'Création d'un ré-

pertoire bibliographique universel. Note préliminaire par Messrs. H. La Fontaine et P. Otlet', *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-6) 15-38. The figure 400,000 was also mentioned in Edouard Descamps' closing address. 'Discours (de clôture de la Conférence Bibliographique Internationale)', *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-6), 5.

22. Ernest Solvay, 1838-1922, discovered an ammonia process for making sodium carbonate. He became enormously wealthy, and turned to economic and social speculation. In 1888 under the influence of Paul Héger he endowed the Institut Solvay de Physiologie at the Université Libre de Bruxelles with Héger at its Head. In 1893 he set up the Institut des Sciences Sociales (which became the Institut Solvay de Sociologie). Otlet was acquainted with Solvay through the Institut des Sciences Sociales and had taken issue with some of Solvay's speculations. Solvay was to be even more closely associated with Otlet when he assumed the Presidency of the International Office of Bibliography from 1907 to 1914.

23. Baron Edouard-Eugène-François Descamps, 1847-1933, studied law and taught at the Université de Louvain. He was elected to the Belgian Senate and eventually became Vice-President, in this as in so much else, following a career parallelled by that of Henri La Fontaine. He was appointed by the King, Léopold II, President of the Conseil Supérieur de l'Etat du Congo. He became Minister for Sciences and Arts in 1907. He was very much interested in international arbitration and became Secretary, then President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

24. See for example 'Address of the President', *Royal Society of London Proceedings*, LIX (1895), 113; *Library Journal*, XX (1895), 337; and particularly G. Fumagalli, 'La Conférence Internationale de Bibliographie de Bruxelles et le Répertoire Bibliographique Universel', p. 11, in *Archives Nationales de France F1713492, Répertoire Bibliographique Universel: renseignements généraux, notes et rapports*, and a note signed O. G. in *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, XII (1894), 481-2.

25. An account of these matters is contained in the Presidents' Addresses, *Royal Society of London Proceedings*, LVII (1894), 43-44, and particularly LIX (1895), 111-12. The report of the International Catalogue Committee of the Royal Society for 1895 is printed in *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-6), 107-112.

26. G. Fumagalli, *op. cit.* and note signed O. G. in *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*. Baudouin reported a gathering of 'thirty came from the whole world' (M. Baudouin, 'Le Problème Bibliographique', *Revue Scientifique*, 7 décembre 1895, p. 709), whereas Fumagalli put the numbers at 'forty or fifty'.

27. Fumagalli, among others, was sarcastic about the circular of invitation to the Conference, observing 'happy he who has seen it; I have not seen it, nor has any of my friends, but it was known how to find our names to send us the list of inscription to the new Institutes. (Giuseppe Fumagalli, 1863-1939, was at this time Director of the Braidense di Milano and later became Director of the Library of the University of Bologna). Apparently responding to various requests that the invitation be printed, Otlet included it in the 2nd issue of the *IIB Bulletin* I (1895-6), 141.

28. Comeromi, p. 231.

29. 'Décisions et Voeux', *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-6), 10-11.

30. 'Institut International de Bibliographie: statuts', *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-6), pp. 12-14.

31. *Moniteur belge*, 17 September 1895, and 24 December 1895. Report of the Minister and the Royal decrees are reproduced in *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-6), 58-61.
32. Ferdinand Van der Haeghen, 1830-1913, was responsible for the still continuing, enormous *Bibliotheca Belgica*. This was begun in 1880 and took the novel form of small separate sheets. It was continued after Van der Haeghen's death by his deputy, Paul Bergmans, and was completed in 1964. A new edition is now under way in conventional volume form.  
Michel-Félix Moulon, 1845-1915, was a distinguished geologist and paleontologist who became Director of the Service Géologique de Belgique in 1897. He became Director of the Classes des Sciences in the Académie Royale des Sciences et des Beaux Arts in 1894.  
Maurice de Wulf, 1867-1946, like Otlet's old friend Armand Thiéry, was one of Cardinal Mercier's first group of students at Louvain. He rose in the academic ranks to professeur ordinaire in 1899. He was secretary to the *Revue Néoscholastique* founded by Mercier and became its editor in 1906, a post he held for 40 years. He was a member of the Académie Royale des Sciences et des Beaux Arts.
33. La Fontaine, however, soon grew in eminence in Parliament. In later years he was Premier Vice-President of the Senate and played the piano for Queen Elizabeth and went mountain climbing with King Albert. It is of interest that before he ascended the throne in 1909, Albert was himself a member of the Senate for the preceding six years.
34. These bibliographies went through a number of rather rapid changes of title and relationship which are described in *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-6), 146-148.
35. «Bureaucratisation» is used here, not in any pejorative sense, but in the general sense given it in the literature of sociology and organisation theory.
36. «Note pour M. le Secrétaire Général de l'Administration des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts, 10 janvier 1897». Archives du Royaume de Belgique, Enseignement Supérieur, Nouveau Fonds, No. 381.
37. «Règlement d'ordre intérieur de l'Office International de Bibliographie», *Moniteur belge*, 12 December 1898. They were reproduced in various IIB publications such as *Annuaire de l'Institut International de Bibliographie pour l'année 1899* (IIB Publication No. 23; Bruxelles: IIB, 1899), pp. 20-23.
38. Copy of a letter dated 11 September 1895 sent to forty-three countries. Archives du Royaume de Belgique, Enseignement Supérieur, Nouveau Fonds, No. 389.
39. Henri La Fontaine. «Rapport sur le progrès de l'organisation bibliographique internationale depuis la première Conférence Bibliographique de 1895», *IIB Bulletin*, II (1897), 246.
40. Archives Nationales de France, Bibliothèques et Archives, F 1713492: Répertoire Bibliographique Universel, «renseignements généraux, notes et rapports», and, «correspondences».
41. Letters to and from the Service belge d'Échanges Internationaux and other departments about the exchange of OIB materials are to be found in Archives du Royaume de Belgique, Enseignement Supérieur, Nouveau Fonds, No. 381.
42. The following information is taken from a small file of letters to which separate reference is not made. They cover the period July and August 1896 and are contained in Dossier No. 183, «Otlet, Paul», Mundaneum.
43. John Shaw Billings, 1839-1913, was admitted to the Medical Corps of the United States and served in the Civil War. He took charge of the Surgeon-General's library, published its *Index-Catalogue* in 1890, having begun *Index Medicus* the year before. He was instrumental in United States hospital re-organisation and was closely associated with the foundation of the Johns Hopkins Medical School and Hospital. After retiring from the Surgeon-General's office he was appointed as the first Director of the New York Public Library in 1896. He became President of the American Library Association in 1902.
44. General Sebert, 1839-1930, graduated from the Ecole Polytechnique in the French Corps d'Artillerie de Marin in 1860. He spent some time in the service in New Caledonia and was involved in the siege of Paris in 1870. After notable research in ballistics he was placed in charge of an artillery laboratory in the navy. He became President of the Association française pour l'avancement des sciences, of the Fédération espérantiste de France, and the Société française de photographie and was one of the senior members of the Institut de France.

## Chapter IV

### INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS AND EARLY DEVELOPMENTS

#### MAINLY EUROPEAN BIBLIOGRAPHERS

The International reaction to the Conference was considerable. The participants in the conference, thirty, forty or fifty of them according to different reporters went back to their various countries, and were soon followed by the early publication of the IIB—OIB—the French tables for sociology of the Decimal Classification, the first fascicule of the Institute's *Bulletin*, and the first bibliographies. By the end of 1896 nearly 70 reviews of the conference and of these publications had appeared in an enormous variety of popular trade, literary and scientific periodicals issued in France, England, America, Germany, Spain and Belgium.<sup>1</sup> Some reviews were simply informative. In others, partisans, adversaries, and sceptics declared themselves in no uncertain terms.

In England, as in America, there was little passion. The news that an International Office and Institute of Bibliography had been launched was accorded a polite but cursory attention. *The Athenaeum* for example, expressed admiration for the extent and variety of the accomplishments of the conference of bibliography, but concluded that the classification by the Decimal system of nearly half a million notices upon which the convenors of the conference had labored indicated that the undertaking was «far too large for private enterprise, or even for a society; and... cannot hope of success without the practical adhesion of the various governments».<sup>2</sup> This view was also held in the United States, where the whole venture was seen as something quite European and very far away.<sup>3</sup>

We are not fully informed whether the international bibliographic conference which met recently at Brussels is entitled to so large a name, or is, perhaps, the development of a private scheme... The value of an international scheme is, of course, in its uniformity... The system as perfected by Mr. Dewey is so widely in use in this country that it would be difficult to conform to a new version at this late date.

On the other hand... it is doubtless true that decided improvements can be made in the original when under expert advice... Messrs. La Fontaine and Otlet of the International Bibliographical Office, have certainly brought forward an interesting subject, and we trust it may be taken up internationally and thoroughly worked out.<sup>4</sup>

On the whole the Royal Society was not much impressed. The invitation for a representative from the Society to attend the conference had come too late for it to be acted on in sufficient time. Not long after the conference ended, however, the Society's Senior Secretary had been able to visit Brussels to look over what the Institute had begun to do there. He noted «the skill and zeal with which the preliminary preparations have been made to carry the work into execution».<sup>5</sup> But in the opinion of Lord Kelvin, the President of the Society, while the energy and enterprise which had been displayed in Belgium were to be admired, the Royal Society should not be deterred from attempting to carry out its own bibliographic program. «It is impossible», he observed, «to overrate the difficulties» connected with the Brussels venture and concluded that «to avoid unnecessary complication in the future, it is essential that very many questions—especially the division of the subject matter in the various branches of science and the nomenclature to be used—be taken into consideration by competent bodies and settled by general agreement».<sup>6</sup>

In Europe, however, comment was not lukewarm or criticism a decorous damning by faint praise. Eminent European bibliographers and librarians, especially in France, rose up as one man in elegant tumult against the Belgians. A Universal Bibliographic Repertory would, no doubt, said Louis Polain,<sup>7</sup> be useful. But «we consider the manner in which the authors of the project have proceeded to be very defective».<sup>8</sup> He objected to the idea of cutting up existing printed catalogs, and he objected emphatically to the Decimal Classification which «far from helping searching, rebuffs the reader».<sup>9</sup> He was by no means convinced that Otlet and La Fontaine had avoided, as they claimed, the faults of traditional arrangements of bibliographic material such as by the alphabet or by the system of Brunet. The Decimal Classification had a strong American bias and in many places was illogical and arbitrary. «The whole of Europe occupies one of the subdivisions of the group 9 *History* with no distinction of period or country, but North America and South America each have one. Isn't that really ridiculous?»<sup>10</sup>

The initial reaction of Henri Stein<sup>11</sup> to the Belgian scheme was extremely hostile and he grew increasingly vituperative about it as the years passed.<sup>12</sup> Eventually he denounced «the perfect inanity and actual uselessness» of the «grandiose and rather temeritous projects» of the two Belgian bibliographers.<sup>13</sup> For Stein, «not only is it indispensable that bibliog-



raphy, to be truly useful, specialise more and more; it is necessary that it be systematic and explained». Lists of references are practically useless even when classified. «One must read and understand and criticise. True bibliography should be made deliberately by men knowledgeable in the matter dealt with, and able to give a useful opinion on the manner in which it has been treated.»<sup>14</sup>

The most judicious, though also negative criticism came from Franz Funck-Brentano of the Arsenal Library, Léopold Delisle of the Bibliothèque Nationale, and C. V. Langlois, a professor of Paleography and History in the Sorbonne. Funck-Brentano gracefully paid tribute to the generous and elevated thought of the two Belgians who had expressed themselves, he declared, with «an ardour, an enthusiasm, a breath of youth and faith» that was quite disarming.<sup>15</sup> But like his colleagues, he suspected that not only would their work not be really useful, it would be unrealisable because of inadequacies in the Decimal Classification. He was at his most devastating, however, when he turned to its founders' idea that subscriptions should be taken out to the Universal Bibliographic Repertory at the rate of 800 francs for 100,000 cards per year. Otlet and La Fontaine had also suggested that three million notices should be rapidly accumulated allowing for 25 per cent error. Funck-Brentano pointed out that it would be difficult to correct such errors as might occur for it would take 30 years to distribute the original cards. He suggested, moreover, that one hundred thousand notices a year would not really begin to account for the annual bibliographic output of the world. A figure like 600,000 would be nearer the mark. Because most libraries would need several sets of cards — one set to be in classified order, and one in alphabetical order of author's names, for example, they would in fact need to receive at least 1,200,000 cards annually. The subscription rates proposed would make the whole venture prohibitively expensive for libraries. He pointed out that a subscription to the British Museum's Catalogue which was then being printed with an estimated one per cent error was a mere fraction of the cost of the Belgian scheme. It had just ten subscribers on the continent.

Delisle undertook to review the fourth edition of the Dewey Classification published in 1894, the Brussels Tables for Sociology, Otlet and La Fontaine's preliminary note for the 1895 conference, and the first issue of the *IIB Bulletin*. He had intended to write two articles, and the first was firmly addressed to the Decimal Classification under a running title, «Public Libraries in the United States». In general, Delisle was concerned at the lack of dissent when the classification was adopted in Brussels, and he was alarmed at the apparent

aim of the Belgians to have libraries exchange in its favour classifications already in use. «One should not, I believe», he said, «accept lightly and without having submitted it to rigorous and repeated proofs, a procedure that, by leading to a radical change of affairs, would expose our old libraries to a complete disorganisation. It is necessary, therefore, to seek out the weaknesses of the Decimal Classification to ensure that they do not outweigh its advantages.»<sup>16</sup> He found what he sought. The classification, he observed, clearly lacked proportion and its emphasis was too American. He examined in some detail the sections in it for philology, the Roman Catholic religious orders, biography and history, pointing out the manifest inadequacies of each. In his second article, which was never published and presumably never written, he proposed to study the use to be made of the classification in Brussels. Whatever the readers of the *Journal des Savants* may have thought was implied by the failure of his second article to appear, the supporters of the Belgian Institute were heartily glad that it did not.<sup>17</sup> Elaborate pains were taken thereafter by the Institute's staff to avoid any contact with Delisle that might be thought to beard the lion in his den and shatter the golden silence of that second article.<sup>18</sup>

Langlois, like the others, was critical of the Decimal Classification. In his view, Otlet and La Fontaine were infatuated with it and led by the nose by it. «They love the Decimal Classification to the point of wanting to introduce it everywhere»,<sup>19</sup> in libraries, in trade bibliographies, even in magazines, the articles of which should all be given their own classification number. He considered it altogether unlikely that governments could be persuaded to form a bibliographic union, as the Belgians hoped, as had been done in the case of the Postal Union, for example, and in many other cases. Such agreement as these unions represented could be negotiated only when there was imperious, demonstrable need. «The states will hesitate to pledge themselves to indefinite sacrifices for problematic returns.»<sup>20</sup> He thought it prudent indeed that the conference of Brussels had set up its own private Institute of Bibliography and had not waited for the governments of the world to unite to do it.

Like Stein and Polain, Langlois was concerned that the projected repertory would be just a list of titles. «It is possible, indeed, by an effort of imagination, to conceive that a body of very numerous employees and indexers, trained and maintained by the Institute, could complete the formation of a single repertory shaped in the mould of the Decimal Classification out of all the printed catalogues of libraries, all the old bibliographic collections and booktrade journals of all countries.»<sup>21</sup> But it would be impossible for them to know

more than the titles of the millions and millions of works that they would thus catalog. He recognised that enumerative, uncritical bibliographies had begun to multiply prodigiously, and that some form of co-operative approach to bibliography had become necessary. The Royal Society had made this latter point quite clear. But all these ventures, co-operative, enumerative and uncritical though they might be, were specialised. Even the Royal Society had limited itself to the area of the sciences. It would have been much better, in his view, if Otlet and La Fontaine had been content to devote themselves to forming a Bureau of Legal and Sociological Bibliography. In such a limited area, in considerable need of organisation, the Belgians might have had some hope of success. The tone of Langlois' article was slightly disdainful and at the Institute it was called a philippic.<sup>22</sup>

It is clear that the professional librarians and bibliographers of France could not accept Otlet and La Fontaine's proposals for mainly two reasons. The first turned on their attitude to the Decimal Classification, and the second on their attitude towards the idea of a universal catalog. In their discussions of both they were deeply influenced by prior knowledge and experience. Their principal objection to the Decimal Classification was not that it was imperfect, for, though this was a fact they were anxious to demonstrate at length, no one would have undertaken to deny it. Rather, the claims made for it seemed to imply that older classifications should be thrown out, and with them should go the old bibliographical order itself in which they had fully vested interests. They responded therefore to the glowing account the Belgians gave of the potentialities of the classification by declaring flatly and at once that by no means did it represent the coming of a bibliographical millenium. Nationalist and professional fervor surged through their pens as though from the threat of some aggressive imperialism as they advised caution.

On the other hand, they brought to their study of the International Institute of Bibliography and the Universal Bibliographic Repertory a full but inhibiting knowledge of similar schemes tried or projected elsewhere at other times. Now that the catalogs of the great national libraries of England and France, The British Museum Library and the Bibliothèque Nationale, were at last being printed, the librarians of Europe were all too ready to share the conviction of those directing the production of these catalogs that they could naturally and simply be transformed into the long hoped for, panaceatic, universal catalogue. But, quite apart from the universal catalog a bibliographer for them was an erudite and discriminating man who frankly acknowledged boundaries to the areas of his competence. Within these boundaries,

however, he was as mighty as a crusader wielding sword and buckler amid swarming infidels. With a penetration which derived from, as it was heightened by, a procedure of infinite comparison, his task was laboriously, comprehensively, to analyse, criticise, interpret, describe and annotate the works falling within the consciously limited purview of his attention. To his disciplines and his sense of fitting limitation the Belgians had not chosen to submit and so, callow and pretentious, stood doubly damned.

## FRENCH SCIENTISTS

It was not so with the scientists of France, who, like their confrères elsewhere in Europe and America, had become increasingly aware of the problems presented by their rapidly proliferating literature. The publication during the last half of the century of the Royal Society's *Catalogue of Scientific Papers* slow though it was, represented a response to a widely experienced need. The recognition that this catalogue was no longer adequate, the demand that it be expanded, and the realisation that it could be made full enough to be useful only by international co-operation, was an example of a much more general phenomenon. The International Institute of Statistics as early as 1887, and the International Colonial Institute set up in Brussels in 1894, had addressed themselves to organising bibliographical services.<sup>23</sup> The International Congress on the Bibliography of the Mathematical Sciences in 1889 had attempted to do for the literature of mathematics, what the Royal Society proposed in 1894 for the literature of the natural sciences as a whole. An International Congress of Applied Chemistry had set up an International Bureau of Chemical Literature in Brussels in 1894,<sup>24</sup> and an International Congress of Zoology had established the Concilium Bibliographicum in Zurich in 1895.<sup>25</sup> The American Association for the Advancement of Science was actively attempting to create for Botany a bibliographical bureau similar to the Concilium Bibliographicum, and the bibliography of geography was an important pre-occupation of the International Congresses of the Geographical Sciences.<sup>26</sup>

When the Association française pour l'avancement des sciences began to ponder the problems of bibliography, its first deliberations were directed towards the difficulties encountered in formulating titles for scientific papers which would be specific, concrete and accurate. A Committee of the Association presented a report on the matter to the Association's meeting in Bordeaux in August 1895. Its recommendations agreed substantially with a more detailed proposal for uniform citations of scientific papers prepared by a Committee of the

International Congress of Physiology. This had been brought before a meeting of that Congress also in 1895. Some of the provisions of this latter proposal were in their turn adoptions of citation rules devised by Herbert Haviland Field and the International Congress of Zoology for the Concilium Bibliographicum.<sup>27</sup> Aspects of international bibliographical standardisation were, it can be seen, on the order of the day of a number of scientific congresses of the time.

Representatives of the French Association for the Advancement of Sciences carried the Association's resolutions for preparing titles of scientific papers to Brussels to the International Conference of Bibliography for adoption.<sup>28</sup> Gratified by the favourable response they had received in Brussels, they came away enthusiasts for the Decimal Classification and the plans of Otlet and La Fontaine for the Institute of Bibliography. Distinguished, well-connected scientists all, they soon broke into print with accounts of the conference and the events arising from it, behind many of which lay their own energetic attempts to be of practical assistance to the new Institute.

Charles Richet<sup>29</sup> decided that all the articles appearing in the *Revue scientifique*, which he edited, from the beginning of 1896 would bear a decimal classification number. He admitted that the classification was not perfect, but

it is impossible to imagine one which would please all the world — but that of Dewey has the incomparable advantage that it exists, that it is used, that it serves to classify in America more than 10 million volumes, and that if one wanted to substitute another for it, which would run the risk of not being better, it would not be followed.<sup>30</sup>

Richet foresaw that, after a few years, the classification would become widely used «and we are anxious to be the first to apply it in Europe after Messrs. La Fontaine and Otlet».<sup>31</sup> A few months after these observations were made, he returned again to the defence of the Decimal Classification and summarised his position thus:

1. An international bibliographic classification is necessary.
2. Such a classification should be at once alphabetical by authors' names, and analytical by subjects treated.
3. Any analytical classification can be made only in an international language, and the only universal international language one could adopt is the language of numbers, consequently a numerical classification, which implies, clearly, the adoption of a decimal arrangement.
4. Any analytical classification can only be artificial; it is absolutely chimerical to hope for a definitive, integrated and faultless classification of all human knowledge.
5. The Dewey system in use for a long time, and having been tested from a practical point of view, can by successive additions very well become an easy, commodious, and general classification.

6. Any overturning of the Dewey system, offering only very problematical advantages, would, at a blow, ensure the serious inconvenience of creating absolute anarchy, and the only chance of reaching bibliographic unity is to accept the system such as it is. Any other procedure would end in failure.<sup>32</sup>

C. M. Gariel like Richet had formed a high opinion of the Dewey Decimal Classification, indeed he went so far as to observe that the idea of decimal numeration «was an idea of genius».<sup>33</sup> Marcel Baudouin undertook to translate into French, German and Italian the Decimal Classification tables for the biological sciences,<sup>34</sup> which he began to develop and apply at once to a medical bibliography he had begun compiling in Paris.<sup>35</sup>

These and other French scientists gathered together all those interested into a French section of the International Institute of Bibliography. Among those who joined was General Sebert. A specific aim of this group was to urge the adoption of the Decimal Classification on the Royal Society when it met in its International Catalogue Conference in London in the summer of 1896.<sup>36</sup> Not long before the actual opening of this conference, the French section met in Paris and declared:

The French Section of the International Institute of Bibliography, having re-examined the decisions taken by the Conference of Bibliography of Brussels in 1895 and the program presented by the Royal Society of London, expresses the wish to see the bibliographical catalog of the sciences proposed by the Society, undertaken in accordance with the Universal Bibliographic Repertory. It believes that the Decimal Classification, completed with the agreement of all interested groups, is of a kind to respond completely to the necessities of an international bibliographic classification.<sup>37</sup>

## REBUTTAL OF CRITICISM, AMPLIFICATION

Sensitive to the criticisms directed against the Institute and its programs, Otlet and La Fontaine were careful to avoid the polemics of confrontation. In the second number of the *IIB Bulletin*, Otlet attempted to provide a further general explanation of what the Institute proposed to do which would constitute an untendentious reply to its various critics.<sup>38</sup> He began by once again asserting the incontestable necessity for a universal bibliographic repertory. Such a repertory, he believed, could properly be conceived of only as universal in scope. However many were the divisions and subdivisions of human knowledge, functionally, essentially it was a unity. No more than in Nature could there be found within its corpus isolated, absolutely independent facts. From such a view, implying clearly the philosophical premises upon which the work of the IIB was based, followed the desideratum that «all documents, writings, books, brochures, articles, etc.» relative to



all subjects should be inventoried. For all that is written, there should be prepared a general, synthetic contents table. No matter how separate bibliographers might be in terms of distance, or how remote from each other in terms of subject, they could all contribute to the essential bibliographical unity, of whose existence Otlet was so firmly convinced, if they would only agree to the relatively simple requirement of publication of standardised bibliographical information on cards.

The RBU was not to be construed as prejudicing the autonomy of what existed. It was not meant to be destructive in any way. For its coverage of the past it had to utilise everything presently available; for the present and the future, if it had the co-operation of bibliographers in the ways projected, it could slowly, naturally, evolve towards its goals. The knowledge that the universal repertory could be completed only upon immense labour was no argument, Otlet reasoned, for not undertaking the labour, nor was the awareness that it would, inevitably, contain mistakes. After all, error existed no less in the bibliographical work of others. Otlet was now, however, rather more cautious in giving a figure for the percentage error, suggesting it might be from 15 to 20 per cent. But one should, he observed in effect, emphasise the positive aspect of this error: at least 80 per cent of the repertory would contain invaluable information. It would be better to have access to this much than to none at all, to be even slightly misled by an error of fact, than to rest in complete ignorance of the fact. The repertory, he stressed, was not a work of art, but a tool. It should be compared with the factories and machines which had revolutionised contemporary industry. It was a form of organising scientific work better than it had been organised in the past — no more, no less.

Some of the repertory's critics had feared that it would contain gaps; others had feared that in its eschewal of selectivity, it would contain too much. This touched again on the problem of specialisation and Otlet was quite clear about it — a bibliographer could not choose without appearing to be arbitrary. He had to list everything for he could not know how or why different persons at different times would approach the literature of a subject.

Other critics Otlet characterised as bibliographical generalists. They had devoted themselves to tracing the origins of the newly born work. This was commendable and potentially constructive «for nothing comes of nothing... But it would be truly unjust to turn this historical preoccupation against the institution one is examining.»<sup>39</sup> Otlet mentioned the various proposals and schemes put forward in the past for a universal catalog or a great union catalog of public libraries, but argued that because such ventures had existed only

in the realms of possibility, one should not infer that the aims of the IIB were unrealisable. «This Institute is the first in which theory has courageously dared to descend to practice. It was founded only after a careful study of the causes of failure of previous projects, and after a preliminary experimental phase of several years.»<sup>40</sup> About other problems and difficulties Otlet remained rather vague. Financial difficulties, especially, he dismissed in a word: «really useful works... have always found financial support.»<sup>41</sup> In any case subscriptions would be taken out to the Repertory both as a whole by great national libraries, and in parts according to subject areas by individuals and organisations with special interests.

As for the Decimal Classification, he repeated that «by its extreme simplicity, its international intelligibility, its concise notation in universally known symbols, those of arabic numbers, finally by its indefinite extension, the Decimal Classification applied to the organisation of scientific materials, has very generally been appreciated as offering a definitive solution to the bibliographic problem.»<sup>42</sup> To those who argued that the classification was not sufficiently scientific, Otlet repeated that bibliographic classifications must be distinguished from classifications of science which from Bacon to Spencer had continually been modified as science itself developed. Classifications of science must be flexible in contrast to bibliographical classifications which must be stable so that «in twenty years one can find in the same place, notices which appear there today.»<sup>43</sup>

Behind the Decimal Classification, he reiterated, which had been demonstrated for over seventeen years in America to be the most useful, the most immediately applicable bibliographical classification, there lay «an immense synoptic table of human knowledge.»<sup>44</sup> The classification was so constructed that it had great flexibility to encompass new knowledge by its infinite but orderly extensibility. The use of auxiliary tables (the geographical subdivisions and the table of the «generalities») together with the use of the colon for combining numbers gave it considerable synthetic power for description. One could read the numbers in a «synthetic» way as combining different ideas, that is, in effect, as a code, an approach facilitated by the fact that «the sense attributed to each of the numbers is permanent and absolute, identical in all the combinations of which it is made part.»<sup>45</sup>

Otlet admitted that the use of the classification was not without difficulties, and he considered briefly those related to the compilation of the classification tables and the index to them and the indexing of bibliographical notices. He pointed out that though the tables and the index needed extension and correction they were very detailed at present and their improve-

ment could be done piecemeal by experts. Nor should it be forgotten, he insisted, that the intellectual problems of indexing were always present no matter what system was used but the Decimal Classification with its index and tables could give much assistance to an indexer by suggesting approaches and relationships.

Otlet now developed his notions of what the Institute should be like more clearly than before. Its aim, he believed, should be sufficiently general to encompass both friends and enemies of the Repertory and the Decimal Classification. It should be «a sort of federation of distinct groups the union of which is necessary: scholars, bibliographers, librarians and publishers». In many scientific fields international congresses had set up sections for bibliography, but they had not been co-ordinated. «In joining the Institute, as they have commenced to do, they will constitute distinct scientific sections to which the Statutes of the Institute, precise on this point, will give extensive powers in the domain of their special questions.»<sup>46</sup>

Otlet's article, though it was published in the *IIB Bulletin*, was by no means the confident performance of a preacher haranguing the converted. It was calculated to provide explanation, correction, amplification and encouragement for those who had become interested but remained sceptical, ill-informed but open to conviction, aware of controversy and confused by it. On the whole he avoided the clever, sophisticated replies to which the misapprehensions and the superficialities of his critics could easily have led him.

#### THE BEGINNINGS OF INTERNATIONAL ACTION

One reason Otlet and La Fontaine spent so little time in the arena of public literary polemics immediately after the founding of IIB was that they were too busy for them. The Institute and the Office formally established, they began at once to spend more and more time bringing pressure to bear on friends and acquaintances well-connected in various specialised associations and societies in order to rally these organisations to the IIB so that they might undertake the development of appropriate parts of the repertory and of the classification. They became inveterate conference goers, and promoters and recorders of bibliographic resolutions, and they were successful. Towards the end of 1895 the Bureau of the Office of Bibliography was invited to the headquarters of the Royal Society in London to explain what was afoot in Brussels.<sup>47</sup> Herbert Haviland Field put the Concilium Bibliographicum in correspondence with IIB, suggested the use of the standard American 75×125 millimeter catalog card instead of the long thin card adopted by the Conference of Bibliography and

finally convinced Otlet and La Fontaine of its value. The Concilium Bibliographicum then became not only a member but a section of the Institute.<sup>48</sup> Immediately following the Conference of Bibliography the two friends set off post-haste for Dresden where the Congrès Littéraire et Artistique International (the International Copyright Convention Congress) was meeting. On the agenda was a proposal by Jules Lermina for a universal bibliographic repertory. Lermina had been urging the Bureau of the Convention in Berne to set up such a repertory for a number of years. Otlet and La Fontaine hoped to encourage the Congress to support the idea, pointing out how successful they had been already in getting such a repertory underway in Brussels. The Congress appeared to be sceptical and unenthusiastic and referred the matter to a committee for study. The idea seems subsequently to have been dropped.<sup>49</sup>

In 1896, accompanied by Maurice de Wulf, Otlet and La Fontaine set off to England for the inaugural meeting of the Royal Society's Conference on an International Catalogue of Scientific Literature. Otlet read a long report to the Conference on the aims and methods of the IIB, and vigorously defended the Decimal Classification when objections were made to it, as they were with some spirit by John Shaw Billings and others no less eminent. The effectiveness of the Belgian delegates in promoting the IIB—OIB at the Conference was limited in several ways. There were rigid rules of procedure and a previously prepared agenda. Some preliminary inspection of IIB—OIB had already been carried out by the Royal Society in 1895 and a decision had been made then to proceed with the development of a special classification for scientific literature. Otlet was a young man, not thirty, and when compared with his colleagues both from Europe and from the Royal Society itself, by no means a distinguished scientist. The burden of presenting the case for the Decimal Classification and for collaboration between the IIB and the Royal Society seems to have fallen principally upon him. He spoke in French, though La Fontaine had a good command of English. He spoke enthusiastically, at length, and at times, out of order. But though the Conference as a whole took little notice of the Belgian demands, no member could have left it unaware of the existence of the OIB—IIB and of its program.<sup>50</sup>

From London Otlet went next to Italy to take up the cause there. The Associazione Tipografico—Libreria Italiana had called an Italian Bibliographical Conference for September in Florence in order to discuss formally the Institute of Bibliography created in Brussels. More than 80 delegates attended the Conference.<sup>51</sup> The way was paved by an article

in the *Bolletino delle Pubblicazione Italiane* by Desiderio Chilovi, the Librarian of the National Central Library of Florence. In this article, Chilovi had undertaken to examine the question: «Would it be useful for the libraries and for the book trade of Italy to adhere to the resolutions of the International Conference of Bibliography in Brussels, and more particularly, to co-operate in the elaboration of a universal bibliographic repertory, by accepting the Decimal Classification of Melvil Dewey as a unique international system of bibliographical classification?»<sup>52</sup> Chilovi was very much in favour. Otlet, accompanied by an Austrian colleague, Carl Junker, expounded the IIB's program at the Conference. Giuseppe Fumagalli, an early critic, was suspicious and satirical. Eventually, however, «the hostile resolutions of Fumagalli were repulsed», and the conference declared that it applauded «the intelligent initiative taken by the Bibliographical Institute of Brussels, to which it conveyed cordial greetings».<sup>53</sup> The Conference recommended that the Associazione Tipografico-Libraria Italiana appoint a commission to study the matters involved in any active collaboration with the IIB. An Italian Bibliographical Association, with Fumagalli elected one of its officers, was formed at the end of the Conference.<sup>54</sup> Problems of organising support in Italy for the IIB continued to play some though an increasingly minor part in the discussions of subsequent meetings of the new association.<sup>55</sup> That Otlet and La Fontaine had turned fertile soil in Italy, however, cannot be doubted. Many Italian journals began to assign decimal classification numbers to articles appearing in them and various Italian translations of the Decimal Classification and commentaries on it began to appear.<sup>56</sup>

Other occasions were seized to promote the Institute. A number of Otlet and La Fontaine's most enthusiastic supporters lectured and wrote on it. In France there were the French scientists.<sup>57</sup> Carl Junker in Austria, as well as lecturing on the Institute and the Classification and publishing articles about them, undertook to set up an Austrian Secretariat for it.<sup>58</sup> Also during 1896, Zech du Biez, Vice-President of the Belgian Booksellers' Association, urged the first International Congress of Publishers to attend closely to the IIB's program. The Congress as a result, voted that it would be desirable «to see the more generalised use of methodical classification in booksellers' catalogs». It also recorded a resolution that publishing houses of all countries should «attempt to form national bibliographies which would serve some day as the basis for the compilation of a Universal Bibliographical Repertory».<sup>59</sup> On yet another occasion, the Institute's supporters, headed by La Fontaine, turned out in force at Liège for the Congress of the International Union of Pho-

tography in August 1896. As a result of their participation at the Congress, the Union joined the Institute and adopted in principle the tables of the Decimal Classification for photography which had been prepared by Louis Stanier, an attaché at the Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique in Brussels and J. Valot of the Musée de Documentation Photographique in Paris. General Sebert, for whom photography was an absorbing interest, became the French member of the Permanent International Commission of the Union.<sup>60</sup>

By 1897 the progress of the Institute was impressive. Its second conference was held in August that year in Brussels. Charles Ami Cutter presented a paper on his Expansive Classification to the conference. Inevitably the Decimal Classification came up for debate and an impressive array of figures rose to support it, including Clement Andrews, the Librarian of the John Crerar Library in Chicago. Two years before, the Classification had been virtually unknown in Europe. Three important resolutions were taken by the conference. First, it was resolved that the Institute should appoint a commission of specialists from «various countries for the purpose of establishing an international code of rules for forming bibliographical notices». Second, that it should appoint another commission to study «the most practical and economical method of printing cards». The third resolution recognised «the usefulness of forming national branches within the International Institute of Bibliography». These resolutions show the Institute beginning to grapple with quite practical problems of international co-operation both in terms of input to the RBU (rules for forming bibliographic notices) and output from it (printing cards from it for distribution). The third resolution involved both notions though its implications were not explored by Otlet until a number of years later.<sup>62</sup>

This second conference of the IIB had been postponed from 1896 to 1897 for two reasons. On the one hand, it was thought that a meeting in London of the Royal Society's Conference which was to be held in 1896, and one involving many of the same figures in Brussels shortly afterwards, would be needlessly repetitive.<sup>63</sup> On the other, by arranging the Conference in 1897, Otlet and La Fontaine were able to seize the opportunity of participating in and exploiting a large international exposition held in Brussels that year.<sup>64</sup> Otlet, La Fontaine and Van der Haeghen, Librarian of the University of Ghent organised a class, Bibliography, in the section of the exposition for the sciences. A letter of invitation to exhibit went out from them to members of the bibliographic and library worlds. The participants in the IIB's conference repaired to the exposition as well as to the installations of the OIB and at both they were given guided tours and all the



necessary explanation of the OIB's work and methods. A competition, from which nothing of interest came, was organised for the best new method of printing cards cheaply, easily, quickly and in small numbers. Technological innovation was necessary if the rapidly growing riches of the RBU were to be properly exploited and the exposition it was hoped would provide the occasion for the necessary stimulus to invention. It did not.

Outside of Brussels itself, the work of promoting and organising IIB went on unabated during 1897 and 1898. Articles continued to appear regularly about the IIB, about its second Conference, and about aspects of its work. Journals such as *Science*, the *Library Journal*, the *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* and the *Bolletino delle Pubblicazioni Italiane* regularly reported on them.<sup>65</sup> In 1897 Otlet spoke on the IIB before the Second International Conference of Librarians in London.<sup>66</sup> Descamps brought up the RBU and its potential scientific value before an international conference assembled in Paris to revise the International Copyright Convention.<sup>67</sup> A meeting of the Austro-Hungarian Booksellers Association resolved that its members should collaborate in every way with the IIB.<sup>68</sup>

In 1898 Otlet read a paper before the Third International Congress of Bibliography. This Congress, sponsored by the French Society for Bibliography, was held once every ten years. The Congress of 1899 was the first in which bibliography of the kind Otlet was concerned with, was discussed. Otlet's paper was entitled «The Universal Bibliographic Repertory: its formation, publication, classification, consultation and its organs». The Congress passed a resolution that «learned societies and editors of periodical publications and bibliographies should respond to the appeal for co-operation which has been addressed to them by the IIB in Brussels, particularly by sending it their work».<sup>69</sup>

An important event of 1898 was a visit to the OIB by the European participants in the Royal Society's second Conference on a Catalogue of Scientific Literature which was held later in that year. The members of the Royal Society's Conference were invited to inspect the OIB's installations on their way to London to ascertain for themselves the extent of its work and its success. Otlet, La Fontaine and Baron Descamps went to London as the official Belgian representatives. «On a number of occasions», it was observed, «the delegates of the Conference of London acknowledged the achievements of the IIB as exemplified by what had been performed between the two conferences (on a Catalogue of Scientific Literature) of 1896 and 1898».<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, the Royal Society and the Conference sponsored by it continued to develop their plans

to set up independently of IIB an international organisation for the preparation of an *International Catalogue of Scientific Literature* for which a special classification was to be devised.

During 1898, the IIB's French adherents set about organising a national office through which the French Section of the Institute «could co-ordinate the efforts of those occupied with the compilation of bibliographies», and facilitate «the realisation of their projects».<sup>71</sup> Such an office was formally established in 1899, called the Bibliographical Bureau of Paris. It was to stand in a similar relation to the French Section of the Institute as the OIB stood to the Institute itself.<sup>72</sup> Because the Bibliographical Bureau was to edit for printing bibliographical notices sent to it from a variety of participating learned societies, it was evident that the development of rules for compiling and editing such notices was extremely important. Such rules would help limit editorial functions as well as promote their efficient performance. The Bureau, therefore, undertook to fulfil the charge of the second bibliographical conference of Brussels in 1897 and set about drawing up what was in effect, a code of rules for descriptive cataloging, as one of its first tasks. This was immediately revised at the OIB, and became standard.<sup>73</sup> Another major task assigned to the Bibliographical Bureau of Paris upon its formation was the organisation of the Institute's third conference in Paris on the occasion of the Universal Exposition to be held there in 1900.<sup>74</sup>

By 1900 the IIB had achieved a not inconsiderable status as an international organisation. The theoretical basis of its work was firmly established by a number of important publications. Its repertories, the physical basis of its work, had grown in four years from less than half a million to more than three million entries. The classification used to order the entries in the repertories had been considerably developed and published in various of its official publications. It had more than 300 members. Scholars and institutions from all over the world, from Germany, Bohemia, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Russia, Austria, Poland, Holland, Sweden, Switzerland, Roumania, Hungary, Mexico, Argentina, the United States, England and France as well as Belgium had paid their ten francs to join it.<sup>75</sup> As far away as Mexico it had influenced the creation in connection with the Mexican National Library of a Bibliographical Institute which adopted the Decimal Classification and was guided in its use by a Spanish translation of articles on the classification by members of the IIB.<sup>76</sup> The Austrian Secretariat and the Bibliographical Bureau of Paris represented direct, if ultimately ineffectual responses, to its program. The Concilium Bibliographicum in Zurich had become affiliated

with it, prepared developments of the Decimal Classification relevant to its subject areas and was publishing extensive periodical bibliographies on cards as part of the RBU.

In two major respects the Institute had enjoyed only a limited success. Hard though its sponsors had tried, it had failed to shake the confidence of the Royal Society in London in the preconceptions which led the Society to devise its own specialised classification for scientific literature, a classification unrelated to the Decimal Classification, and to set up an international organisation for scientific bibliography unrelated to the Institute. It had also failed to win the active support of the International Congress of Publishers. Aware of the need for standardisation in the preparation of trade catalogues and bibliographies, the Congress had, in the final analysis, made no commitment at all to the Decimal Classification as providing a basis for their arrangement. Instead, it had become more interested in the use of a simple system of subject-headings.<sup>77</sup> A major source of material for the RBU was therefore prevented from being directly assimilable by it in so far as the resolutions of the Congress were effective in influencing the policy followed by various trade bibliographies.

Nevertheless, Otlet and La Fontaine's propaganda for the Institute and the widespread appearance of its success, won over a great many individuals to support it. In 1899 Richard Rogers Bowker visited the OIB. He had had the impression before he left America that many of his colleagues thought that the Belgian Institution existed «more on paper» than as a «practical working Office».<sup>78</sup> To correct any misapprehension of this kind, he published a report on his visit in the *Library Journal*. He discussed the objectives of the Institute and the extent to which they appeared to have been met. Among other matters, he dwelt with satisfaction on the considerably advanced elaboration of the Belgian version of the Decimal Classification. No doubt his was a typical reaction at the time to the IIB—OIB: surprise at the energy of its supporters and satisfaction at its accomplishments.

#### THE UNIVERSAL EXPOSITION OF PARIS, 1900

A seal of early approval was set on the IIB—OIB in 1900, the year of the Universal Exposition in Paris. The exposition was the most magnificent of its kind yet held. Very large and successful exhibitions had been held in Paris in 1867, 1878 and 1889. They «were manifestations of the positivist's faith in material and scientific progress as panaceas for all man's ills».<sup>79</sup> The Exposition of 1867 had been largely organised by Frédéric Le Play, engineer, economist and sociologist. He had attempted to make it an elevating expression of social, econo-

mic and politic universalism, and, at the same time, a testimony to the genius of France. It was important as a type. The Exposition of 1878, «continuing the tendency of other expositions to concern themselves more and more with cultural matters», was the first to devote great space and effort to international, scholarly, diplomatic and scientific congresses». At the next universal exposition in 1889, owing to «the increasing world-wide proliferation of knowledge and scholarship», this conference-sponsoring aspect of the exposition was emphasised more heavily, and over 69 international conferences of various kinds were held.<sup>80</sup>

The Exposition of 1900, the fourth of its kind, was attended by more than 50,000,000 people. Most of the nations of the world erected extravagant pavilions wherein was exhibited anything that could be adduced to their national glory. International juries deliberated upon the exhibits, and, according to the Scot, Patrick Geddes, continued, as they had in the past, to stand for «the general desire to advance that widest utilisation of the best in which progress lies».<sup>81</sup> The aims of this Exposition had become much more complex than those of earlier expositions. Among them was the desire

not only to educate in the popular sense, but to ease communication among the world's scholars. In 1900 Esperanto was «so to speak, placed in the world's market». Scholars from everywhere arranged for correspondence in four languages and established systems of bibliographical exchange... Ignored by the mobs, these hundreds of meetings probably best illustrate the aspirations of the Exposition's organisers. Almost every imaginable group with interests transcending national boundaries met in Paris that summer.<sup>82</sup>

One of the 127 International Congresses which were held on this occasion was the third conference of the International Institute of Bibliography. Like most of the other conferences at the Exposition, it was organised and presided over by distinguished Frenchmen. The President of the Bureau of the Commission of Organisation was General Sebert, a member of the Institut de France and the Vice-President was Prince Roland Bonaparte.<sup>83</sup> All of the members of the Bureau were members of the IIB. Among the individuals appointed as Members of the Commission of Organisation, however, there were a number of distinguished French bibliographers and librarians who were not members of the IIB. The only non-French members of the Commission were Otlet and La Fontaine.<sup>84</sup>

In general terms, the aim of the Conference was «to discuss the problems of compiling universal or particular bibliographic repertories designed for students of all specialities».<sup>85</sup> The Documents of the Conference made it clear that free discussion of all kinds of classification systems would be permitted, but that any resolutions which might suggest that

the Conference was making a ruling in favour of or against any individual scheme would be avoided.

The 1900 Conference of the IIB in Paris, represents a high point in the early development of the Institute. It was the first of its Conferences at which official governmental representatives participated. This was, no doubt, due almost entirely to its being held under the auspices of the Exposition. Official delegates attended from Belgium, Canada, Cuba, Denmark, the United States, France, Hungary, Mexico, Roumania and Sweden. It is curious that there was no representative from England (which regarded the Exposition with some suspicion) nor one from Germany (which was one of the most generally successful exhibitors at the Exposition). Melvil Dewey represented the United States. Ninety-one individuals and institutions signed up as participants in the Conference, fifty-one from France, forty from outside France.<sup>86</sup> Its meetings were therefore larger and more representatively international than those of either of the Institutes' earlier Conferences.

Debate seems on the whole to have been vigorous and constructively critical in most instances, as bibliographers described particular works for which they were responsible and submitted examples of them to the Conference for examination. The old controversy about the respective value of selective and critical as opposed to complete enumerative bibliography, a controversy which had pitted the traditional bibliographers, the Arsenal Librarian, Funck-Brentano, Paul Bergmans, the Deputy Librarian at the University of Ghent, and others against Richet, Baudouin and their bibliographically-minded scientist-colleagues, was aired once again. This time, however, Otlet introduced a resolution to the Conference in which he tried to conceptualise and present in a systematic way the various kinds of national, special, selective, analytical, critical and comprehensive bibliographies in relation to one another so that each could be seen to have its own particular merits which were, in the final analysis, complementary to those of that ultimate bibliography, the RBU. He reported on the IIB itself, on the development of the RBU, and on the Decimal Classification.

The concluding resolutions of the Conference, as one might expect from its very general program, were themselves general. It was resolved that governments should improve and standardise copyright deposit laws so that augmented national bibliographies could be more effectively used in the formation of bibliographical repertories. Reflecting a paper presented by Otlet, for whom the subject had become increasingly important, the Conference resolved that it was desirable to see established by country, language, period, subject and category of printed work, general statistics of printing since its inception.

Otlet had begun to study the problem of the statistics of printing rather closely not long after Funck-Brentano had taken exception to the figures he had projected for the size of a complete RBU. How could one arrive at reliable statistics, and what, tentatively, might they be? These were questions occupying him in 1896.<sup>87</sup> In order to encourage the continuing study of these questions, he took them up again in 1900. An important result of such a study for him still remained an accurate prediction of the size of the RBU, but he also observed that such a study would have wider implications. «The intellectual, economic and social function of the book can be made the object of statistical data as precise and various as any other factor of our civilisation».<sup>88</sup> It would be possible, he believed, to define exact and comparable measures relating to the «creation of the book by writers and scholars, its reproduction in multiple copies by the powerful machinery of the modern printing industry, its distribution and extended use, thanks to the degree of perfection found in the commercial booktrade and in the organisation of libraries».<sup>89</sup> He suggested as a draft resolution for the Conference's consideration:

The congress votes to see published general statistics of printing, summarising, coordinating and completing the fragmentary statistics published until now. To this effect it is desirable that all bibliographic publications and particularly official bibliographies provide a supplement giving a statistical summary of the facts in the bibliographical area that the publications embrace. In order to establish these statistics, it is desirable to see adopted the same categories in a manner to facilitate comparisons.<sup>90</sup>

This was adopted with some modifications.<sup>91</sup>

The Conference also adopted as a good statement of the matter, Otlet's resolution setting out the nature of the various kinds of bibliographies and their relation to one another. A number of other resolutions were taken and the Conference closed with a reception at Prince Roland Bonaparte's palace.

Otlet and La Fontaine arranged for part of the RBU which had been steadily growing in Brussels to be exhibited at the Exposition. Representative sections of the constituent repertories containing over two million cards were set up for the duration of the exposition in the Grande Salle des Congrès, together with charts and tables illustrating the problems to the solution of which the Institute was dedicated. Bibliographical accessories which the OIB was producing or which could be had through its agency were displayed and a catalog of them made freely available.<sup>92</sup> Otlet and La Fontaine were constantly on hand to answer questions, offer explanations, guide discussions, and lecture. Thousands trooped through the Grande Salle and stopped to examine the exhibition. Most were scholars attending one or more of the conferences of the Exposition. The Institute was awarded a Grand



Prize for its exhibition. This was a mark of the greatest esteem and a distinction to be remembered.

The Exposition provided constant opportunity for bringing together the representatives of the IIB and others potentially interested in it. The gathering of scholars of every persuasion and their frequent meetings, must have led to much informal publicity for the Institute. One may speculate that members of the OIB staff met and conversed with many previously unaware of the work being done in Brussels, or badly informed or sceptical about it. What must have been a typical, frequently recurring and valuable encounter, took place when Otlet met Patrick Geddes in the early days of the Exposition. Geddes, a Scottish scientist, town-planner, educator and social reformer was Secretary of the Ecole de l'Exposition, set up, like the IIB's exhibit, in the Palais des Congrès.<sup>53</sup> The Ecole de l'Exposition was the continuation of a program of summer schools organised by Geddes in Edinburgh beginning in 1887. For the school in Paris Geddes and some of his colleagues had drummed up support from the British and French Associations for the Advancement of Science, and from contacts Geddes made in America during a whirlwind tour in the early part of 1900. In Paris Otlet and Geddes met and chatted about expositions. From Brussels Otlet sent Geddes a copy of the *Compte-Rendu* of the *Exposition des Sciences* in which IIB had participated in Brussels in 1897 and was invited by Geddes to lecture on bibliography at the Ecole de l'Exposition. This was the beginning of an amicable, mutually rewarding, and far-reaching association which lasted until Geddes' death in 1932.<sup>54</sup>

After this great Exhibition the International Office and Institute could look upon the dawning of the new century with both hope and confidence. Its work was flourishing and the decades before the First World War were to see enormous developments in the Universal Bibliographic Repertory and the Universal Decimal Classification and, above all, to see a gradual widening of the scope of the activity of the Office and Institute as Otlet's thought began to take wing.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. A list of reviews is given without comment in the *IIB Bulletin*, I (1896-7), pp. 141-142, 271-2. A further list appears in *IIB Bulletin*, II (1897), pp. 140-142.
2. *Athenaeum*, 7 September 1895, pp. 321-322.
3. The *Publishers Weekly*, 5 October 1895, p. 602 and the *Library Journal* XX (October 1895), 346 both echo the *Athenaeum's* comments.
4. (Editorial), *Library Journal*, xx (October 1895), 337.
5. «President's Address», *Royal Society of London Proceedings*, LIX (1895), p. 113.

6. *Ibid.*
7. Louis Polain, 1866-1934, then a young man about Otlet's age was eventually responsible for the still standard *Catalogue des livres imprimés au quinzième siècle des bibliothèques publiques de Belgique* (Bruxelles: La Société des bibliophiles et iconophiles de Belgique, 1932). In 1909 he edited from her manuscript the second volume of Marie Pellechet's *Catalogue général des incunables des bibliothèques publiques de France* (Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1897-1909).
8. L. Polain, «Le Système décimal et les publications de l'Office International de Bibliographie», *Revue des Bibliothèques*, VI (1896), 66.
9. *Ibid.*, 87.
10. *Ibid.*, 73.
11. Henri Stein, 1862-1940, had become by the last years of the century a highly respected bibliographer. He had reported to the Congrès Bibliographique International in 1888 on the progress of bibliography since the previous conference in 1876, and in 1897 his large *Manuel de Bibliographie Générale* (Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1897) appeared. It was subsequently reprinted in 1962. In 1927 he took over the editorship of the *Catalogue Générale de la Librairie Française*, vols. 29-32 for the years 1919-1925. Most of his working life was spent in the Archives Nationales. He founded and edited *Le Bibliographe moderne* and founded the Société Française de Bibliographie. He also collaborated with the man to become his chief in the Archives Nationales, C. V. Langlois.
12. Henri Stein, «La Conférence Bibliographique Internationale de Bruxelles», *Revue internationale de bibliothèques*, 1895-1896, I (1897), 29-31.
13. Henri Stein, «L'Institut International de Bibliographie et le projet de Bibliographie Universelle», *Bibliographie moderne*, I (1897), p. 121.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
15. Franz Funck-Brentano, 1862-1947, had studied in the famous Ecole des Chartes. He became Librarian of the Arsenal Library where he edited the catalogue of the archives of the Bastille and wrote a number of historical works. His article «L'Office International de Bibliographie et La Classification Décimale» in *Correspondence historique et archéologique*, III (1896), 40 pp. was reproduced in a number of other journals (see *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-6), 271).
16. Léopold Delisle, «Decimal Classification and Relative Index for Libraries... premier article», *Journal des Savants*, 1896, p. 161. Léopold-Victor-Delisle, 1826-1910, studied at the Ecole des Chartes and began his professional career as an archivist. After a period of rapid promotion he became Administrator-General of the Bibliothèque Nationale in 1874, a post he held for more than thirty years. He was responsible for the decision to print the Bibliothèque Nationale's catalogue, the first volume of which appeared in 1897, the last volume of which is still awaited. He was elected to the Institut de France at the age of 31.
17. Léon Losseau to Otlet, 29 January 1907, Dossier No. 256, «Losseau», *Mundaneum*. Only sweetest Stein with «a few flowers, a little holy water», said Losseau, and Otlet might «have a second edition of the second article of Delisle».
18. Sury of the OIB wrote to Otlet, 17 July 1896, that he had refused a young man an introduction to Delisle from the Institute because he suspected «Delisle and others at the Bibliothèque Nationale were not absolutely favourable to us». The young man, thought Sury, would be better advised to obtain a letter from one of his professors. «Moreover, I would like to observe that M. Delisle... would have great sport with this adolescent

- who does not know our work with the Decimal Classification very well», Dossier No. 183, «Otlet, Paul», Mundaneum.
19. C.-V. Langlois, «A Propos de l'Institut International de Bibliographie», *Revue internationale de bibliothèques 1895-1896*, I (1897), p. 104. Langlois refers to the IIB in his *Manuel de Bibliographie Historique* (Paris: Hachette, 1896), *passim*. Langlois, 1863-1929, became Director of the Archives Nationales in 1912.
  20. C.-V. Langlois, «A Propos...», p. 114.
  21. *Ibid.*, 119.
  22. Charles Sury to Paul Otlet, 25 August 1896, Dossier No. 183, «Paul Otlet», Mundaneum.
  23. «Notes and Documents», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-6), p. 105.
  24. *Ibid.*, pp. 113-118.
  25. *Ibid.*, pp. 121-126. An interesting account of the history of the Concilium Bibliographicum is to be found in Katherine O. Murra, «Some attempts to organise bibliography internationally», *Bibliographic Organisation*, Jesse Shera and Margaret Egan, eds., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951).
  26. «Notes et Documents», pp. 120-121, 130-133.
  27. «Notes et Documents».
  28. C. M. Gariel, «Exposé des propositions votées par le congrès de l'Association française pour l'avancement des sciences, Bordeaux, août, 1895», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-6), pp. 62-66.
  29. Charles Richet, 1850-1935, descended from a prosperous medical family. He did important work in immunology, became a member of the French Académie de Médecine in 1898, won the Nobel Prize for physiology in 1913, was elected to the Institut de France in 1914 and became President of its Académie des Sciences in 1933. He was also very much interested in spiritualism, what he called «metapsychology».
  30. Charles Richet, «La Classification Décimale», *Revue Scientifique*, 4<sup>e</sup> série, IV (28 December, 1895), p. 801.
  31. *Ibid.*, p. 805.
  32. Charles Richet, «La Bibliographie Décimale et le Congrès de la Société Royale de Londres (1896)». This article appeared in *Revue Scientifique*, 11 July 1896, and was reprinted in *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-6), pp. 293-299. Reference is made to the latter, p. 298.
  33. C. M. Gariel, «Les Travaux de la Conférence Bibliographique de Bruxelles», *Revue générale des Sciences*, VI (30 September, 1895), p. 834. Gariel, 1841-1924, a physicist or biophysicist, wrote extensively on acoustics and hearing.
  34. M. Baudouin, «Le Problème Bibliographique», *Revue scientifique*, 4<sup>e</sup> série, IV (7 December 1895), p. 710.
  35. M. Baudouin, «La Classification Décimale et les sciences médicales», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-6), pp. 166-181. Baudouin, 1860-1941, took his Doctorat in the Faculté de Médecine de Paris and wrote a number of works of scientific popularisation. In the last years of the century, however, his interests were turning to pre-history, a subject to which he devoted the rest of his life and on which he published numerous research monographs.
  36. The formation of the French section of the Institute was announced in «Chronique», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-6), p. 279.
  37. Charles Richet, «La Bibliographie Décimale et le Congrès de la Société Royale de Londres (1896)», p. 299.
  38. Paul Otlet, «Le Programme de l'Institut International de Bibliographie: objections et explications», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-6), 73-100.
  39. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
  40. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
  41. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
  42. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
  43. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
  44. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
  45. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
  46. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
  47. «President's Address», *Royal Society of London Proceedings*, XIV (November 30, 1895), p. 113.
  48. Herbert Haviland Field, «Les Fiches du Répertoire Bibliographique Universel», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-6), 67-72. Field, 1868-1921, was an American zoologist who had become increasingly interested in the bibliographical problems posed by zoological literature. He set up the Concilium Bibliographicum in Zurich in 1895. Its main purpose was the publication on cards of bibliographical notices. Field was a firm believer in the value of the Dewey Decimal Classification and after 1895 participated closely in its expansion by the IIB.
  49. Jules Lermina, «Le Répertoire Bibliographique Universel», *Droit d'Auteur*, VIII (1895), 109-111; «Le Congrès Littéraire et artistique international de Dresde du 21 au 28 Septembre, 1895. (compte-rendu): Répertoire Universel», *Droit d'Auteur*, VIII (1895), 134-35.
  50. Royal Society of London, *Report of the Proceedings of an International Conference on a Catalogue of Scientific Literature* (London: the Society, 1896), pp. 8-13 and *passim*.
  51. «L'IIB, Chronique», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-6), 279.
  52. Desiderio Chilovi, «La Coopération nationale et internationale au Répertoire Bibliographique Universel», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-6), 320-24. This was a translation of an article appearing in the *Bollettino delle Pubblicazioni Italiane*, 15 September, 1896.
  53. «Notes, Documents, Analyses: Conférence Bibliographique de Florence», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-6), 330.
  54. *Ibid.*, pp. 330-31.
  55. «Faits et documents: sociétés, congrès et réunions bibliographiques», *IIB Bulletin*, III (1898), 206. The question of the RBU was discussed at the 1897 Turin Conference where Luigi di Marchi acted as rapporteur. («Le Mouvement en Faveur du RBU», *IIB Bulletin*, III (1898), 167).
  56. Desiderio Chilovi, *I Catalogi e l'Istituto Internazionale de Bibliografia* (Firenze: Fratelli Bocca, 1897). This was designated IIB Publication No. 36; Vittorio Benedetti, *Classificazione Decimale...* (Firenze: Barbera, 1897). This was designated IIB Publication No. 12; Luigi di Marchi, «La Classificazione cosiddetta decimale del Sig. Dewey», *IIB Bulletin*, II (1897), 98-107. This was separately printed as IIB Publication No. 49; Società Italiana d'Antropologia, *Classificazione decimale per uso degli antropologia* (Firenze: La Società, 1896). This was designated IIB Publication No. 35; Saladino Saladini Pilastrì, *Table Italienne développée de la Classification Bibliographique Décimale du droit* (Firenze: Stabilimento

- Tipografico G. Civelli, 1899). This was designated IIB Publication No. 46 and appears with French title in the FID list. It had appeared in several parts in 1899 in the *Bollettino di Bibliografia Giuridica Italiana Contemporanea*. An «Esposizione Sommaria della Classificazione Decimale» appeared in pages 1—8 in Fascicule I. The developed tables for law appeared in Fascicule II in a separately paged 8-page section entitled «quadro sinottico della posizione delle scienze giuridico amministrative della classificazione bibliografica decimale; classificazione bibliografica decimale per le scienze giuridico amministrative.»
57. Charles Richet, for example, lectured on the Decimal Classification in March 1896 in the Hôtel des Sociétés Savantes in Paris, and a list of the French Societies «Informed of the question of Classification» was very considerable. «L'IIB: les trois derniers mois», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895—6), 157.
  58. For the setting up of the Austrian Secretariat by Junker see the *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895—6), 162 and 280 and for a number of lectures, see the *Bulletin*, p. 159. Junker published *Eine Allgemeines bibliographisches Repertorium und die erste Internationale Bibliographische Konferenz in Brüssel* (Wein: A. Hölder, 1896); and *Das Internationale Institut für Bibliographie in Brüssel* (Leipzig: Ramm und Seemann, 1897). The first was designated IIB Publication No. 6, and the second IIB Publication No. 19.
  59. «Notes, documents, analyses: Congrès International des Editeurs», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895—6), 332—33.
  60. «Notes, documents, analyses: Union Internationale de Photographie», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895—6), 333.
  61. «La Deuxième Conférence Bibliographique Internationale, Bruxelles, 2 au 4 août, 1897», *IIB Bulletin*, II (1897), 247—257.
  62. *Ibid.*, pp. 175—176.
  63. «Communications du Bureau de l'Institut», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895—6), 140—41; and «IIB: les trois derniers mois», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895—6), 164—65.
  64. «Notes, documents, analyses: Exposition Bibliographique de Bruxelles», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895—6), 333—34.
  65. Bibliographie relative à l'Institut de l'organisation bibliographique internationale», *IIB Bulletin*, II (1897), 140—43; and III (1898), 169—73 and 215—16.
  66. Paul Otlet, «The International Institute of Bibliography», *Transactions and Proceedings of the Second International Library Conference, London, 13—16 July 1897* (London, 1898).
  67. «Le Mouvement en faveur du RBU», *IIB Bulletin*, III (1898), 167—68.
  68. *Ibid.*
  69. *Le Répertoire Bibliographique Universel: sa formation, sa publication, son classement, sa consultation, ses organes*. (Extrait du Compte—Rendu des Travaux du Congrès; Paris: Au Siège de la Société, 1899), 10 pp. See also «Faits et Documents: Congrès Bibliographique International de 1898», *IIB Bulletin*, VI (1901), 220—21.
  70. «La Deuxième Conférence Internationale relative au Catalogue de la Littérature Scientifique», *IIB Bulletin*, III (1898), 164.
  71. «Faits et documents: section française de l'Institut International de Bibliographie», *IIB Bulletin*, III (1898), 164.
  72. «Institutions diverses rattachant à l'IIB», *Annuaire de l'IIB pour l'année 1898* (Bruxelles: IIB, 1898), p. 89.
  73. «Projet de règles pour la rédaction des notices bibliographiques», *IIB Bulletin*, III (1898), 81—113.
  74. «Le Congrès International de Bibliographie de Paris, 11—18 août 1900: Documents...», *IIB Bulletin*, IV (1899), 195—209.
  75. «Liste alphabétique des personnes et des institutions qui sont membres de l'Institut International de Bibliographie, ont adhéré à son programme, collaborent à ses travaux, ou font application de ses méthodes», *Annuaire de l'IIB pour l'année 1899*, pp. 99—110.
  76. Secretaria de Fomento, *La Clasificación decimal de Melvil Dewey*, traducción de tres artículos por E. Sauvage, Ch. Richet, y el Servicio geológico de Belgica (Mexico: Off. typ. de la Secretaria de Fomento, 1899). This was designated IIB Publication No. 38.
  77. «Faits et documents: Congrès International des Editeurs de 1897 — résolutions», *IIB Bulletin*, III (1898), 147—48. See also, Paul Otlet and Ernest Vanderveld, *La Réforme des bibliographies nationales et leur utilisation pour la Bibliographie Universelle*. Rapport présenté au Ve Congrès International des Editeurs, Milan, 1906 (Bruxelles: Administration de la Bibliographie de Belgique et l'IIB, June 1906), p. 1; and «Catalogue de Librairie type international arrêté par le Congrès International des Editeurs (1908)», *IIB Bulletin*, XIV (1909), 91—94.
  78. Richard Rogers Bowker, «The Institut International de Bibliographie, Brussels», *Library Journal*, XXV (1900), 273—74.
  79. Richard D. Mandell, *Paris 1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. x.
  80. *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 21 and 69.
  81. Patrick Geddes, «The Closing Exhibition—Paris 1900», *Contemporary Review*, LXXXVIII (November 1900), 656—57 (Quoted in Richard D. Mandell, p. 111).
  82. Richard D. Mandell, p. 68.
  83. Prince Roland Bonaparte, 1858—1924, a great-nephew of Napoleon, was a patron of the arts and sciences. His own special interest was Botany. He assembled a great library and art collection and made copious donations for the encouragement of research to the Académie des Sciences to which he had been elected.
  84. «Le Congrès International de Bibliographie de Paris... Documents...», *IIB Bulletin*, IV (1899), 197—208.
  85. *Ibid.*, p. 196.
  86. «Compte—Rendu du Congrès International de Bibliographie tenu à Paris du 16 au 18 août 1900», *IIB Bulletin*, V (1900), 103—107, 220—21 and 223.
  87. Paul Otlet, «La Statistique internationale des imprimés: quelques sondages», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895—6), 301.
  88. Paul Otlet, «La Statistique internationale des imprimés», *IIB Bulletin*, V (1900), 109.
  89. *Ibid.*
  90. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
  91. «Compte—Rendu du Congrès International de Bibliographie tenu à Paris...», p. 243.



92. *L'Institut International de Bibliographie: but, organisation, travaux, catalogue des publications*: Exposition Universelle de Paris (IIB Publication No. 47; Bruxelles: IIB, 1900).
93. A standard work on Geddes is Philip Boardman, *Patrick Geddes: Maker of the Future* (Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), pp. 156—211 and 227.
94. Dossier No. 210, «Patrick Geddes», Mundaneum. A letter from Otlet to Geddes, 28 May 1900 gives the details mentioned above. This is in a file «92 G», in the Otletaneum, which contains considerable but fragmentary schematic material for aspects of the two friend's work. It includes also a typed response to an enquiry made by Philip Boardman, student of Geddes' life, about Otlet's friendship with Geddes. The undated note is entitled «Patrick Geddes et Paul Otlet—Le Palais Mondial». See also Philip Boardman, *passim*.

## Chapter V

### THE UNIVERSAL DECIMAL CLASSIFICATION

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE UDC

The two major tasks confronting Otlet and La Fontaine after the International Institute and Office of Bibliography had been formally constituted were the development of the Decimal Classification and the Universal Bibliographic Repertory (RBU). The two were not developed independently, of course, though it is convenient to discuss them separately. The tool became increasingly complex and sophisticated as the tasks it was required to perform became so. The Decimal Classification was viewed as a prerequisite for international bibliographic cooperation in general and for the elaboration of the RBU in particular. In the last part of 1895 and early in 1896 before the move to the new location, Otlet and La Fontaine had arranged for the translation and publication of parts of the classification. For the Conference they had translated the tables for sociology and law with an alphabetical index in English, French and German.<sup>1</sup> This was followed by a translation of the first thousand divisions similarly indexed, and by the general geographical tables.<sup>2</sup> A brief explanation of the nature of the classification and of its «bibliographic nomenclature» was issued early in 1896,<sup>3</sup> and this became part of other early tables as they were published.<sup>4</sup> These first tables, except those for sociology and law, were not expanded,<sup>5</sup> but were simple translations of the 1894 American edition of the classification.

These few publications formed the nucleus for further development. This came rapidly in the next few years by a process of co-ordinated decentralisation. The highly technical task of developing the tables, the accomplishment of which with any degree of depth and completeness demanded extensive subject expertise, was assigned to groups of outside collaborators. This was the taxonomic, enumerative aspect of the classification by which it was related directly and intimately

to the systematics of knowledge. Other aspects of the classification were elaborated centrally by Otlet and La Fontaine, who carefully reviewed all developments in the tables to ensure that consistency and uniformity were maintained throughout the classification as a whole.

The work of co-ordinating and disciplining their collaborators was not a mere formality for the two men. They had at the outset at least one unfortunate experience. The editor of the French indexing journal, *Bulletin des sommaires*, Charles Limousin, undertook to develop parts of the classification and to assign classification numbers to notices appearing in the *Bulletin des sommaires*.<sup>6</sup> Apparently he became intoxicated with classification-building and departed happily but wildly from the original scheme. Otlet was furious and drafted a scathing letter which he thought better of and did not send.<sup>7</sup> The only public comment appeared in an early chronology of events at OIB. «The *Bulletin des sommaires* of Paris (M. Limousin) worked out a classification with a decimal notation different from that of the Institute. It was not followed.»<sup>8</sup>

To guide collaborators in a general way in their work of developing the classification tables a «Rules for the Developments to be made in the Decimal Classification» was drawn up.<sup>9</sup> The purpose of this pamphlet was to provide some «rules and advice on how to proceed in choosing new divisions while maintaining an indispensable unity between all parts» of the classification. It emphasised the final authority of the OIB on all proposals for extension and modification of the tables. It reminded its readers that one of the decisions of the Brussels conference was that no numbers already existing could be modified for fear of conflict between past and future applications of the classification. The 1894 American edition was to be an inviolable standard. It was recommended, therefore, that no new subject should be dealt with until the index had been thoroughly checked to see that the subject did not already appear somewhere in it. It stressed that while a bibliographic classification was related to the more strict classification of science, its value was a practical one in relation to documents, so that there was not much point in assigning numbers to ideas or subjects on which there had been little written. In preparing a detailed classification of their subject fields, it was suggested that collaborators should take the following steps:

- a) a complete enumeration of the objects to be classified;
- b) an examination of the specific characteristics of the objects;
- c) a choice of one of the characteristics as the basis for classification; subordination of the other characteristics to this one;
- d) an arrangement of the objects in classes and sub-classes by proceeding from the general to the particular and from the simple to the complex.

In general, the *Rules* stressed the importance of preserving the simplicity of the classification, and reminded collaborators of the classification's facility for combining and recombining numbers, a facility which could be used on occasion to obviate the necessity for creating new numbers. They were also reminded of the symmetrical and mnemonic features of the classification and were urged to develop and extend them, even where parallelisms might not in fact be complete and numbers would be, for the time, unused.

With these very general rules to follow, a distinguished group of scientists and scholars began to work on various tables. Most notable among the collaborators were Herbert Field of the Concilium Bibliographicum and Charles Richet, editor of the *Revue scientifique*, a physiologist at the university of Paris, and later a Nobel Laureate. The interests of the scientists connected with the Concilium Bibliographicum and of those belonging to the French Section of the IIB (Richet and Baudouin among others) probably explain the early translation of the American tables for the medical sciences. These were soon taken up and revised. The Concilium Bibliographicum published a brief pamphlet containing the tables for zoology in 1897 with an index in French, English and German.<sup>10</sup> Later that year the first extension of the tables for anatomy appeared,<sup>11</sup> and in the next year those for zoology.<sup>12</sup> Richet worked on the tables for physiology and these were published by the Concilium Bibliographicum, also in 1897.<sup>13</sup> Other groups, however, were working on other parts of the classification. At the time of the conference, the Institut Supérieur de Philosophie at Louvain (to which de Wulf, and Otlet's old friend, Thiéry, were attached), the Belgian Society of Astronomy, and the Belgian Geological Commission (headed by Moulon) had pledged their help, both to develop the classification tables in their areas of interest and to apply them to the notices in periodical bibliographies which they would undertake to publish.<sup>14</sup> In the next few years the tables for philosophy,<sup>15</sup> geology,<sup>16</sup> astronomy,<sup>17</sup> as well as those for railway science<sup>18</sup> and photography<sup>19</sup> made their appearance. In 1897 the Office itself prepared and published the recast *General Abridged Tables* of the classification<sup>20</sup> and these were immediately translated into Italian,<sup>21</sup> Spanish,<sup>22</sup> and German.<sup>23</sup>

The distinctive pattern of the Brussels classification emerged only very slowly from the American classification. The essential differences were to lie in the development in the Brussels version of the notions of parallelism, of mnemonics and number-compounding adumbrated in the 1896 *Rules* and in other material prepared at the same time at the OIB, but not fully explained in any of it. Though for Otlet the notation of the classification, what he called its «bibliographic nomencla-

ture<sup>24</sup> was pregnant with all sorts of possibilities for precise, flexible, specific description and classification of documents, it was not until 1899 that the classification was developed to such an extent that it exhibited clearly what were to be regarded as its characteristic features: procedures for the introduction throughout the whole classification of highly elaborated analytic common subdivisions.

As early as 1895, Otlet and La Fontaine had decided to abandon the convention of the American classification of placing the decimal point after a number always composed of three figures. «Is the whole number», Otlet wrote to Dewey, «a decimal, or a whole number plus a decimal point after the third figure?»<sup>25</sup> He concluded that it was better to regard the whole number as a decimal, and to consider the decimal point as serving primarily as a mark of punctuation. In his view, the use of the point in this way would facilitate the reading of a number and better indicate «the order and succession and subordination of ideas» in the number. Carrying the analogy of punctuated numbers yet further, he had begun to wonder what could be done with parentheses and the colon. «In a general way...», he continued his letter, «we came to this rule: the decimal classification is a system which permits the noting of all bibliographic categories by means of concise symbols, figures whose signification and value depend upon their position, and upon certain signs of punctuation which accompany them.»<sup>26</sup> In his «Objections and Explications» Otlet gave a brief explanation of what the figures in a classification number meant, of how a number could become the basis of further development by generalising its signification without violating the principle that new numbers must not conflict with old ones, and suggested how the point, colon and parentheses could be used for combining or modifying numbers.<sup>27</sup>

As the Office's collaborators moved more deeply into their work of developing the tables and using them in the preparation of bibliographies, they began to appreciate inadequacies in the classification's notation and obscurities in the current explanations of its application and use. They began to offer ingenious suggestions for improvements to make the classification responsive to the difficulties that they had variously encountered. Marcel Baudouin, for example, working on the tables for medicine, reached the conclusion that the use of the decimal point after the third figure of a number was useful only if the number were relatively short. He devised a system, followed thereafter at the Office, of using long numbers broken up into constituent parts by the use of more than one point. He also drew up a detailed system of parallelism for the pathology of organs and for diseases and operations.<sup>28</sup> Victor Carus followed up Dewey's own suggestions for devel-

oping the classification by introducing a series of letters for geological formations and for geological time periods. In the midst of the Office's search for techniques for extending the classification's notation and of making it capable of greater flexibility and specificity than it seemed to have, Carus, foreseeing where all this might lead, sounded a note of warning. «One should remember», he said, «that the decimal notation is a means of registering *bibliographic* facts and nothing more. One should therefore avoid attempting to express by numerical indices the scientific results contained in a publication.»<sup>29</sup>

The Marquis Daruty de Grandpré, taking into account the suggestions made in Otlet's «Objections and Explications», presented a succinct description of the mechanics of the classification and how he proposed to extend it by using recurrent bracketed geographical numbers and the colon for his work on a bibliography of the African Islands of the Southern Indian Ocean.<sup>30</sup> A note was added to this article, most probably by Otlet, about the possible use of the plus (+) sign in the classification of documents with multiple subjects,<sup>31</sup> an idea which may have been derived from suggestions made by Simoëns of the Belgian Geological Service, who was working on the tables for geology. Simoëns had thought up a scheme for achieving what was called «bibliographic analysis of documents» by multiple indexings, the classification number obtained on each occasion of indexing being joined to each of the others by the plus sign.<sup>32</sup>

Otlet, drawing on all of this, made a major theoretical statement in his «On the Structure of Classification Numbers», which represented a summing up and distillation of the various proposals received at the Office on the subject.<sup>33</sup> He intended that this article should complement the *Rules* and his «Objections and Explications». It represented a step towards a definite decision on still controversial aspects of the classification. Otlet based his examination of classification numbers on the observation that certain ideas were recurrent in all parts of the classification, such as the historical, geographical, and form categories already discussed by him in various places and derived more or less directly from Dewey. A similar observation was true of individual branches of the classification where subdivisions seemed regularly to recur. Each species in zoology, for example, could be envisaged from many similar points of view. «The consequence of this observation is that classification numbers should have a structure such that to each category of modifying ideas which periodically returns, there should correspond a distinct appearance and permanent signification.»<sup>34</sup> For Otlet there were now two ways of building classification numbers. One was to juxtapose complete num-



bers taken from different parts of the classification and join them with a colon. The other was to make use of «factors» or «autonomous number elements with a distinct and unalterable meaning»,<sup>35</sup> whose autonomy in relation to the numbers to which they were attached was preserved by enclosing them in parentheses. He reviewed Dewey's own suggestions that letters could be employed with decimal numbers to indicate categories such as geological time, physical places and so on. In Dewey's scheme, the number 598.2 j 43 would indicate, Birds in Germany in the Sixteenth Century. Otlet decided against the *mélange* that resulted from this combination of letters and figures, and ventured the opinion instead that one should «borrow different categories of auxiliary indices from corresponding classification numbers and place them between parentheses» to preserve them from assimilation in the main number. He showed how all of the categories mentioned by Dewey could be dealt with in this way: (...5) would indicate geologic time and (...4) would indicate language. The classification numbers for «political» geography began at 913, so that 911 was free for use as a chronologic subdivision, and 912 for indications of aspects of physical geography. The common 91, indicating geography, could be suppressed and the 1 and 2 would appear in parentheses to indicate time and place respectively with another number for further specification: (15) would indicate the Sixteenth Century, and (27) Lakes. Similar formations could be devised for history, for directions of the compass and so on. For the divisions that recurred within a particular science, Otlet had a similar solution. One could take that which is named and in general use in a science (physiology, pathology, the heart, the lungs, for example). The numbers assigned to the «classified nomenclature» of a science, its taxonomic nomenclature in effect, would be derived from zero and would be placed between parentheses. Consciously adopting the encyclopedic point of view required for the development of the Universal Bibliographic Repertory, Otlet stressed the importance of avoiding attributing several meanings to any one number. Confusion between the numbers for the classified terminology of a science (derived from zero), however, and the general numbers for time and place (derived from 1 and 2), would be completely avoided, Otlet believed, if the use of the former were strictly forbidden outside the particular science from which they took their meaning. An exception could be made when one of the «terminological» numbers bore an indication of its source as a superscript. If (012) were the common number for heart in the tables for medicine, a number like the following would be possible: 368.42(012<sup>61</sup>), health insurance against heart disease. But Otlet wondered if the «simplest form of the principal determinant» might not have

been preferable: that is, 368.42:616.12. He did not pursue the relative merits of this alternative.<sup>36</sup>

«On the Structure of Classification Numbers» is a germinal paper. In it Otlet can be seen to be groping towards a form and a terminology for what later became the common and analytical subdivisions. He had submitted the notions of Dewey to a number of his collaborators, such as Carus and Baudouin, for their opinion. In general it was thought the introduction of letters would be useful. But the replies gave Otlet pause, and this is reflected in his paper, for it was clear to him that the specialists whom he had consulted were not much concerned by the problems of the variation of numbers from science to science and of multiple meanings which had become clearly apparent to him from the proposals that they had in turn made to him. He tried, therefore, to find solutions for this problem. Nevertheless, it seems clear to a present-day observer that the use of the parenthesis was bound to be troublesome. Too much was demanded of it. The requirement that the first figure of the number enclosed in parentheses should act as a signal for the different categories of subject, time and place was ominous with potential confusion, and so were the various uses of superscripts that were contemplated. Moreover, Otlet did not include a discussion of the form divisions and «generalities» in this paper. These had sometimes appeared with no parentheses as in the American Dewey, and sometimes within parentheses. They too were derived from zero and could be expected to provide all sorts of complication when set with numbers for the other categories for which Otlet was attempting to devise a characteristic notation.

Though the paper was tentative, it contained, nevertheless, a clear statement of what Otlet hoped to be able to achieve with the decimal notation and of the general principles which guided his thinking. This statement suggested what little store he set upon Carus's warning not to ask too much of the classification's notation. His imagination seems to have been completely captured by the notion of bibliographical analysis.

The Decimal Classification should constitute at one and the same time a classification, and a bibliographic notation. As a classification it should present a framework in which ideas are subordinated successively and in different ways one to another according to whether one assigns them to a principal rank or a secondary one. As a bibliographic notation, it should become a veritable universal language susceptible of interpreting by numbers grouped in factors with separate and permanent meaning, all the nuances of ideologico-bibliographical analysis.<sup>37</sup>

The subsequent stages in the evolution of the classification are well marked. In mid-1897 a paper was prepared at the OIB on the «General Principles of the Decimal Classification»

for the second International Conference of Bibliography at Brussels. This paper represents a good informal indication of where attempts to develop the classification had led by that time.<sup>38</sup> It dealt briefly with a number of aspects of the classification and its use for building card repertories not publicly discussed before. The use of specially shaped differently coloured divisionary cards in a repertory was touched upon also, but no coding system was given yet for the colours of the cards or for their arrangement. Nor was the problem of what were now called «compound numbers and determining numbers»<sup>39</sup> yet resolved. The second part of compound numbers constructed with the colon were called «general determinants», or what one might more intelligibly call, «general modifiers». «Any classification number which completes the sense of another, limits and determines it, is called a general modifier.»<sup>40</sup> Special modifiers were few in number and all were placed between parentheses: (0) for form divisions; (2) for divisions according to physical place; and (3–9) for divisions according to political place. To these could be added another kind of modifier, that for proper names — 396:Molière, would be used for Molière's views on women. The use of superscript modifiers seems to have been abandoned, and the language modifier was now treated as an instance of the general modifier — 52(02):42, Chemistry Treatises in English. Another characteristic of special modifiers was discussed: they could themselves be compounded — 597(281:44), Fish in French Lakes.

The reworked tables of the classification to three and occasionally four figures appeared in 1897 as the *General Abridged Tables*.<sup>41</sup> The introductory discussion was short and dealt mostly with rules for indexing bibliographies «decimally» and for using the Decimal Classification as developed in Brussels in libraries. Having presented a long statement of the advantages of the classification, the introduction to the *Tables* did advert briefly to the use of «symmetrical and modifying divisions». The form divisions were listed with parentheses removed, and the geographic subdivisions discussed. Though the possibility of other modifiers was mentioned, none of them received any extended treatment. The tables themselves, however, displayed the form divisions as appropriate in the numerical array and indicated which numbers could be subdivided geographically by placing after them empty parentheses. The geographic subdivisions were listed fully as subdivisions within parentheses of 91, geography.

In 1898 the first *Manual of the Bibliographic Decimal Classification*<sup>42</sup> was published. This was the detailed study of the construction and use of the classification, the necessity for which had become more and more evident. It gathered together, sometimes verbatim, sometimes in a rewritten more

extensive form, much of the material appearing in the prefatory matter of the *General Abridged Tables* and in the «General Principles of the Decimal Classification», which had been prepared for the IIB's 1897 Conference, on such topics as the encyclopedic nature of the classification, its advantages, the concordance between the complete and abridged tables, the use of divisionary cards in a repertory, and characteristic and abbreviated ways of writing decimal numbers. Among newly introduced general matter was a discussion of how a useful concordance could be achieved between the Decimal Classification and various special classifications for which it could provide an internationally comprehensible index. The use of subject headings arranged systematically or alphabetically was also discussed. It was observed that the same card could be used in an alphabetic repertory of author's names, in a repertory classified by decimal numbers, and in an «analytico-alphabetic» repertory by subject headings, provided that the subject headings were indicated in some relatively simple way in the titles given on the cards. Moreover, at any point of division in a decimal number, the individual bibliographer could begin an alphabetic arrangement of subject headings, the decimal number serving to establish a conventional relation between main headings of a specified degree of generality. Such a procedure would be facilitated by the attempt to establish strict concordance between the Decimal Classification and special classifications, and to develop the Classification in terms of the conventional nomenclature of particular sciences.

Under the heading «Concordance between the old editions and the new editions of the Decimal Classification with respect to Compound Numbers», the *Manual* presented a detailed account of the Office's debt to the 1894 American Dewey, and of how it had attempted to make explicit and to systematise by means of auxiliary tables and special signs, suggestions only partly developed or simply implicit in the American work.<sup>43</sup> It was to this matter that most of the *Manual* was addressed. The various forms of the term, «determinant», were finally abandoned for the terms «analytic and common subdivisions».

Three methods of subdivision were recognised for obtaining symmetry and concordance between parts of the whole classification. First, actual classification numbers could be divided in a similar way so that «only the first figures and the meaning given to them are different»: 445.8, the Verb in French Philology; 455.8, the Verb in Italian Philology.<sup>44</sup> Second, analytic subdivisions could be employed throughout the whole classification to form compound numbers. Third, «common» subdivisions could be added from auxiliary tables to numbers derived from the main tables. The first kind of subdivision would be evident from the tables, but the other

kinds had to be constructed by each classifier independently, and it was necessary that there should be simple and precise rules for their formation and use.

The analytic subdivisions were just those recurrent divisions within a particular science first discussed in «On the Structure of Classification Numbers». They were now, however, taken out of parentheses and were to be indicated by a special precedent «intercalatory zero». If 633.12 were the cereal, Rice, and 631.13 were the agricultural operation, Irrigation, then 633.12.013 would be the Irrigation of Rice where rice is the main subject. These subdivisions were not specially created, but «are borrowed purely and simply from the analytical part of the classification itself».<sup>45</sup> Analytics would, of course, vary from one science to another, and their use and limitations to their use would in every case be indicated in tables for each of the sciences.

Of all the subjects discussed in the *Manual*, the common subdivisions were the most extensively treated. A quotation from Leibnitz and one expressing the underlying principle of the classification were placed at the head of the section which dealt with them.<sup>46</sup> From Leibnitz:

The measure of the richness of a language is not the large number of its words, but the small number of its radicals and the facility with which one can form precise combinations from them.

#### About the Decimal Classification:

From simple and elementary numbers... [it aims] to form an indefinite quantity of compound numbers able to translate the most precise aspects of bibliographical classification into figures.

The ensuing discussion suggests the overtones of a residual conflict in the development of the classification between the inexhaustible possibilities of theory, of philosophy, of linguistic parallelisms, and the limitations imposed by practice. It was stated quite clearly that

... common subdivisions should not be understood to be subdivisions whose application is uniform and constant across the whole classification, but only subdivisions whose application is as general as possible, and to which there are numerous exceptions. The common subdivisions can be used only with respect to the individual tables of a science with all the limitations and exceptions that the subject leads to. This fundamental rule follows: works should be indexed conforming to the classification numbers indicated in the individual tables and not with the aid of numbers Classifiers form themselves from rules and general principles.<sup>47</sup>

While recognising that «absolutely logical and quite general rules would have been eminently desirable» given the «encyclopedic nature» of the OIB's work, Otlet and his colleagues were forced to admit that

It would not have been possible to give the bibliographic classification such a degree of perfection without prejudicing other, more

valuable advantages, especially, without abandoning the stability of the classification and depriving specialists of a certain latitude to develop the classification according to the needs of the various sciences.<sup>48</sup>

The *Manual* revealed that the various problems and difficulties that Otlet had begun to struggle with in «On the Structure of Classification Numbers», a struggle reflected in the subsequent publications of the Office, had at last been resolved. The common subdivisions were increased to six in number — form, time, relation, proper name, place and language, and a special sign was given to each. The form divisions were finally returned to parentheses, to distinguish them clearly from analytic subdivisions indicated by the intercalatory zero and to associate them clearly with the other common subdivisions.<sup>49</sup> The subdivision, time, was taken out of parentheses and placed between French quotation marks, «*guillemets*». The «simplest form of the principal determinant», the juxtaposition of whole numbers joined by a colon, was now simply called the «relation subdivision». The language subdivision was reinstated and was indicated by an extended equals sign or double dash, =. The geologic, place, politico-geographical subdivisions were all, as before, regarded as related and derived from the geographic tables. Geologic time was to be indicated by (1...), aspects of place or physical geography by (2...), and political geography by the well-developed (3—9) subdivisions of the geographic tables. The extended tables for the common subdivisions were appended to the end of the *Manual*. The use of the various punctuation signs would, of course, make filing very difficult and a conventional filing order was established as: (), «», :, A—Z, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, proceeding from right to left.<sup>50</sup> The = sign was omitted from this formula, but was intended to follow the colon and precede the *guillemets*.<sup>51</sup> It is interesting that the plus sign (+) was still maintained for works with multiple subjects as Otlet and Simoëns had first suggested several years before — 961.1+965, History of Algeria and Tunisia. In such a case the cards for the work would be filed under each number, the + sign and the number following it being ignored in filing. This, in a sense, provided a kind of «subject tracing note», informing the user that a work on a certain subject also treated another. But the necessity of using this sign rather than the colon and subdivisions of relation seems questionable. It was further suggested in the *Manual*, that the apprehension by a user of the subject display of cards in a repertory could be facilitated by the use of divisionary cards arranged according to a colour code: orange for a specific subject and subdivisions of relation, blue for the form divisions; green for subdivisions of place; yellow for subdivisions of time, and so on.<sup>52</sup>



The publication of this *Manual* together with the *Abridged General Tables*, did not by any means mark the end of the Office's work on the classification. Indeed, it had only just begun, for, in the period 1899 to 1905, the extended tables for the whole classification were published in fascicules and in special subject *Manuals*. The first of the fascicules was described as «Summary of the Rules adopted for the Establishment and Use of the Bibliographic Repertories». <sup>53</sup> This was at once a summary and a revision of the 1889 *Manual* and was included in the *IIB Annual* for 1899, <sup>54</sup> and in each of the subject manuals after that time until 1905.

The «Summary of the Rules» though substantially the same as the *Manual* of 1899 did contain some modifications and refinements. A number of signs of combination and abbreviation were introduced to complement the signs used for the common subdivisions. These, it was thought, would facilitate the presentation of numbers in the tables and the writing and reading of complex numbers to be used in a card repertory. A single dash was used to indicate «subdivide like» for the analytic subdivisions in the tables. A new procedure for joining the numbers for works with multiple subjects was devised also. Instead of joining them horizontally by plus signs, it was suggested that they could be joined vertically by the use of a curved bracket, especially when a kind of factoring of them was required.  $\left. \begin{smallmatrix} 358 \\ 623.4 \end{smallmatrix} \right\} (05) (44-R.A.)$  would replace 385(05) (44—R.A.) + 623.4(05) (44—R.A.) as the number assigned to the French periodical *Revue d'artillerie* which dealt with the army and with military materials. Another form this number could take, however, was 358+623.4 (05) (44—R.A.). The use of square brackets was especially recommended for compound numbers where the colon was used but to each of which had been added a common subdivision such as that of form: [016:355] (05), a periodical bibliography of military science, instead of 016:355(05) which would indicate a bibliography of military periodicals. One extremely important addition to the 1899 *Manual* was an auxiliary table of the common analytic subdivisions for «point of view» to be used with the tables for pure and applied science and for fine arts. Common analytics were to be signalled by the use of a double zero. They assured a common method of indicating «theory of», «economic aspects of», «manufacture of», «materials used for», and so on.

As important segments of the classification were completed, they were published both as fascicules of the full edition of the extended tables and in groups as special subject manuals which comprised subject tables plus general fascicules such as the «Summary of the Rules», tables of the common subdivi-

sions and so on. In 1899 a *Manual* for the physical sciences appeared; in 1900 manuals for photography and agriculture; in 1902 manuals for law, locomotion and sports, and one for the medical sciences. <sup>55</sup> Rules for editing bibliographic notices, for the publication of bibliographies, and for the formation of bibliographic repertories on cards appeared in 1900. <sup>56</sup> In 1902, the Concilium Bibliographicum, which had been revising the sections of the classification appropriate to its work, issued separate tables for paleontology, for general biology and microscopy, for zoology and a combined table for these three areas. In 1905 Richet and Jordan published a new edition of the tables for physiology, and in 1906 Field published a second edition of the tables for anatomy with an IIB imprint. <sup>57</sup> Finally, during the period 1904 to 1907 the *Manuel du Répertoire Bibliographique Universel*, a volume of over two thousand pages, made its appearance, incorporating all the fascicules of the classification, and various revisions, corrections and extensions to the tables which were made during that period. <sup>58</sup>

After 1907 the study of the classification continued and proposals for developing it yet further were drawn up, weighed and re-examined, though little new work was actually published before the outbreak of the First World War. <sup>59</sup> The classification was now in the form it would take until the second, much delayed edition appeared in 1932.

#### THE BELGIANS AND AMERICANS IN CONFLICT

As the works of publishing the first definitive edition of the Brussels Decimal Classification got under way in 1902, Otlet and La Fontaine began to correspond with Melvil Dewey again. <sup>60</sup> At first desultory, the correspondence grew in volume and frequency after the Brussels Tables had been completed in 1905 and as work on the 7th American edition of the classification gathered momentum. Underlying the Belgian correspondence was an overriding desire to promote in America through Dewey the general aims of the Institute, and particularly to maintain a close correspondence between the American Decimal Classification and the European version, a correspondence upon which, as far as Otlet and La Fontaine were concerned, all international bibliographic co-operation sponsored by IIB was predicated. Over the American edition of the classification they had no direct control, but they could try as much as possible both to ensure that the Belgian edition did not differ from the 1894 American Dewey upon which it was modelled (for little notice appears to have been taken of the 6th, 1899 American edition of the classification) and then, that any new American editions should resemble theirs as much as possible.

Otlet's hopes of America and Dewey and his disappointments were expressed in a letter written to Dewey in 1903 after a mutual silence of over a year. Having explained what the Institute had been doing in a general way up to that time and the specific stage reached in the development and publication of the classification (the subject manuals), Otlet, adverting to the principal goal of all of this activity, observed:

If three years ago we had been able to get agreement in organising bibliographic work in America in perfect concordance with that undertaken by us in Europe, I think we would have been very much further along today; we should have rallied all those who hesitated to the cause of bibliographic unity and to international co-operation in this matter. Unhappily our movement has not been sustained in America, despite numerous appeals to those we thought could have helped us. We cannot get here the considerable sums with which your kings of industry gratify your libraries. It is necessary for us to do much with little.<sup>61</sup>

At the fountainhead of the cause of bibliographic unity lay the Decimal Classification, and Otlet welcomed the resumption of relations with its inventor:

I hope that from now on we will be able to have a regular correspondence, and that you will not abandon any longer to an adoptive father the care of supervising the progress in the world of the Decimal Classification of which you are and should remain the natural father.<sup>62</sup>

He voiced a similar sentiment four years later when the Brussels edition of the classification was completed. Its principles had been expounded enthusiastically by Henry Hopwood before the Library Association in London,<sup>63</sup> and Otlet drew this talk and the subsequent discussion of it to Dewey's attention.<sup>64</sup> But the new American edition had still not appeared, and Otlet was troubled by the delay. He feared that the new American edition, when it finally saw the light of day, might show that the «integrity» of the 1894 classification had not been maintained. Otlet had insisted from the very first on the essential inviolability of the numbers of the 1894 edition as the only way to avoid local variations in the classification. The 1894 edition had been set up as an international standard guarded jealously by the Institute. Otlet had written to Dewey at the time the printing of the Brussels edition was under way: «I hope you are following our work attentively and are satisfied with the effort that we have made to preserve the integrity of the Decimal Classification».<sup>65</sup> Four years later, rather anxiously, he wrote:

There are complaints that so little is known about developments to the 1894 edition! To those who pass on these complaints to me, I tell them that you are the great culprit, that you do not interest yourself any more in your own child now that it has grown up and married bibliography. Wicked father! Show that you are capable of remorse and use your good time to regain lost time.<sup>66</sup>

Dewey met Otlet's overtures graciously. He referred a letter of enquiry about the classification in foreign languages to Otlet with the remark that in future all such enquiries would be directed to him, saying

We feel strongly the need of having the new edition in harmony with your work and are willing to keep in harmony with you. Your work has been done with rare sympathy, skill and efficiency, and you deserve any co-operation we can render. It is, of course, to our mutual interest that the same edition be used on both sides of the Atlantic and we will as far as possible adopt the new features you have introduced, and hope you will see your way clear to adopt most of ours so that the joint book will be more useful on both sides of the Atlantic. I feel the freer in this matter because from the first I have assured you that the IIB was welcome to any returns it could get from the sale of the book in French.<sup>67</sup>

Dewey repeated this sentiment reassuringly at regular intervals, and a species of co-operation in the development of the classification emerged. Otlet, hoping to make use of what little time remained before the Brussels Dewey was finished asked repeatedly for «a note summarising the principal criticisms which have been made of the Decimal Classification», and for the proofs of any tables that Dewey's American collaborators might have drawn up for the new American edition.<sup>68</sup> Not much seemed to come of these requests, presumably because the American edition was not yet very far advanced.

Two sections of the classification tables not yet revised in Brussels in 1903 had caused the Belgians distress: the tables for mathematics, and those for chemistry, and Otlet wrote to Dewey for help.<sup>69</sup> Otlet had had great difficulty finding a suitable collaborator for mathematics. His friend Léon Losseau, learning of this, had come across a professor at the Athénée de Mons who was willing to undertake the work. Though Losseau pronounced the tables for mathematics that were drawn up by the end of 1903 «very good», Otlet found that it was almost impossible to make them take into account the headings of the International Congress of Mathematicians. He wrote to Dewey for an opinion on radically changing the classification for both mathematics and chemistry. Dewey did not fully understand the difficulty, though he had had a note about the tables for mathematics from Field in Zurich which incorporated the opinions of a number of European professors, the substance of whose views he passed on to Otlet.<sup>70</sup>

One of the Belgian collaborators on the chemistry tables had thought he had discerned the use of a particular manual on chemistry in the American tables. Otlet, therefore, wrote to Dewey asking for the name of the works that had been used in compiling the 1894 edition of the classification. By referring to these works, Otlet thought that the IIB's collaborators could better appreciate what had been done in the 1894 edition, and

could therefore maintain its spirit more easily. Dewey answered this letter with a rather full description of how the classification had been compiled:

There is hardly a subject of the Decimal Classification where we could say we adopted anyone's classification. At first we collected all the headings from all the subject catalogues of libraries we could get, to find what groupings had been adopted in an effort to meet the needs of libraries. Then, in consultation with professors and other specialists on each subject, we tried to arrange this material under the heads that would practically be most useful. The inverted Baconian order used by W. T. Harris, now U. S. Commissioner of Education, determined the general order but the classes were bound to be pretty nearly what they are. We have compared all along everything available in classification, but in the nature of things, most classifications were from the standpoint of a scientific specialist and not of a librarian collecting and classifying a great quantity of books, pamphlets, clippings and notes. Our advice has been chiefly from university professors in the various subjects, and other specialists working from distinctly practical ends.<sup>71</sup>

On the whole, the co-operation between the Belgians and the Americans did not get under way soon enough or quickly enough for it to have had much influence on the setting up of the tables of the classification contained in the *Manual of the RBU*. But after 1906 when the Americans began to work much more actively than they had done before on the 7th American edition of the classification, finally issued in 1911, Otlet and La Fontaine found themselves fighting a protracted rearguard action to protect their developments of the classification and with them the cause of bibliographical unity between America and Europe. It began with May Seymour, Dewey's editorial assistant for the DC, asking La Fontaine for a list of the treatises used by the Belgians to develop the Brussels Dewey. Dewey without waiting for an answer followed her letter with another:

I want to put it much stronger than has Miss Seymour. I admire so greatly the spirit in which you and your colleagues have worked that I shall strain a point wherever possible to make our people satisfied to accept your decisions. I want you, therefore, to give me all the light you can that will help us to get your point of view. Can you not make a list of people who did the work on the different subjects, so if occasion arises we can ask further questions. My attitude of mind is to keep in harmony with you unless it is going to make serious trouble here.

La Fontaine, who wrote and spoke English with relative ease, and with whom May Seymour seems to have preferred to correspond, handed the letters to Otlet to answer, which he did, much gratified by the expressions of good will and co-operation they contained.<sup>72</sup> Over the next few years a sporadic correspondence ensued as parts of the Belgian tables were translated into English and sent for checking to Otlet and La Fontaine, and as both new European and American proposals for re-

vision in the tables were drawn up. In 1908 Dewey received modifications suggested by Field in Zurich for the tables for 610, 611 and 612 and he was inclined to accept them. They were sent off to Brussels some time early in 1909 for comment.<sup>73</sup>

Early in 1908 Adolf Law Vöge appeared in Dewey's office with a proposal to develop 621.3, Electricity in Industry, and with a request for \$1,000 to permit him to go away to do this. Dewey was impressed by Vöge, and wrote off to Field and to Otlet making enquiries about him. All that Otlet knew of him was that he had worked with Field in Zurich, was an intelligent and hardworking man with a good knowledge of the Decimal Classification, and had left the Concilium Bibliographicum to take a better position with an American industrial concern. The negotiations for this position had fallen through as a result of a general financial slump at the time. Early in 1908, Vöge had decided to turn once again to bibliography and to Europe, and was soon expected in Brussels. By the end of 1908, Vöge had made suggestions for modifications in 640, 661 and 669. His study of the classification of the chemical elements in 54 had been published in the *IIB Bulletin* and as a separate IIB Publication in that same year.<sup>74</sup>

A controversy flared up as a result of Vöge's work, for he had suggested, especially in chemistry, fundamental changes in the subdivisions of the 1894 Classification. Otlet and La Fontaine addressed a joint note to Dewey, Field and General Sebert about it. A conversation with Sebert in Paris, and the perusal of correspondence which had passed between the Americans, Clement Andrews of the John Crerar Library and Walter Stanley Bischof of the New York State Library (one of Dewey's most faithful and hardworking students and assistants), convinced Otlet completely of the unacceptability of Vöge's suggested changes in light of «the great effort which was made in the preparation of the tables of the Institute to conserve your [Dewey's 1894] classification numbers». Apparently the Americans acquiesced in this view, too, for a short while later, Otlet wrote to May Seymour that he noted, with respect to the development of 54 Chemistry, that «you have not given approval to Mr. Vöge, and very cautiously leave all radical modification to a future edition». The question, he observed, «is not ripe and Mr. Vöge, has no fixed opinions himself».<sup>75</sup>

Nevertheless, a battle line had quite definitely formed by this time. In 1904 May Seymour had sent a translation of the Belgian tables for the military sciences to La Fontaine to check. It was a good translation, he observed, but «first you have not translated the introductory notes of the military tables and these notes are absolutely necessary to understand the whole scheme, and second you have not adopted our writing of



the decimal numbers. You write 355.342.1 instead of 35.534.21.»<sup>76</sup> He went on to explain why this method of writing the numbers was so important and how in other parts of the tables it freed numbers to be extensively developed by the use of a zero and double zero. No comment seems to have been made on this in America. Three years later, when Otlet had reviewed the American proofs for 37 and 07, he asked: «Will you adopt the use of the parenthesis, (), and of the two points, in the sense that we have recognised. It is most important, capital even, from the point of view of our progress in Europe... Will you tell us your decision? I remind you of the English study presented by Mr. Hopwood...». Again there was no answer. A year later Otlet wrote once more to May Seymour that still he had not been informed of any verdict on the use of the common subdivisions:

We observe, reading your drafts, that you have already adopted certain of our ideas on the subject, especially the use of 0 to form what we have called the analytic subdivisions. (These are of the utmost importance.) ... they have been the sole means we have found of reconciling multiple desiderata: maintaining the Decimal Classification (former editions) in its integrity; giving to it the possibility of classifying in detail as is necessary in bibliography; bringing a logical, generalised, systematic character to the classification indispensable for gaining adherents in Latin and German countries. We ask you again urgently to study the question anew ... the work of Mr. Hopwood ... has expressed our thought very clearly on this subject and was published only after conferring with us.<sup>77</sup>

May Seymour did at last answer, and her lengthy reply stressed the different points of view from which the American and the Belgian classifications had been drawn up. She admitted, with regret, the existence of divergencies from the Brussels tables in the new American edition:

We admire greatly the ingenuity of the IIB combining symbols and appreciate their convenience for bibliography. In a few days we will study them anew for use in the preface to Edition Seven, where we shall recommend them for minute classification of notes and bibliographic references ... Mr. Hopwood's exposition is admirable.

The reasons we cannot incorporate these symbols in the tables as essentials are:

1) Shelf numbers must be simple arabic numerals with a single decimal after the first three figures. It is impractical to use signs or to multiply or shift the decimal point to show logical refinements because:

a) makes the numbers look so perplexingly complicated as to prejudice many persons at first glance beyond the power of argument;

b) libraries have to use such cheap help to get books from the shelves and replace them that complicated numbers cause many mistakes;

c) danger of errors from complicated number is also multiplied in a library by the many different places in which the class number of a book is recorded;

d) the time required for the necessarily repeated writing of library numbers is potentially greater for complicated than for simple ones.

2) Our form divisions are used so widely in libraries for such a large amount of material that the inconvenience and expense of changing them on a vast number of volumes and records now bearing them would outweigh almost any theoretic argument for your (O<sup>a</sup>), even if your curves did not add two characters to our numbers and lessen their simplicity.

We greatly regret the difference between DC and CD numbers for the same thing (i. e. form divisions) and the consequent use of the same number for two different things (i. e. O by DC for form and by CD for generalities [actually analytic subdivisions]). We ought if possible to find some way to avoid this clash, since we mutually deplore it and recognise its disadvantages. For you, untrammelled by consideration of library call numbers and shelf use, your plan has advantages over ours; but for us, burdened by a heavy train of usage and pledges not to make changes except for a gain outweighing their cost and also by the fundamental principle of limiting our notation to our tables, it is impossible ...<sup>78</sup>

It was clear from this letter that divergencies would inevitably continue to occur, especially given the use of the common subdivisions. By devising the tables of the common subdivisions the Belgians had released many numbers for further and parallel development in a way that was impossible for the Americans to follow if they took cognizance of these common aspects of subjects variously in the tables themselves. Inevitably numbers would be blocked in the American tables and the enumeration of subdivisions after them would differ from that of the Belgians. Otlet fought back. He sent off almost immediately two notes to counter May Seymour's arguments against the Belgian classification. One was called «An Examination of the Arguments against the Use of Composite Numbers in Libraries», the other, «How to Combine the Notation of the Decimal Classification, Widespread in America, with that of the CD, Principally used in Europe».<sup>79</sup> Presumably they had no effect and as more and more of the American tables were prepared, Otlet and La Fontaine became increasingly disturbed. After receiving the tables for 62, Otlet wrote, «At first sight, I observe with great regret numerous divergencies in the classification.» Later in the month, he received the tables for 621.3—9 and for 614.84 and again he and his colleagues had noticed with dismay

the considerable number of modifications to the CD, and we want to ask you in all cases to conform as strictly as possible. We have made a very great effort to maintain the original order of the classification. It is therefore simple reciprocity that we ask... The Decimal Classification has made great progress in Europe in these last years, and its advantages are beginning to be understood; the tremendous suppleness given to it by our Institute by way of the principles of combination has also been noted. But all the fruits of numerous years of propaganda and of battling for the superior principle will be lost. It is necessary never to lose sight of the unification of classification —

the present eighth edition (sic) should not give to adversaries the means of saying: look the decimalists themselves are not able to agree amongst themselves.

Some weeks later, May Seymour wrote that she had had no time to respond to a request by Otlet for detailed reasons for the increasingly frequent and obvious divergencies between the two classifications. In a sudden fury, La Fontaine picked up his pen and addressed her in forceful but slightly broken English:

You write: it has been impossible as yet to make out for us a schedule of reasons for variation from CD tables. We can only answer one thing: that variation is for the success whole over the world of the DC the greatest hindrance which can be placed in our way. The CD, as we have comprehended it, is penetrating in the most different domains of science and knowledge. You are only thinking of library work: that is the mistake. You affirm you wish to keep in perfect harmony with I. I. B. We are obliged to state that you are in perfect disharmony. We unfortunately have no more hope to convince you. If we must send to you notes about the drafts submitted by you it is because we think it is our duty to do so. Please communicate this letter to Mr. Dewey.

La Fontaine then proceeded to a detailed criticism of aspects of the classification. Under 013 he wrote, referring to the use of the parentheses and the colon, «how is it possible not to understand that the system of CD is more clear and adequate as DC». At 641 his ire broke out again: «we can only say one thing that it is **vexing, vexing, vexing**, to see all our subdivisions changed without the least utility» and he pointed out that at 641.4 only one of the Belgian subdivisions was maintained by the Americans yet many of the variations were quite arbitrary. He followed this remark with eight angry exclamation points.<sup>80</sup>

This, however, by no means marked a rupture of relations between the two groups, though there was a general slackening off of correspondence. In 1909 the Belgians had begun to work on new tables for medicine, hoping to achieve a perfect parallelism between 611-Anatomy and 616-Pathology. A provisional manual incorporating much of the new material and many of the modifications of the old material was prepared for Dentistry. Otlet wrote to May Seymour that the International Federation for Dentistry (which published the manual after the War) was showing great interest in it. It required far-reaching and particularly «delicate» decisions, he believed, and in a detailed letter, examined why discordances between 611 and 616 had arisen and were now hindering the development of the tables. He recognised that a final decision, involving so much change from the original classification, lay in Dewey's own hands, for the IIB had faithfully followed and was firmly committed to following the earlier 1894 edition. It proved impossible, despite repeated application, to get a defi-

nite answer from Dewey. Late in 1909 and early in 1910 Otlet had asked for a report and again towards the end of 1910 he wrote to Dewey with an urgent request for some word on the medical tables. The American edition of the whole classification appeared in 1911, and the give-and-take of revision and counter-revision more or less ceased without the matter having been resolved. Otlet examined his copy of the new Dewey with pleasure and interest: «We proceed very much in agreement on essential lines. The details will harmonise later by the very force of things.» But the remark which followed seems to have been half-hearted; «The principle is established, that there is only one Decimal Classification and this classification is universal».<sup>81</sup>

In the next year, Otlet received a request from a scientist in Urbana, Illinois, for permission to translate the Belgian *Manual of the RBU*. Otlet wondered what Dewey's opinion on this proposal might be, given the differences that had developed in the classification. He was rather brusquely informed of this. Dewey was led by the letter to suspect that they in America had

not kept you well informed of our own methods of progress. We are, as we thought you knew, using your tables as a basis for all our work with the determination to accept your results without change, except where the weight of adverse criticism, discovery of actual errors, or departure from established usage make such acceptances impracticable. Consequently we have translated and typewritten in duplicate nearly if not quite two thirds of the big «manual» and have much of it in the hands of the critics. I send you a set of the translations, omitting only those subjects already published in our 7th edition. You will doubtless find in this misapprehensions of French terms. Since your expansions are under revision and likely to be changed in many details before either you or we reprint them, publication of an English translation would be sure to cause confusion and annoyance.

Dewey's point was clearly taken and Otlet wrote back to May Seymour that he was pleased that an attempt at concordance was still being made for «the only way to arrive at unity is to have a close union between us, then all the dissident classifications will end up by falling into desuetude and the official version will triumph».<sup>82</sup> The little contact between the two groups after that time was in the service of this rather forlorn ideal. May Seymour visited Europe in 1913, and spent a day in Brussels being shown over the OIB by Otlet and discussing the Decimal Classification. Early in 1914 Otlet visited America. At no time had he given up hope for the eventual unification of the two classifications, and an intermittent correspondence was pursued until the First World War descended on Europe and severed for a time all of the IIB's transatlantic ties.

# FOOTNOTES

1. *Decimal Classification; Sociology, Sozialwissenschaft, Sociologie* (Bruxelles: OIB, 1895). This is unpaginated and bears no bibliographical information beyond the title. A fuller version was also published: *Classification Décimale des sciences sociales et du droit*; table méthodique en français et index alphabétique en français, en anglais et en allemand — édition développée (Publication No. 4; Bruxelles: OIB, 1895).
2. *Classification Décimale: tables générales...* (Publication No. 2; Bruxelles: OIB, 1895); *Classification Décimale. Tables géographiques générales* (Publication No. 3; Bruxelles: OIB, 1895).
3. *Organisation internationale de la bibliographie scientifique* (Publication No. 5; Bruxelles: OIB, 1896).
4. For example: *Classification Décimale des sciences médicales*; table — édition française (Publication No. 7; Bruxelles: OIB, 1896).
5. «Editions développées».
6. Limousin's original undertaking was to apply the Decimal Classification to the notices in the *Bulletin des sommaires* and to print them on one side of a sheet only so that the notices could be cut up for inclusion in bibliographic repertories (*IIB Bulletin*, I (1895—6), 46).
7. A draft of the letter, marked «ne pas envoyé», is folded in the pages of Otlet's *Diary* after the last entry for 1895.
8. «Chronologie des principaux faits relatifs au développement de l'Institut International de Bibliographie», *L'Organisation systématique de la documentation et le développement de l'Institut International de Bibliographie* (Publication No. 82; Bruxelles: IIB, 1907), p. 38.
9. *Règles pour les développements à apporter à la Classification Décimale*. (Publication No. 34; Bruxelles: IIB, 1896). This is a short pamphlet of 13 pages and no further citation will be made to it in the following paragraph.
10. Concilium Bibliographicum, *Systema decimale ad usum bibliographiae Zoologicae. Indices alphabetici. Conspectus methodicus*. (IIB Publication No. 8; Turici (Zurich): Concilium Bibliographicum, 1897).
11. Concilium Bibliographicum, *Conspectus numerorum systematis decimalis ad usum bibliographiae anatomicae confectus auctoritate Instituti Bibliographici Internationalis Bruxellensis, ampliatis ab Dr. Hebert Haviland Field...* (IIB Publication No. 10; Jena (Geneva): Fischer, 1897).
12. Concilium Bibliographicum, *Conspectus methodicus et alphabeticus numerorum systematis decimalis ad usum schedularii zoologici*; auctoritate Instituti Bibliographici Internationalis Bruxellensis, ampliatus a Concilio Bibliographico (IIB Publication No. 18; Turici (Zurich): Concilium Bibliographicum, 1898).
13. Charles Richet, *Conspectus Methodicus et alphabeticus numerorum «Systematis Decimalis» ad usum bibliographiae physiologicae*; confectus auctoritate Instituti Bibliographici Bruxellensis et Societatis Biologiae Parisensis, ampliatus ab Carolo Richet... (IIB Publication No. 15; Turici (Zurich): Concilium Bibliographicum, 1897).
14. «L'Institut International de Bibliographie: premiers résultats», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895—96), 49—51.
15. The *Revue néo-scholastique* published by the Institut Supérieur de Philosophie and eventually edited by de Wulf had used the Decimal Classification for its *Bibliographia Philosophica* as soon as it was available. The extended tables for philosophy were not separately published until 1900 when a 2nd edition appeared: Institut Supérieur de Philosophie,

*Classification Bibliographique Décimale des sciences philosophiques: tables méthodiques* (2e édition; IIB Publication No. 42; Louvain: L'Institut, 1900).

16. Service Géologique de Belgique, *La Classification Décimale de Melvil Dewey appliquée aux sciences géologiques pour l'élaboration de la Bibliographia Geologica* (IIB Publication No. 28; Bruxelles: Hayez, 1898); and, Service Géologique de Belgique, *La Classification de Melvil Dewey complétée par la partie 549—599 de la Bibliographia Universalis et appropriée pour l'élaboration de la Bibliographia Geologica*: Introduction, table méthodique et index alphabétique (2<sup>e</sup> édition; IIB Publication No. 29; Bruxelles: Hayez, 1899).
17. *Classification décimale des sciences astronomiques: introduction et index alphabétique* (Publication No. 11; Bruxelles: OIB, 1897).
18. Louis Weissenbruch, *La Classification Bibliographique Décimale et son application à la science des chemins de fer*. (IIB Publication No. 17; Bruxelles: P. Weissenbruch, 1897). This pamphlet was also published in English with the same IIB Publication number.
19. *Classification décimale des sciences photographiques*; tables développées (Publication No. 16; Bruxelles: OIB, 1897).
20. *Classification Décimale: Tables générales abrégées* (Publication No. 9; Bruxelles: OIB, 1897). These tables were also published in *IIB Bulletin*, II (1897, 1—73).
21. Vittorio Benedetti, *Classificazione decimale. Tavole generali di Melvil Dewey, ridotte e adottate dall'Istituto Internazionale di Bibliografia* (IIB Publication No. 12; Firenze (Florence): G. Barbara, 1897).
22. Manuel Castillo, *La Clasificación bibliográfica decimal. Exposición del sistema y traducción directa de las Tablas generales del mismo...* (IIB Publication No. 13; Salamanca: Imprenta de Calatrava, 1897).
23. Carl Junker, *Die Dezimalklassifikation. Gekürzte allgemeine Tafeln; Deutsche Ausgabe* (IIB Publication No. 14; Wein (Vienna): Hölder, 1897).
24. *Organisation internationale de la bibliographie scientifique, op. cit.* This work, like the *Rules*, was unsigned, but was presumably written by Otlet. He acknowledged the «*Rules*» in his «*Sur la structure des nombres classificateurs*».
25. Otlet to Melvil Dewey, ?? 1895, Dossier No. 259, «Dewey» Mundaneum.
26. *Ibid.*
27. Paul Otlet, «Le programme de l'Institut International de Bibliographie: objections et explications», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895—96), 85—93. This will be called «*Objections and Explications*» in the following paragraphs. A slightly fuller and more systematic presentation of these ideas appeared in the pamphlet *Organisation internationale de la bibliographie scientifique*. Here the form and geographical subdivisions were described, together with number-compounding using the colon. Some discussion was also presented about filing problems which would arise when numbers were complicated by the various punctuation signs.
28. Marcel Baudouin, «La Classification Décimale et les sciences médicales», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895—96), 161—181.
29. Victor Carus, «La Zoologie et la Classification Décimale», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895—96), 189—193. The quotation is from page 189. Carus was commenting on various proposals submitted to him by the Office and explained by Otlet in «*Sur la structure des nombres classificateurs*» (see below). Carus, 1823—1903, was an eminent German Zoologist. His history of Zoology is still a standard work. He edited the *Zoologischer*



- Anzeiger from 1878 to 1895 and continued to edit it when it became *Bibliographica Zoologica* published by the Concilium Bibliographicum after 1895.
30. Daruty de Grandpré, «La Classification Décimale et les bibliographies régionales: bibliographie des Iles Africaines de l'Océan Indien Austral», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-96), 205-221.
  31. Unsigned «Note complémentaire», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-96), 221-22. (This is a note to the last page of the article cited in the preceding footnote).
  32. G. Simoëns, «Quelques mots à propos de l'analyse bibliographique», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-96), 222-229.
  33. Paul Ollet, «Sur la structure des nombres classificateurs», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895-96), 230-243.
  34. *Ibid.*, p. 232.
  35. *Ibid.*, p. 234.
  36. *Ibid.*, p. 241.
  37. *Ibid.*, p. 242. He uses the term «pasigraphie» which I have translated «universal language».
  38. *Principes généraux de la Classification Décimale: Conférence Bibliographique Internationale*, 2<sup>e</sup> Session, Bruxelles, 1897. (This paper is anonymous, and was published presumably only for use at the conference. It does not seem to have been printed separately elsewhere either in the *IIB Bulletin* or in the *Publications* series. Parts of it, however, were repeated verbatim in the 1898 *Manuel*, see Note 42 below)
  39. *Ibid.*, p. 5, «nombres composés et déterminants».
  40. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
  41. *Classification Décimale: tables générales abrégées*, *op. cit.*
  42. *Manuel de la Classification Bibliographique Décimale: exposé et règles* (Publication No. 20; Bruxelles: OIB, 1898). This will be referred to as the *Manual* in the course of the text and elsewhere in the notes to this chapter. It was also published in the Institute's *Bulletin*, III (1898), 1-80.
  43. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-47.
  44. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
  45. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
  46. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
  47. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
  48. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
  49. The final method accepted for the indication of the form divisions and the reasons underlying it were explained in the section of the *Manual* on the IIB's debt to the 1894 Dewey, *Manual*, pp. 44-47.
  50. *Manual*, p. 24.
  51. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
  52. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
  53. *Classification Bibliographique Décimale: tables générales refondues*, Fascicule I, Introduction générale aux tables de la Classification Décimale et résumé des règles de la Classification Décimale (Publication No. 25; Bruxelles: IIB, 1899).
  54. *Annuaire de l'Institut International de Bibliographie* (Publication No. 23; Bruxelles: IIB, 1899). This was also published in the Institute's *Bulletin*, II (1898), 1-193.
  55. *Manuel pour l'usage du Répertoire Bibliographique des Sciences Physiques établi d'après la Classification Décimale*. Edition française publiée avec le concours du Bureau Bibliographique de Paris et de la Société Française de Physique (Publication No. 26; Bruxelles: IIB, 1899); *Manuel pour l'usage du Répertoire Bibliographique de Photographie*... édition française publiée avec le concours du Bureau Bibliographique de Paris et de la Société Française de Photographie (Publication No. 45; Bruxelles: IIB, 1900); V. Vermorel, *Manuel du Répertoire Bibliographique des Sciences Agricoles établi d'après la Classification Décimale*. Edition française éditée par V. Vermorel, avec le concours de la station viticole de Ville-franche (Rhône) et du Bureau Bibliographique de Paris (Publication No. 41; Bruxelles: IIB, 1900); *Manuel pour l'usage du Répertoire Bibliographique des Sciences Juridiques*... (Publication No. 43; Bruxelles: IIB 1902); *Manuel pour la formation et l'usage du Répertoire Bibliographique Universel de la Locomotion et des Sports* (Tourisme, Cyclisme et Automobilisme); édition française publiée avec le concours du Bureau Bibliographique de Paris et du Touring Club de France (Publication No. 48; Bruxelles: IIB, 1902); *Manuel pour l'usage du Répertoire Bibliographique des Sciences Médicales* (Publication No. 44; Bruxelles: IIB, 1902). This last is a good example of how the *Manuals* were put together. It comprised the first two fascicules of the extended tables, numbers 9-13 (therapeutics, internal pathology, external pathology, physiology and gynecology, pediatrics and comparative medicine), Numbers 16 and 17 (summary of the tables, generalities, bibliography and library science), number 28 (public and private hygiene) and numbers 34 and 35 (General index and the organisation, work and methods of the IIB).
  56. *Manuel pour l'usage des Répertoires Bibliographiques: organisation internationale de la bibliographie scientifique, règles pour la rédaction des notices bibliographiques; règles pour la publication des recueils bibliographiques et la formation des répertoires sur fiches: tables abrégées de la Classification Bibliographique* (Publication No. 40; Bruxelles: IIB, 1900). Draft rules for editing bibliographic notices, in effect rules for descriptive cataloging, had been drawn up in 1898 by the Bibliographic Bureau of Paris and this draft had been published in the *IIB Bulletin* for immediate use and to serve as a basis for recommendations for modification. The rules were, in fact, almost immediately revised at the office and they, along with the rules for the use of the classification, were included in all the subject manuals: Bureau Bibliographique de Paris, *Règles pour la rédaction des notices destinées au Répertoire Bibliographique Universel* (Bruxelles: Imprimerie Veuve Ferdinand Larcier, 1898); «Project des règles pour la rédaction des notices bibliographiques», *IIB Bulletin*, III (1898), 81-113.
  57. Concilium Bibliographicum, *Conspectus methodicus et alphabeticus numerorum classificationis bibliographici auctoritate Instituti Bibliographici Bruxellensis ampliatum a Concilio Bibliographico: 56 paleontologia* (IIB Publication No. 55; Turici (Zürich): Sumptibus Concilii Bibliographici, 1902); Concilium Bibliographicum, *Conspectus Methodicus et alphabeticus numerorum...: 575-579 biologia generalis, microscopia* (IIB Publication No. 56; Turici (Zürich): Sumptibus Concilii Bibliographici, 1902); Concilium Bibliographicum, *Conspectus methodicus et alphabeticus numerorum... 59 zoologica* (IIB Publication No. 58; Turici (Zürich): Sumptibus Concilii Bibliographici, 1902); Concilium Bibliographicum, *Conspectus methodicus et alphabeticus numerorum... 56-57-59: palaeontologia, biologia generalis, microscopia, zoologia* (IIB

- Publication No. 58; Turici: Sumptibus Concilii Bibliographici, 1902); Charles Richet and H. Jordan. *Conspectus methodicus et alphabeticus numerorum... systematis decimilis ad usum Bibliographiae Physiologicae* (IIB Publication No. 72; Turici: Concilium Bibliographicum, 1905); Herbert Haviland Field, *Conspectus methodicus et alphabeticus numerorum systematis decimalis ad usum Bibliographiae Anatomicae...*, editio secunda (IIB Publication No. 74; Bruxelles: IIB, 1906).
58. The *Manuel du Répertoire Bibliographique Universel* (Publication No. 63; Bruxelles: IIB, 1904—1907) presents something of a bibliographical nightmare. It consisted of two parts: introductory matter of one kind and another, and the extender tables and general index. The introductory matter, together with the abridged general tables and the abridged auxiliary tables for the common subdivisions (which were also included) were separately printed as the *Manuel abrégé du Répertoire Bibliographique Universel* (Bruxelles: IIB, 1905). The tables of the classification, forming the second part of the *Manuel du RBU*, were issued as numbered fascicules of the *Classification Bibliographique Décimale tables générales refondues* (Bruxelles: IIB, 1899—1905) which was given the publication number 25. Each fascicule was thus part of IIB Publication No. 25. A number of these fascicules were collected together in various combinations to form the subject Manuals listed in the preceding notes. Each of these subject manuals was given its own IIB Publication number, so that any Manual consisted of numbered fascicules of the General Tables (Publication 25) with an additional Publication number. Moreover, each of the complete *Manuel du RBU* (Publication No. 65), which represent the assemblage of all fascicules, is potentially different from every other.
59. The tables for medicine were under constant review and a manual for stomatology and odontology was drafted though not actually published until after the War (Fédération Dentaire Internationale, *Manuel pour la Classification Décimale relatif à la stomatologie et à l'odontologie*, IIB Publication No. 112; Bruxelles: La Fédération, 1920). A small supplement to the general tables appeared in 1908: *Manuel du Répertoire Bibliographique Universel: supplément No. 1 aux tables de la Classification Décimale* (Publication No. 63a; Bruxelles: IIB, 1908). In that same year a manual for the use of the classification with material in and about Esperanto, which was a particular hobby-horse of General ebert appeared: *Manuel du Répertoire Bibliographique Universel: extraits limités aux parties plus spécialement applicables à la bibliographie de la langue auxiliaire internationale Esperanto*—avec appendice sur l'emploi de cette langue en bibliographie (Publication No. 91; Bruxelles: IIB, 1908). The appendix was also separately published in Paris as *Emploi en bibliographie de la langue internationale auxiliaire Esperanto* (Paris: Bureau Bibliographique de Paris, 1908). In 1910 a manual for the use of the classification for the organisation of administrative papers and archival material was issued: *Manuel de l'administration: recueil des principes, règles et recommandations pour l'organisation des bureaux des secrétariats et des archives, élaboré en coopération par l'Association Internationale de Comptabilité, l'Institut International de Bibliographie et la Société Académique de Comptabilité de Belgique* (Publication No. 119; Bruxelles: IIB, 1911).
60. Otlet to Dewey, 13 January 1902, Dossier No. 259, «Dewey», Mundaneum. (Except where indicated all letters cited hereafter will be from this file and only the letters themselves will be identified.)
61. Otlet to Dewey, 2 March 1903.
62. *Ibid.*
63. Henry V. Hopwood, *Dewey Expanded: Lecture on the Classification Bibliographique of the Institut International de Bibliographie held before the Library Association, 8 April, 1907*. Reprinted from the *Library Association Record*, June 1907 (Publication No. 88; Bruxelles: IIB, 1907).
64. Otlet informed Dewey of this paper 19 August 1907 and sent him four copies of the Institute's reprint (Otlet to Dewey 11 January 1908).
65. Otlet to Dewey, 22 December 1903.
66. Otlet to Dewey, 19 August 1907.
67. Dewey to Otlet, 16 March 1903.
68. Otlet to Dewey, 13 January 1902; 4 December 1903.
69. Otlet to Dewey, 4 December 1903.
70. Losseau to Otlet, 30 January 1903, Dossier No. 25, «Losseau», Mundaneum; Losseau to Otlet, 11 November 1903; Otlet to Dewey, 30 January 1904; Otlet to Dewey, 22 December 1903; Dewey to Otlet, 13 January 1904.
71. Otlet to Dewey, 25 January 1904; Dewey to Otlet, 5 February 1904.
72. May Seymour to La Fontaine, 17 January 1906; Dewey to La Fontaine, 17 January 1906; Otlet to Dewey, 3 February 1906.
73. Dewey to Otlet, 7 November 1908; May Seymour to Otlet, 11 February 1909; Otlet to May Seymour, 2 March 1909.
74. Dewey to Otlet, 28 April 1908; Otlet to Dewey, 19 May 1908; Dewey to Otlet, 7 November 1908; Adolf Law Vöge, *Grouping the Chemical Elements* (Publication No. 104; Bruxelles: IIB, 1908).
75. La Fontaine and Otlet to Dewey, Sebert and Field, 5 December 1908; Otlet to Dewey, 19 January 1909; Otlet to May Seymour, 21 April 1909.
76. May Seymour to La Fontaine, 10 November 1903; La Fontaine to May Seymour, 3 December 1904.
77. Otlet to Dewey, 11 January 1908 (see note 63: Hopwood, *Dewey Expanded*); Otlet to May Seymour, 21 April 1909.
78. May Seymour to Otlet, 5 May 1909. (Something of a convention arose in indicating the American and Brussels editions: the former, Decimal Classification (DC), the latter Classification Décimale (CD)).
79. Otlet to May Seymour, 21 May 1909. Copies of the notes are not preserved in the file.
80. Otlet to May Seymour, 15 March 1910; 31 March 1910; May Seymour to Otlet, 5 May 1910; La Fontaine to May Seymour, 23 May 1910.
81. Otlet to May Seymour, 25 November 1909; 29 July 1909; 28 August 1909; 25 November 1909; 16 September 1900; 4 February 1910; Otlet to Dewey, 8 November 1910; 7 August 1911.
82. Otlet to Dewey, 13 February 1912; Dewey to Otlet, 3 April 1912; Otlet to May Seymour, 7 November 1912.

## Chapter VI

### THE UNIVERSAL BIBLIOGRAPHIC REPERTORY

#### BIBLIOGRAPHIA UNIVERSALIS

The Universal Decimal Classification, the evolution of which was described in the last chapter, was a tool, a means to an end, only one element, though a major one, in the IIB-IOB's programme of international bibliographic standardisation and co-operation for the compilation of a Universal Bibliographic Repertory (RBU). In their first accounts of this bibliographer's philosopher's stone, Otlet and La Fontaine had only gone so far as to say that it should be complete, arranged both numerically by the number of the Decimal Classification and alphabetically by authors' names, that it should be compiled on cards so that it could easily be kept up to date and excerpted, that it should be reasonably accurate, that scholars and others to whom it would be useful should have ready access to it, and that it should take into account existing bibliographical work.<sup>1</sup>

At the first International Conference of Bibliography, co-operation for its development took two major forms. The first was the acceptance by various individuals in the name of the special organisations they represented or on their own initiative, of the work of developing parts of the decimal classification. The second was the application of the classification either to the articles of substantive journals, or more especially to the entries in periodical bibliographies. Indeed, a number of the editors of these journals were among those who offered to help in the work of expanding the classification tables. As a result of the Conference, a number of periodical bibliographies were at once transformed to meet the requirements of the RBU as described by Otlet and La Fontaine. Otlet and La Fontaine's own *Sommaire méthodique des traités, monographies et revues de droit* and the *Sommaire... de sociologie* were now combined and retitled *Bibliographia Sociologica*, a *Bibliographia Philosophica* was annexed to the *Revue Néoscola-*

*stique* edited by Maurice de Wulf in Louvain and a *Bibliographia Astronomica* was sponsored by the Belgian Society for Astronomy.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, as a result of the agreement at the end of 1895 between OIB and the Concilium Bibliographicum in Zurich, copies of all the bibliographies of the Concilium were forwarded as published to Brussels for the RBU. Preparations for the first of these bibliographies, a *Bibliographia Zoologica*, were almost complete at the time of the Conference. It was estimated that the card edition would contain about 8,000 cards a year and that subscriptions to any or all of its parts could be taken out. This was actually the *Zoologische Anzeiger* which had first appeared in Leipzig in 1878. It continued to be edited by Carus until his death in 1903 when Field assumed the editorship. The Concilium Bibliographicum also planned to publish a *Bibliographia Anatomica* early in 1896 and, if these two bibliographies were successful, to follow them with a *Bibliographia Physiologica*.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the three bibliographies appeared as planned and were published regularly on cards until the outbreak of the first world war.

The OIB also began gradually to expand its own editorial and bibliographical publishing activities in the service of the RBU. Apart from the *Bibliographia Sociologica*, which seems to have been brought out only three times in its consolidated form, the OIB from its inception became closely associated with the *Bibliographie de Belgique*. The main part of this was examined at the Office and classification numbers assigned entries in it. The Office also undertook to compile, as a second part of the bibliography, a classified index to Belgian periodicals. This became a feature of the work until the War. The entries in all of these bibliographies could be incorporated upon publication, either directly because they were published in card form, or after being cut up and pasted on cards, into the Universal Bibliographic Repertory which began to grow rapidly as a result.

In the third number of the *IIB Bulletin*, the whole Universal Repertory was given the Latin name, *Bibliographia Universalis*, and it was reported that «The immense manuscript of the retrospective part continues to be developed at the Office in Brussels, dealing at the same time with all the areas of science and stretching out from the contemporary period further and further into the past. The current part of the repertory is kept up by special periodical bibliographies.»<sup>4</sup> Shortly after this, the term *Bibliographia Universalis* was restricted in its application to these bibliographies only, the names of many of which took the standard Latin form. As the Decimal Classification was developed in French, and parts of it were translated into Spanish, Italian, German and later into other languages, and as adequate rules for the arrangement of bib-



liographic information in notices issued in various forms were devised, a clear picture began to emerge of the RBU as a physical entity and of the international co-operation which was intended to support its development.

Otlet described the RBU in some detail to the second International Conference of Bibliography which took place in Brussels at the beginning of August 1897. When it is completed, said Otlet

This repertory will consist of an inventory of all that has been written at all times, in all languages, and on all subjects. It will be the ledger of science, an Accounting Department where are registered all the intellectual riches of humanity as they are produced. It will be an instrument of study and of information without equal, which will give immediate replies to these two kinds of questions for which, until now, there has been no complete answer: what has appeared on such and such a subject? What works have been written by such and such an author? The repertory will contain twenty to thirty million references according to the first estimates. Division of labour and co-operation alone can assure its realisation.

Its present state is as follows. At Brussels there functions a Central Office whose technical personnel, assisted by numerous employees, are busy with collection and classification for the retrospective bibliography. Already a million and a half cards have been collected. There is at the moment no question of publishing this work which is not sufficiently far advanced and would, moreover, involve considerable sums; but this repertory is put at the free disposition of whoever cares to consult it. The Office also provides copies of this or that part of the manuscript in reply to all requests for information which are made to it by letter and which make some allowance for copying costs.

As for contemporary bibliography, the Office has proposed not only to include it daily in its repertory, but also to undertake with special groups, notably scientific associations... the task of publishing particular bibliographies on a uniform plan. All these collected special bibliographies will embrace the whole field of Universal Bibliography (*Bibliographia Universalis*). Details of form are left to the free initiative of those who direct these publications which have, however, two common features: the first is that each entry carries the symbol of the decimal classification established by convention (classification number of the Decimal Classification); the second, is that each bibliographical title forms in itself a complete whole in such a way as to allow it to be cut up and pasted on a card.<sup>5</sup>

This statement suggests a fundamental difference between the handling of current and retrospective bibliography at the Office, between the prototype manuscript of the RBU and the *Bibliographia Universalis*. In 1899 the bibliographies recognised as forming part of the latter were called *Contributions* and were 29 in number.<sup>6</sup> They ranged from the bibliographies published by the Concilium Bibliographicum, to individual bibliographic works such as Charles Sury's *Bibliographie féminine belge*<sup>7</sup> and Henryck Arctowski's *Materyaly do Bibliografii prac naukowych Polskich*,<sup>8</sup> from an Italian Bookseller's catalog<sup>9</sup> and the Belgian national bibliography to the contents tables

of journals,<sup>10</sup> to say nothing of the catalogs of an English and a Belgian public library.<sup>11</sup> These works had in common one or another of a variety of acceptable entry forms (of which examples were given in the *IIB Bulletin* for 1899),<sup>12</sup> the use of the Decimal Classification, and an arrangement whereby they were issued in card editions, in sheets or books with one side of each sheet blank, or at the very least, in such a way that each economical and standardised entry formed a complete entity.

As the years went by a number of important publications were added to the *Bibliographia Universalis*. One of these was a *Bibliographia Medica* edited in Paris by Richet and Baudoin, who were of that first enthusiastic French group of OIB collaborators and who had been instrumental in forming the Bureau Bibliographique de Paris. This bibliography was intended to continue the famous American *Index Medicus* which had been begun by John Shaw Billings in 1876 but which had terminated in 1899. The *Bibliographia Medica*, however, failed after three years. «Our poor *Bibliographia Medica* is dead», Richet wrote to La Fontaine at the beginning of 1902 in the hope of an offer of financial assistance from OIB.<sup>13</sup> «We can do nothing for it», La Fontaine wrote back, «...I have a thousand regrets for not coming to your aid, but we have to take a radical stand vis-à-vis all the publications which have adopted our ideas — or it would close the institution».<sup>14</sup>

The Office itself continued its program of bibliographical publication. It issued a number of non-periodical bibliographies such as Sury's *Bibliographie féminine belge*, Vurgey's *Bibliographia Esthetica*<sup>15</sup> and La Fontaine's *Bibliographie de la Paix*.<sup>16</sup> La Fontaine also compiled a *Bibliographia Bibliographica* which appeared as an annual between 1898 and 1902. It also became associated with two substantive journals. The first began as *Index de la presse technique* in 1903 under the editorship of A. Louis Vermandel. Its title changed in 1904 to *Revue de l'ingénieur et index technique* and English and German editions of it were issued. The bibliographical part, called *Bibliographia Technica*, was prepared by Vermandel but revised at the OIB. The other journal began as *Revue économique hongroise* in Budapest, but in 1905 was retitled *Revue économique internationale* under two Belgian editors, Masure and La Fontaine undertook to compile a *Bibliographia Economica Universalis* for the editors, but the compilers had entire responsibility for the preparation and actual printing of the *Bibliographia Economica Universalis* which was also issued separately from the *Revue* by the OIB.

The nature and «meaning» of the *Bibliographia Universalis* and the relation of its *Contributions* created some conceptual and practical difficulties. Otlet, for example, responding

to a complaint from Herbert Putnam that the Library of Congress had not received all the publications which constituted parts of the *Bibliographia Universalis*, explained that the *Bibliographia Universalis* «is formed by a series of bibliographies published on a uniform plan either by our institute itself, or by specialists applying our methods. Among the latter there are those remaining independent of our administration through necessity or by particular individual agreement as the case may be. We will cite the *Bibliographia Geologica*, edited by the Geological Service of Belgium, depending on the Government and naturally not able to carry on its title page the name of our Institute».<sup>17</sup>

Comments such as these help one to interpret the significance of the *Bibliographia Universalis* for OIB. One thing is clear. The bibliographies that were part of this series were intended in the first instance not to be any kind of direct output of a centralised RBU, though Otlet and La Fontaine sometimes wrote about them as if they were. They represented enormous, protracted effort to achieve international, standardised, coordinated input to the RBU. Except for the bibliographies published by the OIB itself, subscriptions were usually entered for *Contributions* to the *Bibliographia Universalis* directly with the organisations publishing them.

The existence and the extent of the early development of the *Bibliographia Universalis* suggest that initially Otlet and La Fontaine's views about channeling current bibliographic work into the RBU were practicable. In 1903, 14 items in the *Bibliographia Universalis*, bibliographies appearing periodically over a number of years, contained nearly half a million notices. From the period 1895/96 to 1903 there were 103,000 items in the *Bibliographia Zoologica*, approximately 25,000 in a *Bibliographie des Chemins de Fer*, the compiler of which, Louis Weissenbruch, had developed the appropriate parts of the Decimal Classification, 93,000 in the *Bibliographie de Belgique*, 38,000 in the *Bibliographia Geologica*, and approximately 108,000 in the French *Bibliographia Medica*.<sup>18</sup>

By 1912, according to Louis Masure, who compiled a table of the *Bibliographia Universalis* for the IIB's Annual Report,

The *Bibliographia Universalis* today contains more than a hundred different contributions of which a number are periodicals and appear regularly. Altogether there has been published as of today more than 1,250,000 notices. The following table indicates the state, as of 31 December, 1912, of the principal contributions to the *Bibliographia Universalis*. This is based on the receipt of volumes, fascicules and cards at the headquarters of the IIB.<sup>19</sup>

In point of fact, the table shows that the *Bibliographia Universalis* had yielded 1,293,652 notices for the RBU, and consisted of at least 103 contributions.<sup>20</sup> Masure's table and these figures, however, need to be carefully interpreted. At least

103 numbers were shown as having been assigned to Contributions to the *Bibliographia Universalis*, but only 68 of these were actually listed. The discrepancy cannot be accounted for by the exclusion of minor items. A number of the titles included, for example, contain as few as two or three hundred notices, as compared with a genuinely major item such as the *Bibliographia Zoologica* which contained over a quarter of a million notices by 1912. Up to Contribution No. 30, the following numbers were omitted from Masure's table: No. 1 (the *Bibliographia Sociologica*, which though it appeared only three times in its consolidated form contained over 6,000 notices), and Nos. 5, 7, 9—11, 14, 18—19, 21—25, 28—29. Some of the titles so numbered can be found in the IIB's 1899 Annual.<sup>21</sup> Many, but not all of these titles contain only a small number of entries, and many of them represent short lived periodicals. Some of the gaps in the numerical series may have represented works which Otlet and La Fontaine had hoped to include in the series. But even this conclusion is not a straightforward one. Vurgey's *Bibliographia Esthetica*, for example, published by IIB itself with the typical IIB covers and title page for a Contribution to the *Bibliographia Universalis*, though by no means insignificant in size, was omitted from Masure's list.

A characteristic one would expect of a list of Contributions to the *Bibliographia Universalis* is a quite direct correspondence between the given numerical sequence of the items and the chronological sequence of their publication. On the whole this correspondence exists, though not completely. No. 38, for example, Henri La Fontaine's *Bibliographie de la Paix* was published by the Institute in 1910. The preceding and succeeding numbers belong to the period 1902—03, so that it is an interpolation in the list, presumably to take up an unused number. Contributions 68 to 73 for the period 1903 to 1911 seem to have the expected correspondence between number and chronology. From this point on, however, the list shows increasing confusion between the two sequences. Many of the later numbers are given to works having a considerably earlier publication date than their numbers would lead one to expect. Most of the publications involved were American or English printed library catalogues or reading lists, and as such, often employed decimal numbers and a standardised entry form. They met, therefore, the criteria employed for determining eligibility for inclusion in the *Bibliographia Universalis* but they do not represent a genuine co-operative effort between the IIB and their publishers.

In its earliest days, the IIB stressed that the *Bibliographia Universalis* was a cooperative venture (though the Institute's responsibilities for it were strictly limited), and many publications in the series (though not all, as Otlet explained to Put-

nam), carried on their covers their *Contribution* Number in a standard heading explaining what this meant. After 1907, the IIB seems to have acted unilaterally on ever more frequent occasions in declaring a publication part of the *Bibliographia Universalis*. Perhaps this was simply intended to show the world that the series continued to grow and with it the international bibliographic co-operation it originally represented. But by 1907 the series had become to some extent factitious, and did not represent, other than indirectly and incidentally, bibliographic co-operation springing from the IIB with the RBU looming in the background. By this time, to say nothing of several crises in Otlet's private life, he and La Fontaine had become involved in the expansion of the OIB into a complex of different offices which were to form the nucleus, the intellectual hub, of an organisation of international associations. They were not able, as a result, to keep up the pressure of advice and encouragement that they had first exerted on behalf of the *Bibliographia Universalis*, and there was a general slowing down after that time in the production of bibliographies standardised according to IIB Rules and destined for the RBU.

#### THE COMPILATION OF THE UNIVERSAL BIBLIOGRAPHIC REPERTORY

At the central office of the Institute in Brussels, as the years went by, the RBU, for which the *Bibliographia Universalis* provided standardised material for inclusion, gradually expanded. In 1897 it contained a million and a half notices.<sup>22</sup> A problem in its early development was created by the absence of full classification tables. Many notices were classified tentatively by the abridged tables, the rest by the full tables where they existed. It was intended that the first group would be classified a second time, and that eventually only one minutely classified subject series would exist. In 1899 the Author Repertory had grown to 1,274,000 notices, the «Abridged» Subject Repertory contained 779,000 notices, and the Full Subject Repertory 839,450.<sup>23</sup>

The organisation of these repertories did not prove to be simple. A number of «transitional» repertories had to be established to hold cards for «indexing in the course of execution and to avoid confusion among notices which had reached different stages of elaboration and classification».<sup>24</sup> By 1903 it was felt that the author and subject repertories were not enough in themselves to ensure the maximum usefulness of the RBU and to them were added others involving duplication of elements taken from them. At this time, too, each of the repertories was given distinguishing letters. The main alphabetical

author repertory was given the initial N (presumably for *Noms*), the repertory classified by the extended Dewey tables the letter A, and that by the abridged Dewey the letter B. To the first repertory was added one for the titles of periodicals, NR (*Noms des Revues?*) and one for the titles of books, NL (*Noms des Livres?*). A subject repertory by geography (repertory AG) was added to repertory A. Here were placed duplicate cards from the main repertory for items dealing with a given geographical place — country, region, province, town, etc. Another repertory was that designated NRT, for indexed periodicals.

This repertory constitutes, in principle, a duplicate of other repertories where they comprise notices of articles in periodicals. We have been led to begin this repertory to ensure an effective control over our other repertories. In these, the notices of articles of periodicals are dispersed according to the order of the alphabet by author's names or by words in the title, or according to the subject treated. In the Repertory of Indexed Periodicals, on the other hand, under the name of each periodical one should be able to find an indication of all the articles which have appeared in it arranged by chronological order of publication.<sup>25</sup>

By 1903 it had also become necessary to establish a controlled list of the subject headings used in the Decimal Classification. This was designated Repertory I and by the end of the year contained over 20,000 headings in five languages «with their references, synonyms... and the classification number corresponding to them».<sup>26</sup> A careful record of all the sources used in building up these various repertories was maintained, and this record, designated Repertory IV, contained 430 items by the end of 1903.

Among the principal sources of entries for the Author Repertory were the bibliographies of the *Bibliographia Universalis*. Other major sources were the printed catalogs of the great national libraries. In 1902 Otlet made an exchange agreement with Putnam, Librarian of the U. S. Library of Congress. As a result of this agreement two copies of all the printed cards of the Library of Congress flowed into the repertory.<sup>27</sup> There they joined entries taken from the catalogs of the British Museum, the last volumes of which had appeared in 1899, from that of France's Bibliothèque Nationale, the printing of which was begun in 1901, from that of the Königl. Bibliothek in Berlin, begun in 1908, and from the *Catalogo generale della Libreria Italiana*. The IIB also received as a gift the printed accession lists of the British Museum after 1899 to the War. In return, the IIB sent off (as it did to the Library of Congress) copies of its own publications. In 1910 Clement Andrews, Chief librarian of the famous scientific and technical John Crerar Library in Chicago, made an exchange agreement with Otlet by which, in return for a corpus of Belgian



government documents, Andrews was to dispatch 80,000 cards of the Crerar's classified Catalog for incorporation into the RBU. It appears that Otlet received the cards but that Andrews never received the documents.<sup>28</sup> To these great national library catalogs were added current national bibliographies such as the *Bibliographie de la France*, the *Bookseller*, the *Nederlandsch Bibliographie*, and, of course, the *Bibliographie de Belgique*.

The various subject repertoires were apparently not compiled from exactly the same sources as the main alphabetical author repertory but mainly from the *Contributions* to the *Bibliographia Universalis*, the current national bibliographies and standard special bibliographies, prominent among which were the Royal Society's *Catalogue of Scientific Papers* and the *International Catalogue of Scientific Literature*.<sup>29</sup>

The growth of the repertoires fed from this multitude of sources, which Repertory IV in 1912 showed to be nearly 2,000 in number, was predictably rapid. From a million and a half notices in 1897, the repertoires swelled to 6,269,750 by the end of July 1903. In 1903 the Author Repertory alone contained 3,061,000 notices which required 3,384 catalog drawers to house. At that time the full Subject Repertory (Repertory A) contained 1,541,750 notices, the Abridged Subject Repertory (Repertory B), 942,000.<sup>30</sup> A year later 350,000 notices had been added to all repertoires but no reclassification of entries in Repertory B was attempted during that time, or indeed, subsequently.<sup>31</sup> Though by 1912 the rate of growth of the repertoires had slowed down very considerably, the total in that year, nearly 9,000,000 entries, was staggering.<sup>32</sup>

By 1912, too, a number of the 1903 repertoires had been consolidated. The repertory for titles of books and that for geographical place were abandoned. The repertory of the titles of periodicals (NR) was merged with the repertory of indexed periodicals (NRT), and the periodicals indexed were mainly those indexed regularly at the Office for the monthly bibliography of Belgian periodical literature for which the OIB was responsible and which was issued as part of the *Bibliographie de Belgique*. The geographical repertory may have been merged with another repertory, the Répertoire Iconographique Universel (Repertory PH) begun at the OIB in 1906, one part of which was arranged geographically.<sup>33</sup>

The basic elements, the technology of the OIB's repertoires, were «information» cards (the cards bearing the entries), divisionary cards, catalog drawers, the «meubles classeurs» or the furniture containing banks of drawers.

The combination of these different elements...permits the establishment of card repertoires similar to a true book. The information cards constitute the leaves of the book; the divisionary cards, variously com-

bined, indicate the exterior parts, the chapters, the sections and the paragraphs; the binding consists of the drawer itself, the movable rod of which functions as the spine...The classification numbers on the cards are really a pagination for a work whose contents table is the table of the Decimal Classification. Such a book is consulted as readily as any other. It is necessary only to flick the cards over on their lower edge, as one would turn the pages of a book, in order to read them with the greatest ease.

The advantages of card repertoires over other kind of repertoires compiled in the form of registers, books or notebooks are as follows:

1. Successive daily intercalations of new material are permitted;
2. Classification can be maintained steadily in a strict and rigorous order;
3. Indefinite addition to the amount of material is possible;
4. Immediate utilisation of material already collected, without needing to wait for the completion of the work begun, is possible;
5. Preparation of notices by a great number of people working at the same time, however distant they might be from each other, is facilitated.<sup>34</sup>

This work, this great bibliographical volume growing in size and complexity in the Salle des Répertoires at the International Office of Bibliography, 1 Rue des Musées, Brussels, was intended for wide public consultation. The Salle des Répertoires was thrown open daily from 9 a. m. until Noon, and from 2 p. m. until 6, much after the fashion of a library's Reading Room. But in order to make what were conceived of as its riches available yet more readily, a card copying service was instituted in 1896, and the OIB's staff undertook to consult the Repertoires comprising the RBU in response to requests received through the mails. Even though only recently begun, and by definition far from complete, consultation of the RBU as early as 1896, it was thought, could offer inestimable aid to scholars and men of letters in their work.

The problem of accurately formulating search requests was well understood at the Office, and brief instructions were issued to help potential clients make the best use possible of the repertoires. The dangers in a request of terms too general or too narrow in signification were described, together with the superabundance or meagreness of the material with which the repertory might respond to them. It was also suggested that requests should be accompanied by relevant decimal numbers. The staff of the OIB would then know at once where in the Repertoires to start searching and what kind of material was required. In the tables of the Classification «the degree of generality and specificity of each question is exactly determined by the context». Indeed, the tables, by displaying «divisions and different aspects of particular questions», might usefully help a searcher in formulating his request, prompting him towards bibliographic completeness as well as towards exactness. It was decided at the Office that whenever the number of

cards relating to a request was more than 50, confirmation of the original order would be sought «to obviate surprises».<sup>35</sup>

The number of demand bibliographies provided by the Office gradually rose over the years. In 1896, 21 requests for bibliographical information of one kind and another were received. The next year the number had tripled, and over 1500 cards were copied and sent off in response to them. By 1912 over 1500 requests were being received each year and the number of cards copied had grown to over 10,000. The subjects of the requests ranged from intelligence to coagulation of the blood, from Bulgarian finances and comparative statistics for European public debts to the titles of collections of maxims and proverbs from different countries, from the philosophy of mathematics to the boomerang.<sup>36</sup>

#### DISTRIBUTING THE RBU

In writing about the RBU, Otlet had asserted that copies of the whole would be distributed throughout the world to every major center of learning, where it would soon become an indispensable adjunct to libraries and laboratories. It was to be possible also to take out subscriptions to parts of the repertory, and all of these duplicate repertories would be kept up to date by regular shipments of copies of the cards added to the prototype repertory in Brussels. Indeed, it had been suggested that National Bibliographical Bureaux should be established in the various countries of the world and that among their diverse functions would be the maintenance of a copy of the RBU.<sup>37</sup> On several occasions there were attempts made at the OIB to initiate ambitious subscription and distribution programs, but these were nearly always one-time affairs serving to highlight the problems faced by the Office in achieving its goal of a fully or, at least, significantly distributed RBU.

One such attempt followed the Universal Exposition of Paris in 1900. Part of an enormous exhibit of two million cards prepared by OIB for the Exposition<sup>38</sup> was deposited in the offices of the Bibliographical Bureau of Paris.<sup>39</sup> Here was to be the first national office outside of Belgium having within it a growing, duplicate portion of the RBU. The Bibliographical Bureau, always in rather straitened circumstances, in fact limited its guardianship to a small duplicate of that part of the repertory dealing with applied sciences. As a major part of the Bureau's support derived from the Société d'encouragement pour l'industrie nationale, this particular subject bias is understandable.<sup>40</sup> For several years after the Exposition, the OIB dispatched to Paris parts of the contributions to the *Bibliographia Universalis*.<sup>41</sup> These shipments were apparently neither

regular nor comprehensive, and in 1903 the classified repertory at the Bibliographical Bureau contained only about 40,000 cards.<sup>42</sup> Another attempt at distribution of the RBU was made by Otlet in order to fulfil his part of the exchange agreement with Herbert Putnam of the U. S. Library of Congress. By May of 1903, 70,000 cards representing various contributions to the *Bibliographia Universalis* was assembled in Brussels and sent off to Washington. A subsequent 50,000 cards were exhibited at the St. Louis Exposition of 1904 and were then sent on to the Library of Congress. Other small dispatches were made by the Office's staff to Luxembourg<sup>43</sup> and Bulgaria,<sup>44</sup> but they occurred only once as a gesture of encouragement and support to the libraries involved.

Perhaps the greatest event in the history of the distribution of the RBU was the receipt of a request in 1911 from the National Library of Rio de Janeiro for 600,000 cards to form a general subject repertory. The Library agreed to pay a fee of 15,000 francs for the cards. Having requested half of the money in advance «to recruit personnel to do the work»,<sup>45</sup> Otlet and his staff gathered together 230,000 cards and arranged them in classified order in 192 boxes. A reception was held for the transfer of this material to the Brazilian ambassador, and to it were invited the diplomatic staffs in France and Belgium of most of the South American states.<sup>46</sup> By the end of 1913 the amount of material sent consisted of 351,697 notices.<sup>47</sup> An extra 33,000 notices were dispatched in July 1914, at which point Masure, the Secretary of the OIB, wrote to the Director of the Library to suggest that perhaps the Office should send second copies of cards already sent to Rio for the construction of an alphabetic author repertory.<sup>48</sup> The cards which had been sent were in the main derived from recent Contributions to the *Bibliographia Universalis*, with one or two exceptional items dating back to the period from 1895 to 1900. It is clear that the problem of obtaining copies of the bibliographies making up the *Bibliographia Universalis* but out of print by 1911 or of other material in the RBU, was insuperable and the 600,000 figure contracted for was apparently never met. Nevertheless a high value was set upon the cards received in Rio from the OIB, and in 1914 an attempt was made to send someone from Brazil to Brussels to study how the OIB worked in order to make greater use of them.<sup>49</sup> Unfortunately the War supervened to make the visit impossible.

Patrick Geddes, who had met Otlet in Paris at the Universal Exposition in 1900, had been very impressed by Otlet's claims for the RBU. Scottish sociologist and town-planner, he was drawn into the preliminary arrangements for spending the funds that Andrew Carnegie had placed at the disposal of Carnegie's native town, Dunfermline, in 1903. Geddes believed

that the town's library need only be small if full utilisation of the «million and more books» in the surrounding area could be arranged. Some «bibliographical aid» was «urgently required» for this, he wrote to La Fontaine. «Could you and M. Otlet», he asked, «give me therefore such an indication as I can lay before the trustees of how... the International Bibliographical Institute would be prepared to assist them in the matter — of course with an approximate indication of the necessary outlay on their part.»<sup>50</sup> They would also require, he observed, «a bibliography as complete as possible of all that is being done in Education, in Civic and Social Betterment, in Parks and Gardening, and the like. Pray tell me... if the Institute could supply bibliographies and under what conditions?»<sup>51</sup> La Fontaine had no doubt of the help the Institute could offer, «I am going to get in touch with my friend Otlet», he replied,

and we will communicate to you soon our ideas and observations as to the general plan of the whole city. As to the bibliographical part, we accept very willingly the preparation of the special bibliographies for you at a nominal price, and if, as I suppose, you should want them to be as complete as possible, it will be easy to do perfect work, but the price of the cards will go up to 15 centimes each. As to the methodical catalog prepared for all the books in the neighborhood of Dunfermline, we could also do this and eventually furnish the necessary number of copies. Only, for that, we would have to know if catalogs existed already and if it is possible to obtain a sufficient number of copies.<sup>52</sup>

La Fontaine was of course thinking in terms of compiling a union catalog on the basis of already existing and therefore dated printed catalogs.

When Otlet in his turn replied ten days later to Geddes' letter to La Fontaine, he wrote at great length in the most general vein. What should be created, he said was a Scottish section of the Institute, like the French section «which has not developed rapidly for want of funds». The Scottish Institute would house a complete duplicate of the RBU, would contain a union catalog of Scottish libraries (which would be added to the RBU in Brussels) and would set up an indexing service for Scottish periodicals.<sup>53</sup> A year earlier Otlet had sketched a very ambitious program for the IIB in Scotland:

we would establish a complete duplicate of our repertories destined for your principal libraries. This would be established in manuscript and would be kept up to date by duplicates of all the new cards which we insert each day in our repertories. We could also establish duplicates of parts, such as, for example, contemporary bibliography, bibliography of some of the branches of science, to be used by each of your universities or scientific centers.<sup>54</sup>

But it was clear that the IIB could not have done any of this, should negotiations have been successful with Geddes and his colleagues. The nearest that the IIB ever came to the pro-

gram described for Scotland was the dispatching of cards to the National Library in Rio de Janeiro, and ultimately this was not successful. When in 1902, the year before his enquiries about the participation of IIB in the development of plans for Dunfermline, Geddes wrote urgently to Otlet that he needed bibliographical help for his students in sociology, the IIB did not seem to be able to respond adequately even to this demand. «I wish to put before my students», wrote Geddes, «a set of cards, including yours first of all, which they may use for guidance in reading, and which they may themselves extend as their studies proceed: an Elementary Bibliography of Sociology — this is what we need.»<sup>55</sup> Three weeks went by and Geddes wrote impatiently again for the information and estimates of costs which needed «before my next lecture».<sup>56</sup> Some reply was made but the matter was allowed to drop.<sup>57</sup>

At this distance in time with the few statistics available it is hard to attempt any evaluation of this service or of the RBU itself. The RBU was compiled from secondary sources (catalogs, bibliographies, booksellers' lists and so on) which were simply cut up into entries pasted on cards, assigned classification numbers, and filed in drawers. The limitations of this procedure were obvious, as the Office's critics pointed out at the beginning of its work. Where several copies of an entry were required for the duplicate repertories, or for multiple entries in the main subject repertory, one of two procedures had to be followed. A duplicate copy of the source document could be cut up (and the Office seems to have generally relied on this procedure for obtaining at least one author and one subject entry for a listed work), or the entry could be typed as many times as necessary on cards. Both procedures, expensive and tedious, were likely to discourage multiple entry and duplication of repertories.

The theoretical value of long, highly complex classification numbers, which represented a kind of in-depth indexing of various works (or, at least, of their titles) in increasing the recall of relevant material from the repertories, was in practice very much restricted by the practical problem of copying entries to be filed under the various parts of the number. This same copying problem may also account for the use of different sources in compiling the author and subject repertories, so that the repertories did not represent, as theoretically they should have, two kinds of access to the same bibliographic store. For current *Contributions* to the *Bibliographia Universalis* as many copies as needed at a time for distribution could be obtained and dispatched because the *Contributions* were printed in the ordinary way. But multiple copies for distribution of a series of cards from the consolidated RBU were far too expensive and difficult to make. It was necessary for them



to be typed. A member of the Office staff had to search the repertories as we search a card catalog for cards apparently relevant to a request, remove the cards or the appropriate drawers from the repertory, type a copy of each card, and then replace the cards or drawers.

That the copying problem was very seriously regarded at OIB there is no doubt, both for compiling the repertories, and subsequently for consulting them and preparing bibliographies from them. It lay behind Otlet and La Fontaine's concern to find a cheap and simple method for the reproduction of cards. Facing this problem for the first time in 1895, Otlet wrote for advice to the Library Bureau in Boston.<sup>58</sup> Shortly afterwards he and La Fontaine began to explore the possibility of using a certain kind of typewriter and a specially prepared zinc plate for producing a master for copying. For this they sought advice and technical information from Cedric Chivers manager of the London branch of the Bureau.<sup>59</sup> It seems that the problem of using a typewriter for preparing printed card copy was never resolved and cards for the repertories and from them had to be laboriously typed again and again as necessary.

The printing of cards by conventional means was itself a novelty in Europe when Otlet and La Fontaine proposed to create and distribute their RBU. When they set about organising a class for Bibliography in the Section for Science at the International Exposition of Brussels in 1897, they seized upon this occasion as an opportunity to discover by means of an international competition a solution to their card copying problems. They offered a prize of 500 francs for a machine or procedure which would fulfil these specifications:

1. Printing a small number of copies (50—100) should be easier and more rapid than with the machines and procedures presently available;
2. It should be more economical;
3. The type-plate for each card should be storable in a handy way, so as not to take up much space, in order to permit its future use.<sup>60</sup>

Nothing came of the competition, and at the second International Conference of Bibliography held in Brussels later in 1897, a commission to study the matter further was set up.<sup>61</sup> Eventually in 1899 the Office appointed its own printer who was to specialise in printing its bibliographic material.<sup>62</sup> Unfortunately this step proved something of an embarrassment to the Office. Writing to Richet in 1902 to refuse financial assistance for the *Bibliographia Medica*, La Fontaine commented: «We have ourselves a deficit of more than 22,000 francs, and the heavy charge of a printing shop which Otlet has created has taken us very much beyond what we had originally forecast».<sup>63</sup>

One must conclude that the OIB was simply not equipped financially or technically to perform the functions which it ad-

vertised and promoted with a good deal of misguided and misleading zeal. Moreover, had the copying problem been solvable, the idea of distributing copies of the whole or of parts of the RBU, was suspect for yet another reason. The RBU, as has been indicated, was a bibliographical hybrid made rather mechanically from a large variety of sources. Some of it represented original bibliography; most of it was derivative and one might seriously question the value of any ambitious distribution programme for it. This was equally true of the preparation and distribution of **current** material added to the RBU. Either it must involve secondary sources, and therefore constituted only bibliography made from bibliographies which were readily available to others, or it constituted original bibliography compiled from actual substantive publications. By the device of the *Bibliographia Universalis* original current periodical bibliography for which OIB might have become responsible was decentralised and placed outside its control with only the loosest agreements, when they actually existed, governing form of entry and presentation. There were a number of exceptions, the primary bibliographies published by the OIB or closely supervised by it: the *Bibliographia Bibliographica* (compiled by La Fontaine), the *Bibliographie de Belgique* (edited at the OIB), the *Bibliographia Economica Universalis* (compiled by La Fontaine and Louis Masure), and Verman del's *Bibliographia Technica* published in *Revue de l'ingénieur et de la presse technique* (revised and classified at the OIB). rent periodical bibliographies undertaken at the Office. These may be considered the only effective publication of cur-

#### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SUPPLY AGENCY

Subscribers to the *Contributions* to the *Bibliographia Universalis* were expected to cut up each issue into entries and paste each entry on a card of standard size arranged according to the divisions of the Universal Decimal Classification in standard catalog furniture. Cards of various shapes and colours were to be used to indicate various kinds of divisions in the classified arrangement of the entry cards. It is not surprising, therefore, that at the very outset, the OIB should undertake to become an agent for bibliographical equipment and supplies. In 1895 when work began on the Universal Repertory, Otlet and La Fontaine examined very carefully the problem of getting equipment and supplies for it. They had corresponded at length with Cedric Chivers about weights and colours of various kinds of cards and card stock and catalog furniture and their relative cost. Otlet had hoped that an arrangement might be worked out for the Library Bureau to supply

all that was needed at the OIB at a cost it could afford. He had speculated that, because the Repertory was to be distributed and the use of the Decimal Classification in the creation of repertories would become increasingly widespread as a result of OIB propaganda, perhaps a European Office of the Bureau could be opened, an Office better able to cope with European conditions and needs than either the Office in London or that in Boston. Chivers and the manager of the Boston Office met Otlet in Brussels in May 1896 to discuss relations between their organisations. Some kind of agreement between them was reached in which it seemed that the OIB would participate in the formation of a European Office of the Library Bureau in Brussels. This would supply all OIB equipment and materials. The Library Bureau, in its various locations, would undertake to distribute OIB-IIB publications. It would be given a monopoly in English-speaking countries for them and would receive a commission on sales of them. The OIB, in its turn, would receive a commission on the sale of furniture and supplies by the Library Bureau's European Office in Brussels. Apparently Otlet, who prepared a draft of the agreement, misinterpreted the conversations leading to it, and the notion of a close collaboration between the OIB and the Library Bureau lapsed.<sup>64</sup>

Eventually Chivers learned that Otlet had gone ahead to deal with the problem on his own. He was incensed and wrote:

I understand that you are selling cheaper cases of a similar construction to ours for cards. I shall be glad to have particulars of these cases with prices ... Perhaps you will be good enough to recognise that it is a little painful for us to observe our experience and expensive initiative resulting in competition with our goods. We recognise that the continental market must be supplied with suitable commodities. I would like to see what you consider the quality and price which is likely to be satisfactory.<sup>65</sup>

Otlet wrote back that he had been forced to proceed unilaterally, and had, indeed, been able to make good use of the Library Bureau's experience:

By force of circumstances we have been obliged to have had card catalogues made at a price we can afford on the continent. You will have no difficulty in recognising that the experience that the Library Bureau has acquired in this kind of manufacture, like that of other English and American firms... has been eminently profitable for us... We had a moment's hope that the Library Bureau could take into consideration the propositions we discussed during your trip to Brussels, but we have seen nothing come of it, and we have been forced to turn elsewhere.<sup>66</sup>

From this point on, the OIB acted as an agent in Europe for cards and for furniture of the kind used in its work. It published a catalog of bibliographical accessories in 1897,<sup>67</sup> and this appeared thereafter in various forms in the advertising matter in the *IIB Bulletin*, in irregularly issued *Notice-Catalogues*, the *Annals*, and in various other places. These catalogs

were apparently widely used, particularly in Belgium but also in other countries. Various government departments in Belgium, and someone as remote as Pierre Nenckoff in Bulgaria, bought most of their bibliographical supplies through the OIB.<sup>68</sup> As a commercial enterprise one may suppose that it was not particularly successful. Its commercial activities were incidental to and extensions of its own requirements. The cost of cards and furniture seems not to have changed from 1897 to 1907.<sup>69</sup>

Examples of the various kinds of cards, divisionary cards with or without printed headings and of different colours, white card-stock of different weights for the bulk of the repertories, furniture with or without rods consisting of banks of 2, 4, 8, 16, 24, 36 and 72 drawers were deposited with Carl Junker at the Austrian Secretariat in Vienna, and at the Offices of the Bibliographical Bureau of Paris.<sup>70</sup> This material was also exhibited at the international Expositions in which the IIB-OIB took part. As the OIB developed other kinds of repertories, such as its repertory of dossiers and of photographs, and continued to encourage others to follow its methods and do likewise, it became ever more important that it ensure the availability of appropriate equipment and materials.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Henri La Fontaine and Paul Otlet, «Création d'un Répertoire Bibliographique Universel, note préliminaire», *IIB Bulletin*, 1 (1895-6), 16-17.
2. «Communications diverses: A — application de la Classification Décimale», *IIB Bulletin*, 1 (1895-6), 45-47; «L'Institut International de Bibliographie: premiers résultats», *IIB Bulletin*, 1 (1895-6), 55-57. Each of these bibliographies is described in detail in «Analyses et compte-rendus», *IIB Bulletin*, 1 (1895-6), 146-150.
3. «Notes et Documents: The analytical card catalogue of current zoological literature», *IIB Bulletin*, 1 (1895-6), 124-6.
4. «L'Institut International de Bibliographie: Les trois derniers mois», *IIB Bulletin*, 1 (1895-6), 162.
5. «Compte-rendu sommaire des délibérations: Conférence Bibliographique Internationale, deuxième session, Bruxelles, 1897», *IIB Bulletin*, 11 (1897), 225.
6. «Collection des contributions imprimées au Répertoire Bibliographique Universel—Bibliographia Universalis», *IIB Bulletin*, IV (1899), 178-84.
7. Charles Sury, *Bibliographia féminine belge*. Essai de catalogue des ouvrages publiés par les femmes belges de 1830 à 1897 (Contribution No. 24, *Bibliographia Universalis*; Bruxelles: Ch. Bulens, 1898).
8. Henryk Arctowski, *Materiały do Bibliografii prac naukowych Polaków*... (Matériaux pour servir à la bibliographie des travaux scientifiques polonais, Index des mémoires publiés dans les 14 premiers volumes des

- Mémoires Physiographiques de Pologne; Miedzynarodowy Instytut Bibliograficzny, 1897).
9. G. Barbera, *Catalogo perenne delle edizioni e della opere in deposito per ordine cronologico e con la classificazione decimale secondo il systema Melvil Dewey* (Firenze: Barbera, 1897). Two supplements were issued to this catalog bringing it up to 1900. It was Contribution No. 27 to the *Bibliographia Universalis*.
  10. Bureau Bibliographique de Paris, *Sommaires bibliographiques du bulletin de la Société d'Encouragement pour l'Industrie Nationale, 1896*. (Paris: Le Bureau, 1898); Bureau Bibliographique de Paris, *Sommaires analytiques des principaux articles des comptes-rendus des séances de la Société Française de Physique, 1897* (Paris: le Bureau, 1898). These were contributions No. 29 and No. 28 to the *Bibliographia Universalis*.
  11. Andrew Keogh, *Catalogue of the Stephenson Branch of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Public Libraries, 1897* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Andrew Reid, 1897); C. J. Bertrand, *Catalogue de la Bibliothèque Publique d'Ath* (Gand: Host, 1898). These were Contributions 25 and 26 respectively.
  12. «Modèles des publications bibliographiques», *IIB Bulletin*, III (1898), 193—204.
  13. Richet to La Fontaine, 2 January 1902, Dossier No. 257, «Richet», Mundaneum.
  14. La Fontaine to Richet, 29 January 1902, *ibid.*
  15. Vurgey, *Bibliographia Esthetica: répertoire général des travaux d'esthétiques* (Bruxelles: IIB, 1908). No Christian names or initials are given for the author. This was Contribution No. 44 to the *Bibliographia Universalis*.
  16. H. La Fontaine, *Bibliographie de la Paix* (Bruxelles: IIB, 1910). This was Contribution No. 44 to the *Bibliographia Universalis*.
  17. Otlet to Putnam, 23 November 1903, Dossier No. 297, «Library of Congress», Mundaneum.
  18. IIB, *Rapport sur la situation et les travaux, 1903* (Bruxelles: IIB, 1904). The report was also published in *IIB Bulletin*, VIII (1903), 247—70. No reasonably full account of all the titles of the Contributions to the *Bibliographia Universalis* occurred until 1912, and this was by no means complete. A table of the more important Contributions and the number of notices contained in them was given in the *Manuel abrégé du Répertoire Bibliographique Universel* (Bruxelles: IIB, 1905), pp. 55—56. This was as of 5 September 1904. Another table listing the same Contributions as of May 1905 showed an overall increase of 30,000 notices by that time. («Etat de publication et statistique de la Bibliographia Universalis, arrêté du 1<sup>er</sup> Mai, 1905», *IIB Bulletin*, X (1905), 51—52).
  19. Louis Masure, *Rapport sur la situation et les travaux pour l'année 1912* (Bruxelles: IIB, 1913), p. 43. (Annual Reports were not issued every year, but only in 1903 and 1912).
  20. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
  21. IIB, *Annuaire de l'Institut International de Bibliographie pour l'année 1899* (Bruxelles: IIB, 1899), pp. 104—110.
  22. «Compte-rendu sommaire des délibérations; Conférence Bibliographique Internationale, deuxième session, Bruxelles 1897», p. 255.
  23. *Annuaire de l'IIB pour l'année 1899*, pp. 91—93.
  24. *Rapport sur la situation et les travaux, 1903*, p. 9.
  25. *Ibid.*
  26. *Ibid.*
  27. There are a number of letters about this agreement from Otlet and La Fontaine for the period 1902 until the War in the Mundaneum in Dossier No. 297, «Library of Congress».
  28. Andrews to Otlet, June 27, 1911, Dossier No. 488, «John Crerar Library», Mundaneum.
  29. A description of the various repertoires comprising the RBU as of 1912, and the principal sources used in developing them appeared in Masure, *Rapport... pour l'année 1912*, pp. 18—20.
  30. *Rapport sur la situation et les travaux, 1903*, pp. 10—11.
  31. «Répertoire Bibliographique Universel, statistique au 1<sup>er</sup> Janvier 1905 (table)», *IIB Bulletin*, X (1905), 49—50.
  32. Masure, *Rapport... pour l'année 1912*, pp. 18—22.
  33. «La Documentation et l'Iconographie», *IIB Bulletin*, XI (1906), 29—69.
  34. «Section VII, formation des répertoires bibliographiques; subdivision 16: fonctionnement des répertoires à fiches», *Manuel abrégé du Répertoire Bibliographique Universel*, p. 73.
  35. «Communication des fiches du Répertoire Bibliographique Universel», *IIB Bulletin*, II (1897), 142—43. See also *Renseignement sur l'Institut International de Bibliographie; ses services et ses travaux: Le Répertoire Bibliographique Universel* (s. l., s. d.), 21 pp.
  36. Masure, *Rapport... pour l'année 1912*, pp. 93—97.
  37. «Organisation des instituts nationaux de bibliographie», *IIB Bulletin*, VI (1901), 174—178.
  38. IIB, *L'Organisation systématique de la documentation et le développement de l'IIB* (Publication No. 82; Bruxelles: IIB, 1907), p. 42.
  39. «Inventaire des bibliographies envoyées au Bureau Bibliographique de Paris», Dossier No. 186, Mundaneum. This file seems to imply that the whole exhibit at the Exposition of Paris was sent to the Bureau. But this was not actually so (see the work cited in note 40).
  40. General Sebert, *Note sommaire sur le Répertoire Bibliographique Universel basé sur la Classification Décimale* (Paris: Typographie Philippe Renouard, 1903). This is an extract from the *Bulletin* of the Société d'Encouragement pour l'Industrie Nationale, for 1903.
  41. «Inventaire des Bibliographies envoyées au Bureau Bibliographique de Paris».
  42. General Sebert, p. 12.
  43. See Dossier No. 518, «Bibliothèque du Gouvernement du Grand Duché de Luxembourg», Mundaneum.
  44. See Dossier No. 515, «Nenkoff», Mundaneum. (Pierre Nenkoff was the Librarian of the Pleven Public Library) and W. Boyd Rayward, «Pierre Nenkoff... and the IIB...», *Libri*, 24 (1974), 209—228.
  45. Otlet to Manuel Cicero (Director of the Library), 9 May 1911, Dossier No. 504, «Bibliothèque Nationale de Rio de Janeiro», Mundaneum.
  46. Otlet to various diplomats, 29 November 1911 (form letter), *ibid.*
  47. «Total des fiches envoyées à la Bibliothèque Nationale de Rio de Janeiro» (note), *ibid.*
  48. Masure to Cicero, 20 July 1914, *ibid.*
  49. Cicero to Masure, 5 August 1914, *ibid.*



50. Geddes to La Fontaine, 12 October 1903, Dossier No. 210, «Patrick Geddes», Mundaneum.
51. *Ibid.*
52. La Fontaine to Geddes, 21 October 1903, *ibid.*
53. Otlet to Geddes, 28 July 1903, *ibid.* (this is a 5 page letter).
54. Otlet to Geddes, 26 April 1902, *ibid.*
55. Geddes to Otlet, 8 October 1902, *ibid.*
56. Geddes to Otlet, 28 October 1902 (a card), *ibid.*
57. There is a note (by Masure?) on the card cited above giving prices: «27 francs, 1000—5 centimes the card as usual».
58. Otlet to the Bureau in Boston (an undated letter written after the September Conference in Brussels in 1895), Dossier No. 369, «Library Bureau. Boston—Londres, 1895 à 1900», Mundaneum.
59. Various letters between Otlet, La Fontaine and Chivers, November 1895 to January 1896, *ibid.*
60. «Faits et documents: Exposition Bibliographique de Bruxelles», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895—96), 120—21.
61. «Compte-Rendu sommaire des délibérations: Conférence Bibliographique internationale, deuxième session, Bruxelles, 1897», p. 262.
62. «Imprimerie de l'Institut International de Bibliographie», *Annuaire de l'IIB pour l'année 1899*, p. 119.
63. La Fontaine to Richet, 29 January 1902, Dossier No. 257, «Richet», Mundaneum.
64. The draft agreement is headed «Avant-projet de convention entre l'Office International de Bibliographie et le Library Bureau». Various letters passed between Chivers and Otlet about it during the months of May and June 1896. Dossier No. 369, «Library Bureau. Boston—Londres, 1895 à 1900», Mundaneum.
65. Chivers to Otlet, 9 June 1897, *ibid.*
66. Otlet to Chivers, 10 June 1897, *ibid.*
67. «Catalogue des accessoires bibliographiques—meubles et fiches», *IIB Bulletin*, II (1897), 161—66.
68. Various requests for cards and furniture appear in the dossiers of the government departments. The Nenkoff file in this connection also contains a long drawn out and, in retrospect, amusing drama over a key which was lost in transit to Bulgaria for some locked catalog furniture (Dossier No. 515, «Nenkoff», *passim*, Mundaneum). In the preliminary advertising matter to the *IIB Bulletin*, V Fasc. XII (1907), at the end of the catalog of accessories is appended a list of «References» for the material advertised. These references include a number of Belgian government departments, and various universities, museums and colleges.
69. The same prices are listed in the «Catalogue des Accessoires Bibliographiques...» (1897), and the advertisement in the *IIB Bulletin* for 1907 described in the preceding note.
70. «Institutions diverses se rattachant à l'IIB», *Annuaire de l'IIB pour l'année 1902* (Bruxelles: IIB, 1902), 14—16.

## Chapter VII

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICE AND INSTITUTE OF BIBLIOGRAPHY

#### THE OIB

Charles Sury, the first secretary of OIB, resigned after a number of years to join the Library of the Université Libre de Bruxelles. He was succeeded by the young historian, Eugène Lameere, to whom, as to Sury before him, was assigned some editorial responsibility for the publication of the *IIB Bulletin*. This vehicle of information, news and scholarly articles was issued by the OIB continuously but irregularly from 1895. It gradually decreased in size and regularity as time went on and contained an increasingly large number of errors, from which, indeed, it had never been particularly free and for which it had been criticised by the IIB's adversaries. «It is not worthy of an Institute of Bibliography», declared Otlet in a note to Lameere. «In the future I desire to see all the *Bulletin* and above all the annexes, such as tables, covers and introduction».<sup>1</sup> Lameere died at the untimely age of thirty not long after taking up his duties at the OIB and was replaced by Louis Masure.

Louis Masure, like Otlet and La Fontaine, had taken a *Doctorat en Droit*, and had been admitted to the Bar. His was one of the most important appointments made by Otlet and La Fontaine. As Secretary he dealt with all the routine matters of internal administration. He did much of the editorial work, and the indexing and preparation of printer's copy at the Office. He assumed responsibility for its general correspondence, both with various Belgian government departments with which the Office had continuing relations, and also with foreign collaborators. When Otlet, aware that he could and did behave in a manner he himself described as «scrupulously, stupidly grand seigneur», was hasty and unsympathetic or evasive in correspondence, or aloof and impatient in person, Masure stepped in with softer words,



Office International de Bibliographie  
La Salle des Répertoires, 1903

fuller explanations, discreet indications of when and how the great man should be approached. He was on familiar terms with most of the government officials with whom the Office came regularly into contact, and this must have contributed a great deal to the smoothness and effectiveness of their routine interaction. Without him the Office might very well have been less successful than it was, for he relieved Otlet of the necessity of attending to those ubiquitous, nagging minutiae of administration which confront every executive in any organisation. Otlet was by temperament very little capable of dealing systematically and pertinaciously with them. Apart from all of this, Masure had a talent beyond price: he could read the curt notes in which Otlet frequently conveyed his instructions to his staff both when he was busy in Brussels or on his frequent trips out of it. More often than not these notes were hastily scrawled in an almost indecipherable, crabbed handwriting which was the despair of Otlet's friends, and the subject of much exasperated badinage. As Secretary

of OIB, then, Masure seems to have been intelligent, faithful, meticulous, unassuming, unassertive, competent, patient, persistent—in a word, indispensable. He provided an often-tested but strong thread of administrative continuity in the Office for twenty seven years.

In 1901, the IIB published a note in its *Bulletin* on the «Organisation of national Institutes of Bibliography».<sup>2</sup> Among the functions of these institutes as here set out were: the preparation and keeping up-to-date of an integrated bibliographical repertory on cards for all the material, current and retrospective, published in a country, a repertory which could provide a base from which to publish various kinds of official bibliographies; the maintenance of a duplicate of the RBU and the organisation of an information service in connection with it; the preparation of a union catalog of the libraries of a country; the publication of a bulletin of information about bibliographical activities being carried out within a country; and the compilation of an annual report on the state and statistics of national bibliographical organisation. National institutes of bibliography were also to serve as the national liaison body with the IIB and be counsellor to and, when necessary and if feasible, the agent of national governments in all matters of national or international bibliographical import.

Some of these functions the OIB performed automatically for Belgium as the headquarters organisation of the IIB. But other aspects of the work thought appropriate for national institutes of bibliography were taken up very seriously. The organisation of a union catalog for Belgian public libraries was begun in 1902. By 1903 over thirty printed catalogues of various libraries had been dismembered, pasted on cards, and interfiled to form an alphabetic author repertory. To this were added several important publications concerning astronomical and geological material in Belgian libraries.<sup>3</sup> Over the years this general catalog grew in size and comprehensiveness as the catalogs of particular libraries were printed, so that by 1912 it represented the holdings of 73 libraries and contained locations for over 30,000 periodical titles.<sup>4</sup> It was planned eventually to print excerpts from it under the title *Central Catalogue of Belgian Libraries*. Only one such excerpt, *Periodicals of Medicine*, appears to have been issued,<sup>5</sup> though negotiations were held with the Belgian Chemical Society in the hope of gaining its support for the publication of a second catalog dealing with chemical periodicals in Belgian libraries.<sup>6</sup>

From its inception, the OIB was directly involved in the completion of the Belgian national bibliography, *Bibliographie de Belgique*, published by the Belgian Booksellers' Association,

under contract from the Belgian government. In 1895 the OIB prepared a second part to this bibliography, an index to selected Belgian periodicals, and provided classification numbers for the books listed in the first part of the bibliography. The periodicals' index appeared again in 1896 slightly augmented in size. In 1897 and 1898 the OIB did not participate in preparation of the *Bibliographie de Belgique*. But after 1899 the association of OIB with the *Bibliographie* was continued uninterrupted until after the War. In 1906, with a subsidy from the Government, the Office became responsible for an edition of the bibliography on cards, copies of which were distributed free to a number of great foreign libraries.<sup>7</sup> This was an important step for the OIB in its rôle as a national institute of bibliography attempting to cooperate as fully as possible with the International Institute of Bibliography in the elaboration of the RBU. The *Bibliographie de Belgique*, as Otlet and its editor, Ernest Vanderveld, proudly pointed out to the fifth International Publishers' Congress in Milan that year, now fulfilled all the requirements formulated by the IIB for a national bibliography.<sup>8</sup> The relationship of the OIB with the *Bibliographie de Belgique* was constantly renegotiated over the years as the contracts for the publication of the bibliography expired and were themselves renegotiated. In 1911 Otlet was appointed to a Commission supervising the publication of the bibliography.<sup>9</sup> In 1912 and 1913 the periodicals' index, now called «Bulletin des sommaires», which, like the parent bibliography itself, gradually increased in size with the years, was issued on special lightweight sheets of paper printed on one side only. When the Mandate of the Commission of 1911 expired in 1914 and the compilation of the bibliography was assigned at that time to the Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, it was announced that «the publication of the 'Bulletin des sommaires'... will henceforth be exclusively entrusted to the OIB».<sup>10</sup>

The fact that the OIB saw the entire bibliography in various stages of preparation gave it ample opportunity to fulfil another of the tasks of a national institute of bibliography — the gathering of publishing statistics, and these were tabulated and published from time to time in the *IIB Bulletin*.

The OIB did little, however, for retrospective bibliography in Belgium though it tried to the extent of entering into a series of negotiations with the Ministry of the Interior and Public Instruction for the compilation and publication of a *Bibliographie Nationale* for the period 1880 to 1900. This was to continue work already completed and published for the period 1830 to 1880. The negotiations, however, seem not to have ended in any agreement.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, there were other ways in which the Office could promote the cause of bibliography in Belgium, especially by encouraging and helping various institutions to print the catalogues of their libraries. It participated, for example, in the preparation of the catalogs of the libraries of the Ministry of Railways, the Central Statistical Commission of Belgium, and the Ministry of the Interior and Public Instruction. The first was carried out over the period 1899 to 1902, the second from 1903 to 1908 (involving the printing of volumes 1 to 4 of its catalog), the third from 1902 to 1911 (involving the printing of volumes 1 to 7 of its catalog). The Office indexed and revised bibliographical notices sent to it for these catalogs, and, when the various volumes were published, dismembered and interfiled them so that each library would have only one, integrated, catalogue of its holdings.<sup>12</sup> In return for these labours the Office received for its own use up to as many as 12 copies of each of the printed volumes.<sup>13</sup> It performed these same tasks for other non-governmental organisations in Belgium, or advised them how to proceed themselves,<sup>14</sup> and participated in the compilation and publication of various special catalogs such as, for example, the catalogs of various expositions arranged by the Cercle d'Etudes Typographiques of Brussels.<sup>15</sup>

In 1906 the OIB began to publish a list of Belgian patents, first in the *Journal des brevets*, and then separately in Brussels. This was a culmination of a number of years of study on the nature and functions of Patent Offices and the application of the Decimal Classification to Patent Literature.<sup>16</sup> That same year a «Notice on the Organisation of Publicity for Patents: Bibliography of Patents», appeared in the *IIB Bulletin* which suggested that a

Patent Office, from the bibliographical point of view and from the point of view of research, is not only a Library where volumes are conserved, it is a centre of documentation whose function henceforth should be quite clear: to gather together the printed documents in different countries on patents, reduce these documents to a certain number of primary categories or patent descriptions, thereupon to classify each patent according to the categories of a uniform classification; to form in this way from the numerous publications in large collections, a homogeneous, always up-to-date whole.<sup>17</sup>

This note explored the application of the Decimal Classification to patent literature, and the OIB began to correspond with the International Bureau for Industrial Property in Berne and with groups in America.<sup>18</sup> The formation of a Repertory of Patents on cards classified according to the Decimal Classification seemed to be a logical outcome of the OIB's studies and of the various international recommendations for the handling of patents.<sup>19</sup> In Belgium, patent notices were published sequentially in no particular order in the



*Moniteur belge* as a form of simple registration. The OIB took each of these notices from the *Moniteur belge*, classified it, and every fortnight published a collection of notices thus obtained in a *Répertoire des brevets d'invention délivrés en Belgique*, described as a separately printed extract of the *Journal des brevets*.<sup>20</sup> The notice for each patent contained only its registration number at the State Patent Office, the name of the inventor, its title and a classification number. The classification was made by A. Louis Vermandel, the editor of *Index de la presse technique*, or *Bibliographia Technica*. The Repertory of Patents was seen as «part of the whole work of co-operative documentation established by the Institutes».<sup>21</sup> At least 47 issues appeared from 1907 to 1909 containing well in excess of 15,000 notices.<sup>22</sup>

The OIB, in its rôle as national bibliographical institute acting for Belgium in the sphere of international bibliography, eventually became the regional bureau for Belgium of the Royal Society sponsored *International Catalogue of Scientific Literature*, but only rather reluctantly. At the end of 1899, the Minister of the Interior and of Public Instruction wrote to Otlet as Secretary-General of the OIB, asking his opinion on the Royal Society's proposed organisation for the *International Catalogue*. Otlet replied with a description of the OIB's programme, and pointed out that

with respect to the bibliography of works published in Belgium, our Office already constitutes the national organisation which the Royal Society wishes to see created as a 'regional bureau' by the institution of which the Royal Society hopes to facilitate the collection and dispatch of material to London. Indeed, among other work, our Office carries out the regular and systematic registration of all the books and periodical articles which appear in Belgium. It would therefore be possible for us, at relatively little new cost, to furnish the Royal Society of London with the material it asks for and to permit Belgian scientific literature therefore to figure in the future *International Catalogue of the Sciences*.<sup>23</sup>

Otlet, La Fontaine and one other member of the OIB's Committee of Direction had acted for Belgium at each of the conferences held by the Royal Society on the *International Catalogue of Scientific Literature*. The *International Catalogue* was a venture on the scale of the work projected for the IIB, and it was potentially either a formidable rival or a powerful ally. Both at the various conferences on the *Catalogue* and in his writings Otlet ceaselessly and unsuccessfully enjoined the Royal Society to reject its isolationism, to co-operate with the OIB, to adopt its methods and participate in its work. Over the years, the *IIB Bulletin* carried the documents issued by the Society about the *Catalogue*, and reports of the meetings to which Otlet had repaired.

In 1899 Otlet published a detailed, point-by-point and highly critical examination of the final specifications adopted

by the Royal Society for the *Catalogue*. To this he joined the closely reasoned, equally adverse critiques of Field and Richet and published them as a separate fascicule of the *IIB Bulletin*.<sup>24</sup> By 1902, four volumes had appeared. Concluding a general appraisal of them and the enterprise which had produced them, Otlet remarked:

Bibliography to-day has truly become a technique; it has a history, numerous applications, rules gradually arrived at from several centuries of experience gathered throughout the world. Why at Burlington House, does pleasure seem to be taken in transgressing principles which seem definitely established to-day, and why is there a refusal to recognise the irresistible force of the contemporary movement towards co-operation, towards uniformity, of methods, towards co-ordination of existing scientific undertakings?<sup>25</sup>

In 1905 the *Manual of the RBU* containing the fully developed tables of the Universal Decimal Classification was tabled at a meeting in London for the *International Catalogue of Scientific Literature*. A note accompanied it requesting that some agreement between the *Catalogue's* Council and the IIB should be reached whereby the scope of the *Catalogue* would not be extended as had been suggested at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the *Catalogue* in 1904. The IIB would assume the direction of similar catalogs for «social and technical sciences». The note suggested that the regional bureaux established to co-operate with the Royal Society in the compilation of the *Catalogue* could easily extend their work to include the collection of appropriate material in each country for the new subject areas. A formal resolution of intent to co-operate with other bibliographical organisations (the IIB was not specifically mentioned) and a decision to limit the scope of the *Catalogue* to the natural sciences was as much as the Belgians achieved at this meeting.<sup>26</sup>

Perhaps Otlet's reservations about the *Catalogue* as well as his emphasis on the international work of the OIB—IIB explained his reluctance to set the OIB up formally as a regional bureau for the *Catalogue*, though he acknowledged as early as 1900 that it could act as one. Eventually in 1907 Henryk Arctowski, a distinguished Polish geophysicist and Polar explorer, complained that though Belgium subscribed to a number of copies of the *Catalogue*, Belgian scientific work was not properly represented in it. He acknowledged that OIB had done something already for the *Catalogue*, but it was not enough.

In Germany, in France, in Poland and elsewhere committees have been formed... by the academies or the learned societies; in Belgium, on the contrary, we are disinterested in the work which touches us so directly, and we have abandoned completely to the care of the OIB work which, in my opinion, should be done more or less under the responsibility of a competent commission, composed in consequence of men of science, one specialist for each science, for example.<sup>27</sup>

Arctowski's plea and the implicit criticism of OIB had considerable effect. After a number of meetings between various interested individuals, a Commission of the kind he had proposed was set up. A Decree issued on 5 May 1908 indicated its function as

to lend its scientific collaboration to the OIB for indexing and classing works published in Belgium concerning the sciences. The bibliographical notices which will be prepared are destined to enrich the Repertories and Bibliographical collections of Belgium, and are regularly to be sent to the Bureau of the International Catalogue of Scientific Literature in London.<sup>28</sup>

The OIB undertook to prepare and maintain the manuscript of the notices involved, and to limit and co-ordinate the work of the various specialists compiling them, the final manuscript being reviewed by a plenary session of the Commission before dispatch to London.<sup>29</sup> Though the original suggestion for the work of the Commission was limited to preparing material for the Royal Society's *Catalogue*, Otlet had ensured that the Commission's charge was couched in more general terms. One meeting, for example, concluded with the resolution

there is occasion to collaborate in the preparation of the RBU, characterised by the use of cards, the development of the Decimal Classification, and the publication of bibliographical notices for each branch of science from a central organisation; there is also occasion to encourage the publications of the Concilium Bibliographicum, the *Bibliographia Universalis*, (and to) collaborate in the International Catalogue of Science for the bibliography of Belgian scientific works.<sup>30</sup>

Otlet prepared a list of societies likely to be able to assume responsibility for various subject areas,<sup>31</sup> and became anxious to develop a concordance between the Royal Society's classification and the Decimal Classification.<sup>32</sup> During the following years he supervised and organised the co-operation of Belgium with the Royal Society, for the OIB did in fact become the Belgian regional bureau of the Royal Society's *Catalogue*, although it seems that its collaboration was never wholehearted nor particularly persistent.<sup>33</sup>

A natural extension of the OIB's work in co-ordinating bibliographical activities in Belgium and facilitating the co-operation of various associations and societies concerned with it, was the gathering at the OIB of information on Belgian learned societies. In 1904 a circular was prepared and sent out to determine the name, the headquarters, the date of foundation, the officers, the sessions, the work, services, collections, publications, affiliations, the library holdings and the state of their organisation, and the budget, of these groups, for an *Annuaire des sociétés scientifiques, artistiques et littéraires de Belgique* which was published in 1905.<sup>34</sup> This small volume, limited to notices about 'free associations of all kinds whose objects and endeavours complement the action of official aca-

demies and institutions and that of the great universities',<sup>35</sup> was important as marking a stage in the evolution of OIB into a bibliographical centre for these associations.

The work described above, which OIB carried out with greater or less regularity, was in a sense specifically national and did not involve much in the way of systematic publication. As a bibliographical institute which was also headquarters of the International Institute of Bibliography, it also assumed, as has been indicated, a not inconsiderable program of bibliographical publication. Of first importance in this program was the *IIB Bulletin*, the *IIB Publications*, and of course the various *Manuals* of the Decimal Classification. The *IIB Bulletin* appeared regularly from 1895 until 1911 when it ceased to appear except for a brief revival in 1914. During 1912 and 1913 the Institute was 'very strongly engaged in work for the government and for other institutions: that is the reason for provisionally stopping the publication of the *Bulletin*'.<sup>36</sup> During the first ten years of IIB's existence most of its publishing activity was directed towards the *Bulletin* and the completion of the elaborated Decimal Classification. It did, however, publish a number of individual bibliographies and Henri La Fontaine's annual *Bibliographia Bibliographica*.

With the completion of the *Manual of the RBU* and its printing during 1904 through 1907, the OIB was freer to undertake other publications than before. It continued, of course, to collaborate in the preparation of the *Bibliographie de Belgique*, the catalogues of a number of libraries as described above, and in the *Bibliographia Technica* which appeared regularly from 1903 until the war, and resumed immediately after it. But it also assumed a fuller responsibility for the *Bibliographia Economica Universalis*, attached to the *Revue économique internationale*.

The main part of the *Revue* was printed by the Imprimerie Goemare, but the quotations by this firm to print the bibliographical part compiled at the OIB by Masure and La Fontaine were so outrageously high,<sup>37</sup> that, after some investigation, the work was given to the firm of R. and H. Fourrez.<sup>38</sup> In a note prepared for the prospective printer, the bibliographical part of the *Revue* was described as 'an independent publication first appearing in the *Revue économique internationale*, and then, separately in 12 fascicules a year which, at the end of the year, are brought together in a single volume'.<sup>39</sup> The *Revue* agreed to pay 65% of the costs of printing the bibliography. It was imperative that the *Revue* should receive the bibliography by a specified time each month so that it could meet its publication schedules. This became the source of a great deal of trouble. The October and November 1908 issues, very much delayed, caused recri-

minations between the publisher, Fourez, Masure and the *Revue's* editor, which were exchanged well into 1909, Masure alleging that he had sent the copy to Fourez in time, Fourez claiming it had come late.<sup>40</sup> This altercation was particularly rancorous because in 1907 the three parties had worked out a system of penalties for lateness at 20 francs per day exacted by the *Revue*.<sup>41</sup> By 1910 the position had become impossible. Desperately preparing for the 1910 Brussels Exposition and a series of conferences organised by the OIB, Masure wrote that the bibliography would be late, but «to apply the penalties in this case would be very unfriendly».<sup>42</sup> This elicited a stiff response: «The *Revue* cannot disorganise its services because the OIB organises a conference!»<sup>43</sup> By June the penalties for the previous three months had reached more than 1200 francs. «What», wrote the editors, «will the Institute offer to pay?»<sup>44</sup> In 1911 the OIB was punctual except for January, but in 1912 and 1913, when more conferences took place, the trouble began again. At the end of 1912 (when the OIB had been late with the Bibliography every month), the total penalties for the three years, 1910, 1911, 1912, reached 3,850 francs. The first payment for a number of years made by the *Revue* to the OIB for the printing of the Bibliography was made in July 1914: 115 francs!<sup>45</sup>

It was clear that the Conferences of 1910 and 1913 absorbed most of OIB's energies, so that it could not keep to the printing schedules for the *Revue économique internationale*. It also became clear that in its relations with its own printer, Fourez, the OIB was, economically, walking a tightrope. Fourez's bills for 1905, 1906, 1908, for example, could not be paid at once. The most often repeated excuse was the absence from Brussels of the peripatetic La Fontaine, who had become Treasurer, or the necessity of waiting for the OIB's governmental subsidy.<sup>46</sup> Evident in all of this is a reaching by its directors just beyond the OIB's budget and organisational ability, a tendency to move on to a later series of tasks before a basis in the assured consolidation of former ones was achieved. Consequently the assumption of new work at the OIB invariably interfered with the performance of former work. As the Office expanded, most of its publishing activities were interrupted and in some instances terminated. La Fontaine, beginning his work on the *Bibliographia Economica Universalis*, ceased to compile the *Bibliographia Bibliographica*. The expansion of the Institute in 1910 led to the cessation of the *Répertoire des brevets* and the silence of the *IIB Bulletin* which was only broken briefly in 1914. Though the Decimal Classification was discussed, revised and newly developed in part after 1905, very little of it was published after that time and none of it was published on a regular basis.

Nevertheless, whatever difficulties and inadequacies were revealed as time went by and as the growing Office and Institute creaked and groaned in their reaching towards internationalism, the *Bulletin* did appear for 16 years; the *Bibliographia Economica Universalis*, a comprehensive but by no means complete work,<sup>47</sup> appeared for 11 years; the enormous *Manual of the RBU* was published; and regular work was done over the decades from the beginning of the Institute's active life to the War, on the *Bibliographie de Belgique* and the *Bibliographia Technica*. If this work was not consistent in quality, and was neither always efficiently nor punctually performed, it was at least undertaken and met some need. This is an achievement which should not be deprecated.

#### OTLET

Once an obscure advocate practising law unwillingly and with little success in the Court of Appeals in Brussels, by 1905, a decade after the foundation of the OIB—IIB, Otlet had become a man of sufficient stature to act for the government at important international gatherings concerned with bibliography. He was at the head of the OIB, a semi-official agency of government, and of the IIB, which he always represented as nestling, because of the OIB, in some vague, ill-defined way under the protective mantle of the government. Dedicated, hard-working, friend and acquaintance of many placed high in the social, professional and political circles of the day, he soon settled into a position in Brussels of assured but not obtrusive eminence. From this position and cementing it and increasing its importance, he took an active part in various ventures related to his interests.

In 1905 he helped form a Musée du Livre with the participation of a number of organisations concerned with printing and publishing, and became its President. The source of the collections of the Museum was, at Otlet's suggestion, an exhibition of photogravure held in 1906 and sponsored by the Cercle d'Etudes Typographiques of Brussels.<sup>48</sup> In 1906 the Musée du Livre organised an exhibition of Belgian art and literary books and a series of lectures at Ostend in the holiday season. One of a formidable series of lecturers which included his old maître, Picard, and the poets Lemonnier, and Verhaeren, Otlet opened the exhibition with an address entitled «Aspects of the Book».<sup>49</sup> Later he delivered the inaugural address at the official opening of the Musée du Livre in Brussels.<sup>50</sup>

One of the organisations which participated in the forming of the Musée du Livre was the Union de la Presse Périodique Belge. As editor of the *IIB Bulletin*, Otlet had been a member of the Union for a number of years. In 1906 he became Vice-



President, and President in 1908, a position he still held as late as 1923.<sup>51</sup>

An extremely important appointment was to the Administrative Council of the Royal Library and to its sub-commission for the inspection of the library. Otlet had long been interested in libraries, of course, and had studied Belgian libraries for a number of years.<sup>52</sup> He prepared reports on the Royal Library's catalogs and its collections with sensible and extensive recommendations for their improvement. This work brought him some public notice.<sup>53</sup> He retained his seat on the Council until 1914.

In 1906 he was elected to the Libre Académie de Belgique and became active within it. In the year following his election, he prepared a report for the Academy on a «Program for the Minister of Sciences and the Arts». This was a new ministry centralising administrations which had previously been scattered inappropriately amongst other government departments. The administration for Science, Letters and the Fine Arts, for example, had been attached to the Ministry of Agriculture in 1884. In 1888 it was transferred to the Ministry of the Interior and Public Instruction. In 1895 matters connected with the Fine Arts were returned to the Ministry of Agriculture. The members of the Libre Académie and the organisations affiliated with the Musée du Livre were active in campaigning for the creation of the new Ministry. Baron Descamps, President of OIB, was appointed to the portfolio. Otlet's report on the new Ministry was detailed and listed the various institutions over which it would exercise control, including the OIB, and discussed certain urgent problems with which it would have to concern itself.<sup>54</sup>

During this time, however, Otlet's family was still in financial trouble, and Otlet was a busy man much divided between their affairs and his responsibilities for the OIB—LIB. The family quarrelled bitterly on occasion over money. Eventually the two brothers Paul and Maurice and their stepbrothers and stepsister, Raoul, Adrien, Gaston, Edouard and Rita, formed themselves into a company, Otlet Frères. Paul, the oldest and least interested, became President. The company's main purpose was to guard the family's Spanish interests, mines at Montcayo and the Soria railway. Raoul spent much time in Spain as the family's representative but Otlet was on occasion forced to journey thither himself. Suddenly, in 1907, his father died at the age of sixty-five. «With him», Otlet wrote, «disappeared an enlightened, tenacious, useful energy».<sup>55</sup> As far as Otlet was concerned his father carried to his grave the possibility of the recovery of the family's lost fortune. All that was left was the melancholy and frustrating task of putting his father's tangled business

affairs into a final order. This was no easy task, nor one from which he could expect to gain. He did not even have the sustaining prospect of the ultimate renunciation of the uncongenial world of business and a total surrender to his intellectual, even spiritual, world of internationalism and bibliography, a world whose enticements grew stronger as he became more deeply involved in it, for the disorders of Otlet Frères had not yet reached their peak. Two years after his father's death, Otlet still struggled with the estate and he still remained uncertain of anything of value to him from it. It seemed that nothing financial that he touched was straightforward. The year before his father's death, his maternal grandfather, Michel Van Mons, died. Otlet and his brother, Maurice, shared in Van Mons's estate, of which Otlet was made an executor. A difficulty in the will, however, was so serious and the search for a solution so prolonged, that Otlet referred to its ultimate settlement in a will of his own made in 1913.<sup>56</sup>

Divorce proceedings were initiated between Otlet and his wife, Fernande, in April 1908. It was said that his preoccupation with his work and his frequent absences from Brussels were responsible for the rupture between them.<sup>57</sup> Perhaps it was inevitable that they should separate. From Otlet's *Diary* we have a picture of Fernande as a gay, light-hearted, rather flighty girl. Presumably as she grew older her interest in her husband's work became no more lively than in earlier days. Nor, one imagines, did she become any more able to comprehend the dedicated rather obsessive student and idealist which formed such a large part of Otlet's character. Often alone, with two teenage children at school, excluded by her own temperamental indifference from that all-absorbing, oddly institutionalised intellectual world of her husband's, she must have found life drab and uneventful. There can be no doubt of the intensity of Otlet's feelings for her when he was a young man struggling towards the maturity of a life guided by a confident sense of direction. Anxious, often depressed, lonely and unsure of himself in the various European cities into which his travels and studies took him, he continually faced the spectre of failure at examinations and the sacrifice at his father's insistence of a way of life that he desired passionately to follow. In the midst of his difficulties, he dreamed of the felicity of a future given richness and meaning by a beloved wife. Her image and the prospect of their union steadied and comforted him. For Fernande the future realised itself in marriage to a man torn between business affairs which he detested and in which it was not expected that she should take an interest, and a vocation which failed to capture her imagination but to which her husband wished to surrender himself utterly. He appeared not to seek her amuse-

ment nor to encourage her to find a congenial occupation of some kind. There was now little money and few of those diversions characteristic of Edouard Otlet's household in the days when Otlet courted her, days in which the family was aggressively prosperous. She must often have felt isolated and bored. The death of his father released Otlet from any familial constraint to prolong the marriage.

These years of Otlet's private life, however, were by no means completely shadowed by the death of his father and by his divorce. He was a regular visitor to the house of Henri La Fontaine's sister, Léonie. The visits eventually assumed an almost invariable pattern as the years went by. He dined with her every Tuesday evening. Indeed, so strong became the habit of these visits for Léonie that they were continued for a time, as it were, by proxy after Otlet's death, by his colleague and disciple, Georges Lorphèvre. At some time during the period of his divorce proceedings he met a friend of Léonie La Fontaine's, a wealthy Dutch woman, Cato Van Nederhasselt, who was older than he. She expressed interest in his work and desired to participate in some way in it. Their acquaintance developed apace through visits and correspondence and the consequence, disappointing a tenuous hope that Léonie La Fontaine was thought to cherish,<sup>58</sup> was Otlet's second marriage in 1912 to Cato Van Nederhesselt. This was a very successful marriage, as far as one can gather, from which Otlet continually drew strength.

#### THE CONGRESS OF MONS AND THE MONT DES ARTS

In 1905 an International Exposition was held at Liège in Belgium. The OIB exhibited excerpts from its repertoires and examples of bibliographical equipment and supplies. It was also a member of the Exposition's Commercial Office and it assembled, classified, and prepared for consultation at the exposition a large collection of catalogs, prospectuses, circulars and other industrial and commercial material. As on similar occasions, a large number of international conferences were held. Though no conference of the IIB was called, its officials participated in a number of others such as that of the International Union of Photography, a Congress for the Extension of French Language and Culture and the International Congress of the Press. A culmination of these international conferences was one sponsored by the Belgian government. It was intended to provide a kind of «summary» and «crown» of all the others.<sup>59</sup> Presided over by the King and held at Mons, it was called the International Congress for World Economic Expansion. Otlet presented a long report to it containing proposals for the development of the OIB by

means of a Documentary Union of Governments into the world documentation centre of which he had always dreamed. The report emphasised the necessity for reliable, current information as a basis for planning economic expansion and he explored the various ways in which private and official information agencies could best be organised.

Among the resolutions taken by the International Congress for World Economic Expansion were a number of the utmost importance to the OIB. Perhaps the most important was:

Considering that rapid, integrated current documentation related to matters of world expansion is necessary for the full utilisation of theoretical and practical information scattered in innumerable publications which are printed each day; Considering that the task of guiding researchers through documents should be the responsibility of special organisations charged with providing direct information; Considering the results of organisations created up till now for better organising documentation and the work that they have done towards this goal; Considering especially the activities of the International Institute of Bibliography which are based on international co-operation and standardisation of methods; Considering that the sections of offices of special technical and scientific documentation offer the public more precise and complete information than do public organisations, ...; Considering that similar institutions, which it is desirable to see develop and multiply, can become a force in documentation by uniformity of method, the world character of their documentary collections, and by federation with the International Institute of Bibliography:

**The Congress adopts the following resolutions:**

1. Information services which act as intermediaries between the public and documents, furnishing, upon written or verbal consultation to those interested, information on special points concerned with economic and geographic matters, should be organised in libraries with their collections of publications, and museums with their collections of objects, concurrently with instruction and courses;
2. Abundant, systematically collected, ready-for-use material for response should be placed at the disposal of the personnel of these services which have been charged with the duty of satisfying the requests of the public. For the rational organisation of information resources the documentary methods of the International Institute of Bibliography should be recognised. Particularly, a central documentary repository should be created in which should be unified and co-ordinated daily, as a sort of permanent register, all the information collected relative to places, people, institutions and products.
3. A central office of documentation and information should be set up in every country. This office should be organised by public authorities with the agreement of the unofficial associations. It should be widely accessible to those interested. The central office should be put in touch with branches organised according to the same methods. Upon the initiative of an international office, an agreement should be made between the central offices of the different countries and the great international institutions in order to verify their documentary methods and exchange information and documents which are of a public nature.
4. The Congress resolves that the International Office of Bibliography which the Belgian government created in 1895 should set up an inter-

national service whose object would be to organise world documentation in economic, industrial, commercial, legal and social matters as well as in connected subjects.<sup>60</sup>

Another resolution of the Congress was equally important:

Close relations should be established between the museums on the one hand, and, on the other, inquiry and information offices in economic matters, in such a way as to complete a physical documentation in the one (objects or facsimiles) by graphic documentation in the other (writing, printed materials, drawings, photographs) and reciprocally to put the museums and information offices in relation with the press in order to give it documentation for its task of educating the public in economic matters.<sup>61</sup>

These resolutions encouraged Otlet to plan and to work for increased support for the expansion of the OIB—IIB. Late in 1905 he addressed a memorandum to the government setting out four proposals. The first was that the government should call a conference to create an International Union for Documentation. The OIB would be the headquarters of the Union and would «act as the central institution co-ordinating the work of the office and that of the national bibliographical services». In joining the Union, governments would ensure that their countries published a national bibliography and adopted the minimum bibliographical rules, promulgated by the OIB, for all bibliographic work. Secondly, Otlet proposed that the government help the OIB create a national documentation service in economic, technical and commercial matters. This service would develop an up-to-date documentary repertory drawing its material from patents, government documents, statistical publications, tariff documents and technical and commercial annuals amongst other sources. The government would need to provide the OIB with free locations for such a service, furniture to house the new repertories contemplated for it and an additional annual subsidy of 15,000 francs. Thirdly, the government should set up an Information Service for Scientific and Educational Institutes in Belgium. This service, to be part of the OIB, also, would publish an annual. Finally the Government should set up a Service for the National Bibliography and Catalogues of the Libraries of Belgium. This would co-ordinate and extend services already existing.<sup>62</sup> Of course, Otlet had already begun to put most elements of this program into effect well before 1905. The Congress of Mons and the awakened government interest in information services provided him with an opportunity to push ahead with his long-standing plans, of which the oldest and most central was that for a Documentary Union of Governments. The proposals were not immediately acted on as such.

Nevertheless, in May 1906 a Commission was appointed by the Minister for the Interior and Public Instruction. Its

purpose was to examine a project known as the Mont des Arts. In the Mont des Arts were to be centralised and co-ordinated in appropriate and adjacent locations the Royal Library, Archives, Museums and other educational, cultural agencies under the aegis of the Minister. The Mont des Arts was intended to give effect to the World Conference of Economic Expansion's resolutions concerning Museums. The existing buildings were to be altered and others built on to or around them. Otlet was the junior member of the Commission, and as such, in what seems to be a long hallowed tradition, was asked to take the minutes of its meetings by the Chairman, Cyrille Van Overbergh, the Director-General of the Ministry's Administration for Higher Learning, the Sciences and the Arts.

In his address to the Commission Otlet enlarged upon his earlier proposals to the government concerning the future of the OIB. He described the movement of international associations towards setting up their headquarters in Brussels. Brussels was, as a result, rapidly becoming an important scientific, educational and cultural centre for the whole world. It seemed clear to Otlet that the Government should encourage this trend, should assure the international associations hospitality and support. As one of these organisations and already situated in buildings destined to be part of the Mont des Arts, the IIB should logically become their centre and should gradually extend its services to provide an international documentation service. Already the IIB had attempted to encourage co-operation between Belgian learned associations and societies and similar international associations located in Belgium. Otlet gave an account to the Commission of his attempts to set up a Collective Library of Learned Societies. He had conceived of this as early as 1903 even before the IIB had begun the survey resulting in *Annuaire des sociétés scientifiques, artistiques et littéraires de Belgique*. He had then approached the government for an allotment of increased space for the OIB and had been rebuffed with the comment that the OIB's Royal Decree of 1895 in no way committed the government «to furnish a location for the libraries of learned societies».<sup>63</sup> In 1905, however, the Government agreed to allow the OIB to occupy the Chapelle Saint Georges, 27a Montagne de la Cour. This was a very old structure which had been rebuilt in 1516, restored in the nineteenth century, and was of some architectural interest. It was part of the Palais de Beaux Arts, close to the other OIB—IIB locations and had an entrance in the Rue de la Régence.<sup>64</sup> In February 1906, six associations had agreed to participate in the Collective Library.

It was possible now, Otlet informed the Commission, to



supply the government architect with all the necessary information for planning the inclusion of the Collective Library in the Mont des Arts. In addition, then, to the facilities needed for the IIB, provisions should be made in the future Mont des Arts for

1. A large library with a reading room, a periodicals room, and book stack able to house about 500,000 books. This library would comprise, as a federative organisation, the collective library of the scientific societies of Belgium and a collective library of the international institutions ...;
2. A room for the information and documentary repertoires which should be anticipated as developing ten times as much as those already elaborated by the IIB;
3. Offices for a dozen secretariats installed near the library and the repository rooms.<sup>65</sup>

These offices would house the international associations in the nucleus of an international centre.

The Commission was sympathetic in its conclusions to Otlet's wishes and recommended that:

It is desirable to group the collections of objects whose function is to be viewed and which, apart from their documentary character, participate in the nature of works of art ... Libraries and documentation services should be grouped and attempts should be made to bring together around the Royal Library, without threatening their autonomy, the presently dispersed libraries of learned societies, of various ministries and international institutions.<sup>66</sup>

In the course of the Commission's meeting Otlet and the chairman, Van Overbergh, were stimulated to form a grand plan for two new museums which would complement those already existing: a World Museum and a Social Museum. Otlet and Van Overbergh both saw their proposals as extending the work of the World Congress at Mons the year before. For Otlet the notion of a World Museum returned him to his preoccupations with synthesis, on the one hand, and documentation in the broad sense in which he had begun to define it, on the other. For Van Overbergh the notion was an extension of his concern with educational reform.

Having observed that museums had been formed «everywhere» in recent years, and that some of them were museums of «everything», the authors described the World Museum they envisaged. It would provide «a visual exposition of that which constitutes the concrete reality of [our country], being at every point linked to other countries, marking thus, in a clearly apparent way, its place in the universe». And where better could it be placed than in the middle of the Mont des Arts, for «is it not, in its many respects, the corollary, the link, the synthesis of all the other museums?»

As for the Social Museum:

The idea of an exposition of the organisation and working of social institutions, of presenting in a figurative way and by the least abstract

means possible, the different elements of modern society, the great laws which regulate the social organism, the goals of its activity, the surest means of attaining them—this idea was brought to birth by the international associations. For the last twenty years every World Fair has had its exposition of social economy and each has ... made apparent to the people that which is known to the few: the action of impalpable forces in the scattered world.

This kind of exposition had been held at Liège in 1905 and would again be held in an exposition planned for Brussels in 1910. Otlet and Van Overbergh emphasised the ease with which the necessary documentation for the Museum could be collected by government departments and from the international associations increasingly making their home in Brussels.<sup>67</sup>

This document is of particular interest because it foreshadows the great museum Otlet actually set about organising at the 1910 Brussels Exposition and which figured largely in his thoughts thereafter. Indeed, the Congress of Mons may be considered as marking an important step in the evolution of Otlet's thought. As a result of its deliberations and the subsequent Mont des Arts projet, Otlet became concerned with ideas of how to extend the basic organisation underlying his work. He was awakened to the notion of Museum as essentially documentary and he was stimulated to begin considering the possibilities of participation afforded by the international associations whose headquarters seemed to be mushrooming in Brussels. That the OIB—IIB could become an important national information and documentation service, he was convinced. It could also become the centre of international documentary organisation. The prospect of the extension of the OIB—IIB in the Mont des Arts, of its being given an official, above all international character through the creation of a documentary union of governments, and of its introducing an extensive economic and technical information service, led Otlet to attempt to find additional funds for it.

As a notice in the newspaper, *La Chronique*, observed:

The resolutions of the Congress of World Expansion are being put into effect one after another. One of the immediately practical ones consists of the organisation at Brussels of an International Institute of Documentation centralising all information in economic, technical and social matters. To this end it is proposed to now give new development to the International Office of Bibliography which is directed by a Commission presided over by Baron Descamps and which possesses important collections. The Office will be installed in the Mont des Arts and will enter into relations with different international institutions existing in Brussels and abroad. This vast project is vigorously encouraged by the King.<sup>68</sup>

A Patronage Committee, the newspaper went on to inform its readers, was being set up and the financiers, Ernest Solvay and Franz Philippson were to be part of it. A sum of 200,000 francs was decided as necessary to develop the OIB as plan-

ned. This sum was to be spent over four years by which time the Mont des Arts, it was believed, would be finished, and the OIB in its new, expanded form settled within it. Ernest Solvay, who became President of the IIB—OIB when Descamps resigned in 1907 to head the new Ministry of Sciences and Arts, promised to put up 50,000 francs as a start. Philippson, following Solvay's lead, promised 10,000 francs. This drew an enthusiastic letter from Solvay's secretary: «we are enchanted. And the old cynical saying is right: to him who has will be given». Later in the year a further donation of 10,000 francs was received. («Congratulations from M. Solvay and myself»). Many letters were sent out soliciting funds but it is clear that the goal of 200,000 francs was not reached. The King's support, referred to in the notice in *La Chronique*, seems to have been limited to the acknowledgment of the receipt of donations to the OIB by Royal Decree. In the final analysis the Mont des Arts was a much delayed project and eventually, in 1909 Otlet asked Philippson to permit his contribution for the expansion of the OIB to be used to support the formation of an International Microphotographic Section in the IIB.

## EXPANSION

During the period just before and just after 1905, the OIB underwent considerable expansion. Of first importance was probably the Collective Library of Learned Societies. It came formally into being in April 1906 and was officially opened by Baron Descamps, outgoing President of OIB, in December 1907 by which time the number of participating societies had grown from six to twenty-five. The objectives of the Library were described as:

To group the scattered libraries of scientific and corporate institutions and associations as well as those of the [editorial] offices of periodicals, to assume the administrative management of these libraries in a manner to be determined in each case, to put appropriate locations which will be heated, lit and accessible during most of the day, at their disposal; to place the collections of each member institution under a responsible administration charged with preserving them, cataloging them, making them available for use within the library and lending them outside it, but in no way interfering with the ownership and the free disposition of the works deposited by the member institutions; to constitute by bringing different special libraries together in this way, a collective library which will progressively embrace the different branches of encyclopedic knowledge, and which will be an auxiliary to existing public libraries whose character is general; in this way to put extensive collections of use for documentation work at the disposal of the International Institute of Bibliography in exchange for its supervisory care; at the same time to permit scientific associations to be certain of their members' access to the information and documentation sources of the Institute.<sup>69</sup>

The Collective Library was in a sense part of a pattern of structural elaboration within the OIB which involved the creation of new sections and new repertoires. In 1905 an International Institute of Photography was created as a new section of the IIB. It grew out of an agreement between Ernest de Potter, editor of the *Revue belge de photographie*, and the OIB. The OIB undertook to develop the services and collections of the Institute of Photography in its own locations. De Potter agreed to donate his collections, both photographic and bibliographical, to the Institute and to undertake a program of extending them as much as possible, acting as «Conservator of the Photographic Division of the International Institute of Bibliography» under its administrative control. His was to be an honorary position until such time as the OIB received an increased subsidy from the Belgian government or support from other governments. The OIB would then pay de Potter an annual sum of three thousand francs for a period of ten years.<sup>70</sup> This agreement was put into effect. The Institute was set up. An appeal for collaborators was issued, and rules and procedures for carrying out its work were published.

The new Institute was to have several major functions. First of all it was intended to promote the study of matters relating to photographic documentation. But primarily the Institute was to create a Universal Iconographic Repertory which was described as:

a general collection of pictures and documentary illustrations originating from various sources on all subjects and classified.<sup>71</sup>

At the time of the setting up of the Institute, there were about 100,000 pictures in stock, about 12,000 of which had been mounted and classified. A specially prepared catalog of them contained about 15,000 cards. The repertory consisted of a main «documentary» repertory of actual pictorial material which was classified by the Universal Decimal Classification and housed in specially designed catalog furniture and filing cabinets, and a number of auxiliary repertoires. The items were mounted where necessary on to sheets of one of two standard sizes: ordinary postcard size (and much of the material was in the form of postcards), and a larger size (21.5×27.5 cm). Provision was made for miscellaneous material of larger sizes in special folders. A rather complicated «bibliographic repertory», an index, in effect, was then compiled for this material. The index had three parts: a file in accession order in which material was enregistered as received and from which a unique number for each piece was derived; a subject file; and finally, a file of authors and photographic artists. The repertory grew steadily after its creation. Masure gave statistics for its various parts in his report on the IIB

in 1912, and at that time the various files contained well over a quarter of a million entries.<sup>72</sup>

It was intended to be organised in such a way that it would complement the Universal Bibliographic Repertory. Its purposes were described as:

1. To conserve for public use at an appropriate time the innumerable graphic documents wherein important events appear from day to day and where are reproduced objects worthy of being paid some attention;
2. To conserve thus, for historians of the future, documents recording transitory aspects of modern life of the disappearance of which there is a strong risk if they are not systematically collected...;
3. To permit anyone whatever who wishes to study a subject to obtain a summary idea of the whole by a simple glance at illustrations of the subject;
4. To procure for men of science, administrators and statesmen, for technicians, for the world of commerce and industry, illustrative, precise, accurate and pertinent documents on the different objects of their research and their activity;
5. To furnish artists and artisans in the practice of their craft indispensable documents for their work;
6. To furnish documents for illustrations in books, reviews and journals for teaching and for lecturers;
7. To facilitate preliminary study for travel.<sup>73</sup>

In 1907 the IIB actually developed standards for repertories of dossiers which had become of increasing importance to its work after the formation of the Universal Iconographic Repertory. The special furniture constructed for housing them was described and illustrated, and the mounting, arrangement and use of materials in specially designed folders or dossiers explained. By this time the kind of materials deposited in dossiers was extended beyond the merely illustrative. «The name of 'dossier' is given to the whole of the pieces gathered into packets or bundles in the same folder and on the same subject. The pieces assembled in dossiers vary according to the nature of the repertories (letters, reports, newspaper cuttings, photographs, notes, prospectuses, circulars, printed menus, etc.).»<sup>74</sup> This led to the formation of an Encyclopedic Repertory of Dossiers which extended the other main repertories of the OIB: the Universal Bibliographic Repertory and the Universal Iconographic Repertory. By 1912 the material in the Universal Documentary Repertory, as it was also called, contained nearly a quarter of a million pieces of largely but not entirely textual material «relative to all the objects and all the facts which constitute human activity in its widest extension».<sup>75</sup>

Bibliographical, illustrative and now partly substantive, the repertories in the OIB were further extended after Otlet's participation in the International Congress for the Study of Polar Regions held in Brussels in 1906, the Congress of the Federation of Regional Hunting Societies and the International

al Congress of Fisheries, both of which were held at Antwerp in 1907. As a result of proposals put to these Congresses by Otlet and his colleagues an International Polar Institute and International Documentary Offices for Hunting and for Fisheries were set up and affiliated with IIB. An International Documentary Office for Aeronautics was set up on similar lines in 1908.<sup>76</sup> All of these Offices were formally distinct from the OIB—IIB. They had their own statutes which in form and wording were almost the same. They were administered by General and Administrative Councils upon the former of which, especially, were represented a great many aristocratic names. Otlet was a member of the Administrative Councils of them all. The initiative for their formation came from him and all of the Offices, except for a time that of the International Polar Institute, were set up within the OIB—IIB headquarters. The International Polar Institute, directed by Georges Lecoq of the Royal Belgian Observatory, was initially located at the Observatory at Uccle, though later its collections were transferred to the OIB in Brussels.<sup>77</sup>

The programs of the various offices were similar. «The time has come», it was announced in the document setting out the aims and objectives of the International Documentary Office of Fisheries,

to group in a central organisation every documentary matter concerning fisheries so that each institute concerned with the subject in various countries can obtain information according to its requirements and also every individual, government, artisan or professional. The object is to concentrate the work of each for the general benefit... The object of the Central Documentary Office is not only to collect every necessary bit of information but also to classify it and to keep it openly at the disposal of every member of this Office, irrespective of nationality; to study documentary evidence and eventually to publish results of this and to take all the necessary steps to develop... universal documentary information in matters of fishing.

Each of the Institutes or Documentary Offices were to establish a universal bibliographic repertory in the area of their interests, assemble a library of relevant publications and a collection of illustrative material («photographs, drawings and prints»). Finally, they were to compile a repertory of documentary evidence derived from the other repertories and collections. This was to be a crucial feature of the Office's work.

Documentary evidence will be classified on separate fly-sheets, then docked and shelved. It will contain extracts of literary works, separate articles, cuttings from newspapers, parliamentary documents, reports, prospectuses of industrial establishments and diverse manuscripts which could not be included in the library, also memoranda furnished by the Office, replies to enquiries and references to applications.<sup>78</sup>

Proposing the creation of an institute to deal with the documentation of the polar regions, Otlet suggested that its



work should be analagous to that undertaken by the International Association of Academies for developing the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.<sup>79</sup> The problem was not so much a question, he believed, of a new kind of special work, but of giving a «methodical form» to work that should have to be undertaken anyway. The association devoted to the study of the Polar regions, and by extension to any area of scientific work, «could not, in an objective manner conforming to the requirements of science, establish a methodical plan of exploration, nor formulate a detailed scientific program, nor publish in an up-to-date form the results obtained, if it did not proceed to a preliminary analysis and indexing of existing documents».<sup>80</sup> In all of this Otlet was in fact making the leap from bibliography through documentation to the notion of encyclopedia adumbrated by and partially explored in his early paper *Un peu de bibliographie*.

Reports on several of these «sections», or «affiliated institutes» were made to the International Conference on Bibliography and Documentation called by the IIB in 1908.<sup>81</sup> A total for all the institutes of slightly over 210,000 items was indexed in the period to 1912. Much of the work was apparently retrospective, indexing and excerpting beginning for certain journals and treatises in the 1860's. As a result, by 1912 the latest indexings were for the period 1908 or 1909, in many cases earlier. These dates suggest either a gradual slowing down of work by 1912, or the inability of the Institutes to keep up-to-date, given the volume of the work to be done because of the retrospective dates at which it had initially begun.<sup>82</sup> It was necessarily slow as it involved excerpting which was done painstakingly by hand as there was no mechanical copying apparatus.

Otlet attempted to develop a service for technical information in the OIB. This led him to formulate his ideas on the need for new kinds of information services more clearly than before. Technical information, he observed, was available in a great many forms: in great encyclopedic treatises, in separate and particular monographs, in periodicals, annuals, formularies and tables, collections of patent specifications, official publications and in pictorial form. A «primordial need» was now being felt, he believed, for «annotated, precise, rapid, easy, up-to-date, integrated and specific documentation». This had been true for a long time, but was now truer than ever before as far as men of action were concerned.

Everything is discussed, everything is examined anew. Progress, reforms, improvements burgeon from the contact of men and things. It is necessary to stabilise them, control them, adjust them. For this it is necessary to have information, immense quantities of information. This exists already collected in innumerable public documents. But it is necessary to offer it in relation to demand. For this new organs are necessary.

The OIB proposed to fill this need in the fields of technical and industrial information. Its service of technical documentation would be based, it was announced, on a bibliographic repertory, a union catalogue of technical works in Belgian libraries, a repertory of patents, a permanent special Belgian repertory in relation to industry and production, a collection of photographs and other illustrative material, and the publication of a documentary periodical.<sup>83</sup>

The impetus for this service derived from the conclusions of the World Congress on Economic Expansion at Mons. There was nothing new about it in that what was proposed was already fully part of the OIB's general program. A. Louis Vermandel, who was collaborating with the OIB already in the preparation of the *Index de la presse technique* or *Bibliographia Technica* and who had devised the patent classification used by the OIB, agreed to direct the new service for technical information. In a contemporary sketch of the OIB's locations a Service for Technical Documentation is shown as set up adjacent to the Collective Library.<sup>84</sup> The service did not prosper and an «appeal to engineers, industrial people and technicians» was issued in 1911 calling for increased support. On the model of the other auxiliary institutes within the OIB—IIB, it was now called the International Office of Technical Documentation.<sup>85</sup>

In 1904 Otlet had been invited by the International Congress of the Press to explore the idea of an International Newspaper Museum in order to see if the OIB might help in its promotion. In 1907, he began systematically to investigate ways of setting up such a museum. He was then Vice-President of the Belgian Periodical Press Association (its President in 1908). Late in 1907 he met with representatives of the Newspaper Collectors Group (*Cercle des Collectionneurs des Journaux*) and of other interested societies. A tentative program and statutes were drawn up for the new Museum:

**Program:** to organize at Brussels under the patronage of the Belgian government and the City of Brussels in connection with the collections of the IIB and paralleling those of the Museum of the Book [*Musée du Livre*] an International Newspaper Museum dedicated to the documentation of newspapers in all forms, and to the study and diffusion of matters connected thereto;  
To establish with the help of particular collectors a collection of specimens and a Universal Bibliographic Repertory of the Press (newspapers, periodicals, bulletins, periodicals of societies);  
To form a library of works related to the Press.

The statutes provided for the administration of the new Museum by a Committee of ten members.

... the interior organisation of the Museum is attached to the organisation of the IIB. Its collections, though autonomous, are destined to remain joined to the other collections grouped at the Institute. In case

of the Association for the Museum being dissolved and a similar association not being constituted, the collections will go to the IIB or, in default, to the Belgian state with the obligation that they be maintained.<sup>86</sup>

The Museum was duly created and became so busy with material for incorporation into its collections that Otlet wrote to its President that «our personnel cannot devote all the time desirable to integrate the specimens into the collections which grow more and more». He hoped that the Museum's Council might «judge it opportune to create a post of Assistant Keeper of the Newspaper Museum». The Museum continued to be extremely active until the War and some attempt was made to continue it after the war. Its immense collection of specimens, still largely intact at the Mundaneum, have in recent years been heavily used by scholars interested in the bibliography of periodicals and newspapers of the period.<sup>87</sup>

#### INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF BIBLIOGRAPHY AND DOCUMENTATION, 1908

There had been no official conference, no general shareholders' meeting so to speak, of the IIB since 1900, despite all the activity that had taken place in its affairs since then. Acceding to requests from foreign members, Otlet agreed to call a meeting in 1908. He expressed some reluctance to do this. The next international exposition in Belgium after that of Liège in 1905 was to be held in Brussels in 1910. It was planned to hold a conference then. This conference would thus come exactly ten years after the highly successful Paris Conference of 1900, ten years full of achievement. The goal of the 1910 Conference, it was hoped, would be the conclusion of a documentary union of governments, the assurance «to our work», wrote Otlet to Baron Descamps asking him to preside at the 1908 conference, «of the official consecration of states». <sup>88</sup> He recognised, however, that a preliminary meeting might be useful in establishing a firm basis upon which to reach up towards official recognition and status. The Conference was, therefore, called not only to discuss the present state of bibliographical organisation, which was a general aim of all the IIB Conferences, but

its immediate aim was to investigate the means of creating an International Documentation Organisation and thus lay the foundations of a permanent International Congress and of an International Union between the different states.<sup>89</sup>

A number of documents were prepared at the Institute for the conference. A draft of proposed statutes for the new union, naturally, was among them. Another important document was a «Report on the IIB and the Systematic Organisation of Do-

cumentation». <sup>90</sup> This and a further report by Otlet and La Fontaine on the «Present State of Bibliographical Questions and the Systematic Organisation of Documentation» which Otlet read at the conference were extremely important in providing a rationalisation for all that had been happening within the Office and the Institute. The preliminary «Report on the IIB» is particularly interesting because it defined «document», «documentation» and «documentary method» quite explicitly. Over the years these words had taken on added, even new, meaning as used by Otlet. A document was to be considered as anything «which expressed or represented by means of any graphic signs whatever (writing, picture, schema, numbers, symbols) an object, fact, idea or impression. Printed texts (books, periodicals, newspapers) are the most numerous category to-day». The documentary method was a means of bringing documents together in such a way that they could easily yield up the information they contained and must be regarded as a necessary complement of other methods of investigation such as observation or experimentation. By «Documentation» was meant «the bringing together and co-ordination of isolated documents in such a way as to create integrated wholes». The «Report» distinguished between various kinds of documents and various forms of documentation. The latter involved bibliography («list or inventory of existing publications»), librarianship, iconography («collections of prints, designs, photographs...»), documentary dossiers and documentary publications. The systematic organisation of documentation, involving the development of the RBU) and to their analysis and ry of «integrated information». Any international organisation for documentation that was to be set up would need to be universal in its approach to the listing of documents (involving the development of the RBU) and to their analysis and summarising (involving the Encyclopedic Repertory of Dossiers). It would need, also, to cover all countries «in a vast network of documentation services, established in all the great centers by autonomous groups... adhering to a common plan and realising it according to common methods». <sup>91</sup> A great, powerful, international center would need to be at the head of the network as the source of its vitality, an institute which would be «an emanation and representation of the autonomous groups». The institute would organise and co-ordinate the outlying centers. In consultation with them it would decide upon programs for them, would protect and develop accepted methods, and above all, would maintain centrally prototype repertories. This was to be the rôle, the future, of the International Institute of Bibliography.

With this and a number of other documents before them, delegates from various countries assembled in Brussels in July

1908 and got down to work. The documentary union was the last item on the agenda, culminating as it seemed to do, the rest of the program. A great deal of territory was covered before it was reached as various delegates reported on projects of immediate interest to them or on bibliographical conditions in their countries and on the state of organisations associated with the IIB (such as the specialised Institutes). James Duff Brown<sup>92</sup> from England was caught out by a request for an account of the work of English public libraries and, refusing to make an impromptu address on the subject, made some generally affirmative noises about the program to be prepared for the 1910 conference and some doubtful ones about the possibility of international bibliographical standardisation.<sup>93</sup>

One important discussion centered on administrative documentation, a subject of long standing interest for Otlet, and he prepared a general paper for the conference on «Documentation in Administration».<sup>94</sup> He raised the problem of administrative documentation at the conference, he said, not because it was the proper moment to discuss it in any detail, but because it was the first time that it had been raised in a conference of bibliography and he hoped that in future it would become an integral part of IIB conference programs. He noted the tendency for greatly increased use of documents in administration and the provision by government offices of more and more information. He believed that the IIB's methods were extremely appropriate for the control and organisation of these documents, especially the work it had done on «dossiers». Nowadays, he observed, increasing use was being made of scientific information in government. The methods of the IIB permitted the development of integrated documentation services for administrative purposes and he declared that administrative documentation was as important a field of study as scientific and technical documentation, the requirements of which had received most attention to that time.

In September 1906, the IIB had exhibited at an Administrative Exposition, the *Tentoonstelling op gemeentelijk Administratief Gebied* in Amsterdam. Here the problem of classifying and arranging the administrative documents and archives of local government organisations was emphasised. In Zaandam, in Holland, systematic attempts were being made to use the IIB's methods in communal administration. Two representatives to the Conference from Zaandam, the mayor and the town clerk, described what was being done. An association had been formed in Holland to consider the problems of administrative documentation, the *Nederlandsche Vereeniging van Gemeente Belangen*, and there was some hope that an International Office of Administrative Documentation might be formed

at the IIB to complement the other Offices and Institutes added to its structure.<sup>95</sup>

The major work of the conference was introduced by Otlet and La Fontaine's «Present State of Bibliographical Questions and the Systematic Organisation of Documentation». It developed more generally many of the points made in the IIB's «Report...» and it provided a full, generalised explanation of what Otlet and La Fontaine had been attempting to achieve at the OIB-IIB in the last few years.<sup>96</sup>

Having surveyed the present organisation of bibliography throughout the world and concluded that it consisted of a multitude of unco-ordinated organisations having little or no sustained relationships with one another, Otlet observed that one could see in them, nevertheless, «the parts of a vast whole», that they formed «the living elements of a general organisation which needed only encouragement and system in order to emerge». But bibliographical organisation should not be considered independently from the organisation of science. «The medium of the organisation of scientific work is the book, above all in its latest form, the periodical». So highly developed had science become, Otlet observed, «the only conception which corresponds to reality is to consider all books, all periodical articles, all the official reports as volumes, chapters, paragraphs in one great book, the Universal Book, a colossal encyclopedia framed from all that has been published...». An index is necessary for such a vast and complex work, and for this the RBU must serve as the prototype. It is also necessary, of course, to have the documents themselves. Otlet then described the trend in contemporary libraries towards universality of collections. As their collections, and the methods of organising them, have developed «libraries have become establishments of the first order for scientific investigation, the culture of the people and the instruction of adults». Looking into the future, we will see them becoming «*Universitates Litterarum*, modern universities of the written word encroaching daily on the domain hitherto reserved for the universities of the spoken word...». Eventually will emerge the true universal library. This will be «the *Archivium* of humanity, and the RBU will be its true catalog after having appeared for so long as the catalog of a purely ideal universal library».

To these elements, existing now and full of promise of their future, the book (the Universal Book), the Library (the Universal Library), yet a third element must be added. This was quite new: the Scientific and Technical Office. The business of the Office should be information as opposed to documents. Though Offices of the kind Otlet was describing often had libraries attached, they fulfilled their functions by means of the compilation of dossiers. Gradually, said Otlet, we may



expect them to become more widely established, more precise in their functions, more effective in their information-providing rôles. Gradually, the idea of 'consultation' will be substituted for that of reading. The repertory will replace the library, and the dossier, unique for each question, formed from analytical elements on separate sheets or cards, will appear containing by extract all that has been written on a subject and kept up to date».

This was an important notion for Otlet and had two far-reaching consequences. One was that eventually we might be able to suppress the publication of various kinds of important material in little general demand but for which, hitherto, there had been no alternative means of access. A few manuscript copies dispatched to central offices would then suffice. Moreover, the techniques of the Office, if carried out as described, would help to eradicate erroneous, misleading, out-of-date, or simply repetitive material.

The second consequence of the notion of Scientific and Technical Offices Otlet explored in some detail. One would expect that as Offices became more widely established the actual forms of publication would begin to adapt to their needs. Journals and books would appear on cards, or on detachable sheets as «autonomous elements» to allow easy interpolation in an appropriate dossier. Otlet had actually explored this idea, a development from his view of what bibliographical publications should be like, as early as 1901 when he had described what he called «revues à découper»,<sup>97</sup> and in 1906 a card edition of the periodicals' index section of the *Bibliographie de Belgique* was issued. In 1907 the Belgian Sociological Society experimented with this new form of publication Otlet was advocating in its journal which was edited by Cyrille Van Overbergh. Van Overbergh was working closely with Otlet on the Mont des Arts project and on a study of international organisations which was published as a monograph in the new form by the Belgian Sociological Society and the IIB.

Otlet was careful to suggest that the library and the office should not be thought to be antagonistic, that there was no question that eventually one would supplant the other. Both were to be necessary in the future. They would form separate departments of a single organisation. «One can summarise such a conception by saying: 'the book of the future is the Office'. Certainly the Office is very much the form which the Encyclopedia should take in this dawn of our twentieth century, in order that we might inherit the learned centuries preceding it.» Nowadays, Otlet observed, encyclopedias tended to be works of popularisation and not of synthesis of the whole of intellectual production as they had been in the past. The Office would

make possible this true form of encyclopedia in an appropriate modern version.

In the emergence of the perfected documentary organisations envisaged by Otlet, especially the office, the international associations would inevitably be required to play an ever increasingly important rôle. These, dealing with scientific, economic and social questions of the greatest importance should therefore be encouraged, he believed, to establish permanent secretariats which would have a double function: administration and documentation. Internationalism had to be recognised as a fact of life in the twentieth century and could be seen emerging in all sorts of ways. The phenomenon of international association, in Otlet's view, expressed the increasing solidarity of peoples.

These associations have as their object all areas of activity and thought: the natural sciences, the social sciences, colonisation, law, art, work, transport, industry and commerce, etc. . . .

By mutual knowledge of their efforts and by closer co-operation these associations make men more and more aware of what their ideas mean and of the growing internationalisation of their interests. In this way they give a new orientation to the life of the people. They show that despite frontiers and despite prejudice, the common needs of men are stronger than even their competition, and that conflict between people will gradually be replaced by collaboration.

Now, in order to achieve these general and appropriate ends practically, every association must establish a preponderant place for the document.

Unity, to make uniform — this is, in reality, one of the principal aims of these organisations; now, this supposes common practices and this presupposes common ideas. The action of information and of the diffusion of ideas and facts, only being able to materialise across distance through writing, one is naturally led to the view of the document as the very instrument of internationalisation. Thus, the organisation of everything concerning the document appears to be one of the most important functions of the international associations which have been created.

This passage expresses quite clearly the thinking underlying Otlet's increasing preoccupation with internationalism and the international associations, and in it lies the seeds of his future passionate conviction that the world's future lay in a world society.

During the debate at the conference itself he was perhaps more explicit about what form international organisation for documentation should take than in «The Present State of Bibliographical Questions...» What he saw as necessary, it became clear, were in fact two kinds of organisation. The first was an official union which could only be established by a diplomatic conference:

We believe that governments have to fulfill with respect to bibliography, the circulation of the book, the intellectual diffusion of its contents, duties analogous to those which it has assumed in creating a union for the protection of copyright.<sup>98</sup>

The union would involve bibliography, international exchanges, international inter-library lending and the constitution of central collections. There should be, however, another unofficial organisation paralleling the first. This would take the form of a permanent International Congress of Bibliography and Documentation whose function would be to develop the kind of work the present conference was engaged upon. The IIB, if these two organisations were formally created, would prepare the congresses, attempt to execute its decisions and provide a secretariat for the Union.

Some opposition was expressed to the idea of including international inter-library lending among the functions of the Union, this being thought more appropriately the work of library conferences. The Dutch delegates from Zaandam wanted to see the functions of the IIB and the Union formally extended to explicitly embrace administrative documentation, a proposal which had Otlet's support. Otlet had been emphatic that the proposed permanent International Congress of Bibliography and Documentation should be composed of two groups of participants, national groups and international groups. The French delegate, C. M. Gariel, suggested that national commissions were unable to participate very successfully in international congresses and should not be involved. Otlet repudiated this suggestion believing that the representation of national, international and special organisations was possible and their participation actually necessary for success.

Cyrille Van Overbergh, Director-General of Higher Education in the Belgian Ministry of Sciences and Arts, rose to assure the conference of the sympathetic receipt by the Belgian government of any proposals it might make. He was extremely eloquent about this, obviously concerned at the hesitations and objections of some of the conference members to the draft text of the document setting up a documentary union of governments. He put it this way:

First of all there is the principle of the union. Everyone seems agreed on it. This agreement stems from all the conversations we have had with the members of the conference. Now, it is necessary to be more precise about some ideas. It is desirable that international exchanges should become more efficient and more general. Who opposes this? No one. Who opposes the fact that regional bureaux in each country should deal with questions of bibliography and documentation and that relations should be established in some form to be agreed on? Again, no one. On all these general ideas we are agreed. Now, in my view this agreement should be formulated in a general fashion. If you wish it, inform the Belgian government of your resolutions asking it to submit them to other governments in such a way as to suggest to them and make them aware that they should assemble, for example in 1910, to consider an extremely precise program along these general lines.

These suggestions were received with applause and the Congress unanimously agreed on the text of a resolution submitted by the IIB and introduced by Otlet. It called for a permanent International Congress of Bibliography and Documentation to meet for the first time in 1910. The IIB was charged with its organisation. Moreover, the Conference requested that the draft statutes for the International Documentary Union drawn up by the IIB be submitted to the Belgian government for transmittal to other governments.

The government acted promptly. Thirty five countries were informed of the projected union and were sent drafts of the statutes proposed for it. Slowly the replies trickled in to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were sent on to the Ministry of Sciences and Arts and thence to Otlet. In England the matter was referred to the British Museum. The Directors informed the Belgian diplomatic officials in London «the employees of their library would not be able to take an active part in the work of the projected union». They offered sympathy.<sup>99</sup> France was unable «at present to envisage its participation». Cuba was also unable to see its way clear. Switzerland, on the advice of its national library, decided bluntly not to participate. The proposals were seriously received and put under close study in Holland. Persia agreed to participate; Denmark would do all it could; Costa Rica, Salvador, and Panama acknowledged the receipt of the Belgian government's proposal; Argentina agreed in principle. In America, the American Library Association's council unanimously recommended that it unite with the IIB in requesting the U. S. Government to send a delegate to the 1910 conference. The tenor of the replies was clear and must have been disappointing for Otlet, La Fontaine, and, of course, Cyrille Van Overbergh. Nevertheless, plans went ahead for the 1910 conference unchecked, though the diplomatic congress to create an International Documentary Union receded into the background for the time being.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Otlet to Lameere, 18 December 1901, Dossier No. 192, 192a, «Bulletin de l'IIB», Mundaneum. Lameere, 1872-1901, achieved swift eminence as an historian and innovator in extension work at the Université de Bruxelles. He collaborated with Sury on a paper, «Ecoles du livre et la création d'une école du livre à Bruxelles» read at the 2nd IIB Conference in 1897.
2. «Organisation des Instituts Internationaux de Bibliographies», *IIB Bulletin*, VI (1901), 174-78.
3. «Rapport sur la situation et l'état des travaux... au 31<sup>er</sup> Décembre 1903», *IIB Bulletin*, VIII (1903), 270.
4. Louis Masure, *Rapport sur la situation et les travaux pour l'année 1912* (Bruxelles: IIB, 1913), p. 31.

5. *Catalogue Central des Bibliothèques de Belgique: périodiques de médecine* (Bruxelles: IIB, 1911). This was designated *Contribution* No. 63 to the *Bibliographia Universalis*. The entries were printed on only one side of the paper. Many titles are listed without dates.
6. Dossier No. 499, «*Catalogue Central des Périodiques de Chimie*», *passim*, Mundaneum.
7. *L'Organisation systématique de la documentation et le développement de l'IIB* (Publication No. 82; Bruxelles: IIB, 1907), 49.
8. Paul Otlet and Ernest Vandeveld, *La Réforme des bibliographies nationales et leur utilisation pour la Bibliographie Universelle*, rapport présenté au Congrès International des Editeurs, Milan 1906 «Bruxelles: Administration de la Bibliographie de Belgique and the IIB, 1906», p. 1.
9. Director-General (Cyrille Van Overbergh) of Administration for Higher Education to Otlet, 19 January 1910, Dossier No. 295a, «Ministère de l'Intérieur et de l'Instruction Publique, 1907 à...» Mundaneum.
10. *Bibliographie de Belgique* (1914), initial *Avertissement*.
11. Otlet to the Minister, 11 December 1901, 28 April 1902 and *passim*, Dossier No. 295, «Ministère de l'Intérieur et de l'Instruction Publique»; Mundaneum.
12. Louis Masure, pp. 45–66.
13. Director-General of Administration for Higher Education to Otlet, 30 October 1907, Dossier No. 295a, «Ministère de l'Intérieur et de l'Instruction Publique, 1907 à...» Mundaneum.
14. Dossier No. 356, «Bibliothèque du Barreau», *passim*; Dossier No. 445, «Association des Licenciés sortis de l'Université de Liège», *passim*. Mundaneum; also *Catalogue de la bibliothèque de Cercle d'Etudes Typographiques* (Bruxelles: Maison du Livre, n. d.).
15. For example: Cercle d'Etudes Typographiques de Bruxelles, *Exposition de photogravure, Bruxelles, 1906* (with introduction, «Sur le livre et l'illustration», by Paul Otlet; Bruxelles: Cercle d'Etudes..., 1906); and *Catalogue de l'exposition du livre belge d'art et de littérature* (Ostende (?): Musée du Livre, 1906).
16. General Sebert, «Sur un répertoire spécial des brevets d'invention, basé sur l'emploi de la Classification Decimale, rapport présenté à la Conférence de Bibliographie et de Documentation, Bruxelles, 1908», *IIB Bulletin*, XIII (1908), 292. In a note, Sebert lists various notes and «démarches» made by IIB in the matter of patent-documentation.
17. «Notice sur l'organisation de la publicité des brevets d'invention (Bibliographie des Brevets)», *IIB Bulletin*, VII (1902), 170.
18. «Faits et Documents: bibliographie des brevets d'invention», *IIB Bulletin*, VIII (1903), 160–64; see also the list of various notes, a number unpublished, in General Sebert, «Sur un répertoire spécial des brevets...», p. 292.
19. «La Documentation en matière de brevets d'invention», *IIB Bulletin*, XII (1907), 212–36. Here are quoted *in extenso* various proposals and suggestions about patents, and national procedures adopted for them (including Belgium) are described.
20. *Répertoire des brevets d'invention délivrés en Belgique*: liste systématique établie par l'Institut International de Bibliographie avec la collaboration de M. A. Louis Vermandel, Ingénieur. 1907, Liste No. 1 (Moniteur Belge du 19 Décembre 1906, No. 195374 à 195758) — extrait

du *Journal des Brevets* (Contribution No. 50 aux Répertoires de l'Institut).

21. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
22. Louis Masure, p. 46, includes in the list of *Contributions* to the *Bibliographia Universalis* only Nos. 1 to 40 of the Répertoire des Brevets. At least 47 were issued, and copies of most of these 47 are still stored in the attics of the Mundaneum.
23. Otlet to Minister, 5 (?) December 1900, Dossier No. 259a, «Ministère de l'Intérieur et de l'Instruction Publique», Mundaneum.
24. Paul Otlet, «Observations présentées au point de vue de la méthode bibliographique par le Comité de Direction de l'IIB», *IIB Bulletin*, IV Fasc. 1–2 (1899), 5–51. This fascicule was described as an «Examen du projet de la Société Royale de Londres concernant le *Catalogue International des Sciences*».
25. Paul Otlet, «Le Catalogue International de la Littérature Scientifique», *IIB Bulletin*, VII (1902), 209.
26. Several drafts of the note submitted to the meeting in 1905 remain in the attics of the Mundaneum. One dated 30 June 1904 is entitled «Communication faite par les délégués de la Belgique à la Convention International du Catalogue International des Sciences, Londres, 25 Juillet 1905 relative aux compléments à apporter à ce catalogue», and contains MSS corrections in Otlet's hand. A summary result of the meeting from IIB's point of view appears in *Organisation systématique de la documentation et le développement de l'Institut International de Bibliographie*, p. 47.
27. Remarks of Henryk Arctowski to a meeting of the Belgian Society of Geology, «Procès-verbaux», 17 December 1907», *Bulletin de la Société Belge de Géologie*, XXI (1907), 280–81.
28. Decree of 5 May 1908, Dossier No. 406, «Comité Belge de Bibliographie et de Documentation Scientifique», Mundaneum.
29. Summary Instructions for the work of «dépouillement», *ibid.*
30. Conclusion of meeting of 5 May 1908. Other meetings had taken place on 14 and 20 February, *ibid.*
31. Undated ms. note in Otlet's hand, *ibid.*
32. Otlet to Paul Héger (his uncle and Director of the Institut Solvay de Physiologie), 27 November 1908 and 1 March 1909, *ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*, *passim*.
34. *Annuaire des sociétés scientifiques, artistiques et littéraires de Belgique, 1904–1905* (IIB Publication No. 66; Bruxelles: IIB, 1905).
35. *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. 1.
36. Masure to Pierre Nenkoff 1914, Dossier No. 515, «Nenkoff», Mundaneum.
37. Olivier (joint editor) to Otlet submitting Goemaere's prices with the comment «ridiculous», 13 February 1905. Otlet agreed, 13 February 1904, *ibid.*
38. In a ms note on a letter by Otlet to Fourez 6 March 1905, Otlet gives the comparative prices: Fourez 67.50 francs for 400 titles — another printer, 96 francs for 400 titles. (Dossier No. 221, «Fourez: Travaux d'Impression», Mundaneum.)
39. Note dated 2 February 1905, Dossier No. 249, «Revue économique internationale», Mundaneum.



40. Letters for the period, *passim*, *ibid*.
41. Letters for the period March—May, *passim*, *ibid*.
42. Measure to Olivier, 7 June 1910, *ibid*.
43. Hennebicq (joint editor) to Otlet, 7 June 1910, *ibid*.
44. Editors to Otlet, 25 June 1910, *ibid*.
45. Editors to Secretary General, 7 July 1914, *ibid*.
46. Letters for the period, *passim*, Dossier No. 221, «Foutez: Travaux d'Impression», Mundaneum.
47. «The Brussels Bibliography of Economics (from the Athenaeum)», *Library Journal*, XXIX (1904), 596—97.
48. See dossier No. 279, «Salon du Livre», Mundaneum; also *Catalogue de l'exposition de photographie, Bruxelles 1906* (Bruxelles: Cercle d'Etudes Typographiques, 1906). One of the first publications of the Musée was Otlet's *Un Musée du Livre à Bruxelles*: projet de constitution d'un société ayant pour objet la création du Musée (Publication No. 2; Bruxelles: Musée du Livre, 1905).
49. Paul Otlet, *Les Aspects du livre*: conférence inaugurale de l'exposition du livre belge d'art et de littérature organisée à Ostende par le Musée du Livre, 14 juillet 1906 (Publication No. 8; Bruxelles: Musée du Livre, 1906); see also: Ostende Centre d'Art, *Catalogue de l'exposition du livre belge*... (Bruxelles: Veuve Ferdinand Larcier, 1906). The program of lectures («Ostende Centre d'Art, saison de 1906, oeuvre des conférences») is folded into copies of this catalogue.
50. Paul Otlet, «L'Inauguration de la Maison du Livre: discours d'ouverture», *Art Moderne*, XXVII (27 January 1907), 26—28; 10 February 1907, 43—44; 17 February 1907, 50—51.
51. See, in the *Bulletin Officiel de l'Union de la Presse Périodique Belge*, the section «avis à nos affiliés» on the verso of the front cover for the appropriate periods which gives this information.
52. Dossier No. 347, «Bibliothèque Royale: dossier personnel de M. Otlet», Mundaneum, *passim*; Paul Otlet, «Les Bibliothèques publiques à l'étranger: fait à retenir et à méditer par la Commission de la Bibliothèque Royale», *Art Moderne* XIV (1894), 36, 139, 148; Paul Otlet, «Les Bibliothèques en Belgique», *Art Moderne*, XV (2 February, 1895), 31 and 37, and 10 February 1895, 44—45.
53. «A la Bibliothèque Royale, chez M. Paul Otlet», *La Chronique*, 16 November 1908 (an interview relative to the Catalogue of the Bibliothèque Royale); «Au Feu», *La Chronique*, 9 September 1908 (an interview with Otlet concerning the dangers of fire at the Bibliothèque Royale).
54. Paul Otlet, *Le Programme du Ministère des Sciences et des Arts* (Bruxelles: Editions de La Belgique artistique et littéraire, 1907), *passim*.
55. [Paul Otlet], *Edouard Otlet* ([Bruxelles: Les Presses d'Oscar Lamberty, 1907]), p. 8.
56. No. 17, 18 October 1913, *Testament Paul Otlet, Otletaneum*.
57. M. Georges Lorphèvre in conversation with the author in the summer of 1968.
58. Conversation with M. Lorphèvre.
59. «Séance d'ouverture: discours de M. Beernaert», *Congrès Mondial des Associations Internationales: actes*... (Publication No. 2a; Bruxelles: Office Central des Associations Internationales, 1913), p. 876.
60. Paul Otlet, «L'Organisation rationnelle de l'information et la documentation en matière économique», *IIB Bulletin*, X (1905), 46—48.
61. *L'Organisation systématique de la documentation et le développement de l'IIB*, p. 59.
62. «Quatre propositions faites par l'IIB à l'Administration des Sciences et Enseignement Supérieurs», unnumbered file, «Rapports avec le Gouvernement Belge», Mundaneum attics.
63. Minister of Public Works to Otlet, 27 July 1903, Dossier No. 409, «Ministère des Travaux Publics», Mundaneum.
64. Minister to Otlet, 4 April 1905 and 24 November 1905, Dossier No. 318, «Ministère des Finances et Instruction Publique».
65. Commission instituée par M. le Ministre de l'Intérieur et de l'Instruction Publique pour l'examen du projet du Mont des Arts, *Procès-verbal de la séance du samedi, 5 Mai 1906*, pp. 9—10. The *Procès-verbaux* and conclusions are in carbon typescript in the Mundaneum attics and do not appear to be part of a file.
66. Commission instituée par M. le Ministre... pour l'examen du projet du Mont des Arts, *Conclusions*, p. 2.
67. «Le Musée Mondial et le Musée Social: note présentée par M. Cyrille Van Overbergh et Paul Otlet sur l'opportunité et la possibilité de rattacher à l'ensemble du Mont des Arts le Musée Social et le Musée Mondial». This is a carbon of a typescript in the Mundaneum attics with the *procès-verbaux* of the Mont des Arts Commission's meetings.
68. *La Chronique*, 22 March 1907. The newspaper and the relevant letters are in a small file in the Mundaneum, Dossier No. 329, «Comité de Patronage». Reference to individual items in the file will not be made.
69. *Bibliothèque collective des associations et institutions scientifiques et corporatives* (Publication No. 76; Bruxelles: IIB, 1906). (This was also published in *IIB Bulletin*, XI (1906), 18—26.
70. Draft of a «Convention entre l'Institut International de Bibliographie et Monsieur E. de Potter», 3 November 1905, Dossier No. 238, «Répertoire Iconographique», Mundaneum.
71. *La Documentation et l'iconographie* (Publication No. 78, Bruxelles: IIB, 1906), p. 8.
72. Louis Measure, pp. 36—39.
73. *La Documentation et l'iconographie*, pp. 11—12.
74. «Les Répertoires à dossiers», *IIB Bulletin*, XII (1907), 6.
75. Measure, pp. 24—25.
76. Paul Otlet, *L'Organisation rationnelle de la documentation pour l'étude des régions polaires*: rapport présenté... au Congrès International pour l'Etude des Régions Polaires, Bruxelles, 1906. (Publication No. 79; Bruxelles: IIB, 1906); G. Lecoq, «L'Institut Polaire International», *IIB Bulletin*, XIII (1908), 352—363; *International Documentary Office of Fisheries—Programme—Organisation—Branches* [in English] (Publication No. 1; Bruxelles: International Documentary Office of Fisheries, 1908); *Office International de Documentation pour la Chasse*... (Publication No. 1; Bruxelles: Office International de Documentation pour la Chasse, 1908); *Office International de Documentation Aéronautique*... (Publication No. 1; Bruxelles: Office International de Documentation Aéronautique, 1909).

77. Georges Lecoq, 1869—1929, had a military education and led the 2nd Belgian expedition to the Antarctic in 1899. He became Scientific Director of the Royal Belgian Observatory in 1900.
78. *International Documentary Office of Fisheries* . . . , p. 7.
79. *Encyclopaedia of Islam* edited by M. Th. Houtsma and others (London: Luzac, 1911—38). This encyclopedia was published in parts forming 40 volumes with a supplement over a period of nearly thirty years. It was a collaborative work of scholars from all over the world and was judged one of the most important reference works in English on its subject.
80. Otlet, *L'Organisation rationnelle de la documentation pour l'étude des régions polaires* . . . , pp. 6—7.
81. *IIB Bulletin*, XIII (1908), 352—365.
82. Masure, pp. 106—113.
83. Paul Otlet, *L'Organisation de la documentation en matière technique et industrielle: le nouveau Service Technique de l'Institut International de Bibliographie* (Publication No. 73; Bruxelles: IIB, 1906), 6 pp.
84. Paul Otlet, *L'Office International de Bibliographie* (Bruxelles: Le Mouvement Scientifique en Belgique, 1830-1905, [1906?]), p. 19.
85. «Office International de Documentation Technique: appel aux ingénieurs, aux industriels et aux techniciens», *IIB Bulletin*, XVI (1911), 209—211.
86. Documentation relevant to the Musée de la Presse is to be found in a small file, No. 386, «Musée de la Presse» in the Mundaneum and no reference will be made to separate items in the file. See also, Paul Otlet, «Sur la Création d'un répertoire des articles de la presse quotidienne», *IIB Bulletin*, IX (1905), 306—310.
87. Comment to the author by Georges Lorphèvre.
88. Otlet to Baron Descamps, 12 May 1908, Dossier No. 368a, «Ministère des Sciences et des Arts», Mundaneum.
89. *Analytical Account of the International Conference of Bibliography and Documentation, Brussels, July 10—11, 1908* (Publication No. 103; Bruxelles, IIB, 1908), p. 1. (in English).
90. «Rapport sur l'IIB et l'organisation systématique de la documentation», *Actes de la Conférence Internationale de Bibliographie et de Documentation, Bruxelles, 10 et 11 Juillet, 1908* (Publication No. 98; Bruxelles: IIB, 1907), pp. 67—98. This was a part-reworked, part-verbatim duplication of much of *L'Organisation systématique de la documentation et le développement de l'IIB* (Publication, No. 82; Bruxelles: IIB, 1907).
91. This summarises parts of «Rapport sur l'IIB...», pp. 67—76.
92. James Duff Brown, 1862—1914, a Scot, was an advocate of open access collections, founder and first editor of *Library World* and inventor of *The Subject Classification* which had some fame. As librarian of the Clerkenwell Public Library, he had a powerful influence on the public library movement in Great Britain at the turn of the century.
93. «Compte-rendu des séances», *Actes de la Conférence Internationale* . . . , p. 322.
94. Paul Otlet, «La Documentation en matière administrative», *Actes de la Conférence Internationale* . . . , pp. 147—154.

95. «Compte-rendu des séances», pp. 330—32; also M. Zaalberg, «L'Organisation de la documentation administrative», *Actes de la Conférence Internationale* . . . , pp. 217—27.
96. Henri La Fontaine and Paul Otlet, «L'Etat actuel des questions bibliographiques et l'organisation systématique de la documentation», *Actes de la Conférence Internationale* . . . , pp. 159—84. The quotations which follow are from this report without further citation. The report was also published in *IIB Bulletin*, XIII (1908), 165—91. This paper develops two earlier papers by Otlet and he may be considered its major author. The earlier papers are: Paul Otlet, «Les Sciences bibliographiques et la documentation», *IIB Bulletin*, VIII (1903), 121—47; and Paul Otlet, *L'Etat actuel de l'organisation bibliographique internationale* (Publication No. 75; Bruxelles: IIB, 1906).
97. Paul Otlet, «La Technique et l'avenir du périodique», *IIB Bulletin*, VI (1901), 179—85.
98. «Compte-rendu des séances», *Actes de la Conférence Internationale* . . . , 1908 p. 325. The following material is taken from the «Compte-rendu...», pp. 326—344 and no further reference will be made to it.
99. Copies of various official letters to Otlet and La Fontaine from the Ministry of Sciences and Arts concerning the international responses to the proposed union are contained in Dossier No. 306, «Union Internationale pour la Documentation» in the Mundaneum.

## 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.<sup>1</sup>

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».<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

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»<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup>

The first task undertaken by the Central Office was the compilation of a brief directory of international associations in Brussels.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup>

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.<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup>

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 «personification 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.<sup>13</sup>

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.<sup>14</sup>

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».<sup>15</sup> 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).<sup>16</sup>

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.<sup>17</sup>

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»<sup>18</sup> 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»,<sup>19</sup> «Code for the Organisation of Administrative Documentation»,<sup>20</sup> and «Code for the Organisation of Photographic Documentation». 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.<sup>22</sup>

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 up-dating and gradual extension the exhibit might ultimately form the kernel of a permanent Museum of Internationalism.<sup>23</sup> 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».<sup>24</sup> 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 Solvay was there and so was Otlet and La Fontaine's old *maître*, 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.<sup>25</sup>

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.<sup>26</sup> 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». 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.<sup>28</sup>

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.<sup>29</sup>

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.<sup>30</sup>

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 Sebert 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.<sup>31</sup>

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 Cinquantenaire 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.<sup>32</sup> At this time special catalogs were also issued for the section on administrative documentation,<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup> A version of the general catalog was issued in Esperanto.<sup>35</sup> 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*,<sup>36</sup> 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.<sup>37</sup> 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».<sup>38</sup>

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.<sup>39</sup>

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.<sup>40</sup>

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.<sup>41</sup>

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.<sup>42</sup>

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.<sup>43</sup>

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.<sup>44</sup>

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.<sup>45</sup> 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.<sup>46</sup>

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,<sup>47</sup> a subject he had first raised and dealt with systematically in 1903.<sup>48</sup> 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.<sup>49</sup>

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,<sup>60</sup> 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.<sup>61</sup>

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.<sup>52</sup>

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».<sup>53</sup> 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.<sup>54</sup>



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.<sup>55</sup> 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,<sup>56</sup> 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».<sup>57</sup> 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.<sup>58</sup> 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.<sup>59</sup> 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.<sup>60</sup> A number of new Catalogues for the Museum as a whole and for its special sections were issued.<sup>61</sup> In 1914 a Child Welfare section was created from a travelling exhibit donated to the Museum.<sup>62</sup> 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.<sup>63</sup> 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.<sup>64</sup>

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.<sup>65</sup>

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.»<sup>66</sup> 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.<sup>67</sup> 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, transitive 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.<sup>68</sup>

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.<sup>69</sup>

### 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.<sup>70</sup> 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.»<sup>71</sup> 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.<sup>72</sup> «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 Señor'».<sup>73</sup>

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».<sup>74</sup> 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»<sup>75</sup> 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.<sup>76</sup>

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.<sup>77</sup>

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.<sup>78</sup> 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».<sup>79</sup> 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.<sup>80</sup>

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.<sup>81</sup>

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.<sup>82</sup>

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.<sup>83</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

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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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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*,<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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*.<sup>5</sup> 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



called the League of Nations (in French, la Société des Nations). He dedicated himself to the work of developing and popularising this idea with unremitting singlemindedness in the following years.

His «Declaration of the Rights of Nations», became a basic working document for the Permanent Commission of the Conférence des Nationalités set up in Paris in June, 1915. Among the tasks of the Commission were «the definitive elaboration of the text of the 'Declaration of the Rights of Nations'» and the gathering together in a general way of «all of the work destined to be presented to the Conference of the Powers which will commence at the end of the War».<sup>6</sup> In 1916 Otlet presented a similar document to the Ligue pour une Société des Nations. This document summarised five sessions of meetings sponsored by the Ligue at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes Sociales in Paris at the beginning of 1916.<sup>7</sup> These two were part of a spate of publications by Otlet on various aspects of the subject. During 1916 he presided over the Conférence des Nationalités which met then at Lausanne.<sup>8</sup> There was some suspicion of excessive German influence at the Conference and Otlet, as its President, was accused of being a German sympathiser. In 1916 the Central Organisation for a Durable Peace created in the Hague at the end of 1915 with extensive international representation, issued Otlet's study on an international executive body.<sup>9</sup> One of the most considerable of all his wartime publications, however, was *Les Problèmes internationaux et la guerre*.<sup>10</sup>

This work represented a culmination of his thought, research, lecturing and discussion about the War and about the projected League of Nations. It was dedicated to Albert, King of the Belgians who warmly acknowledged it, and to Otlet's sons. In is an extraordinary work, typical of the systematic treatises that Otlet penned at various times throughout his life. The erudition it reveals is vast. Its treatment of its subject is formidably encyclopedic and yet its conclusions are in some manner limited and detached from the body of evidence from which they are intended to emerge and which is meant to support them as incontrovertible. It rises from tentative generalisations about the causes and likely consequences of the War, through a long and exhaustive study of «conditions and factors of international life», to conclusions about the conditions required for the emergence in the future of a Society of Nations and what this organisation should be like and do. One of the final sections is «On International Sociology». Here speaks the young man who went to Paris in the hope of finding a universal synthesis of knowledge, who wrestled for his spirit with the Jesuits and eventually declared his faith to lie not in religious metaphysics but in «positivistic evolutionism»:

We have reviewed actual events. We have considered them not from the outside in terms of appearance, capturing an infinitely varied spectacle of particular and individual cases, but we have considered them from within in their relations, their causes, their backgrounds, the conditions which have determined them. To catalog the facts, to clarify them, to retain from among them what is essential, to link one to another, to follow them towards more general facts and then to others yet more general still, such has been the task we have proposed if not accomplished. We have constantly asked ourselves if a point of view exists from which we can embrace all the facts, from which they will take on a synthetic character... There is indeed an international sociology the outlines of which we have been able to trace and partially fill out. We have amply justified the existence for it of a particular objective. It has, therefore, from the theoretical point of view, a principle capable of synthesising all data, and from the practical point of view, a problem in the solution of which the data can find their application.<sup>11</sup>

The following year Otlet published a detailed study of the World Constitution he had been proposing as the basis for a Society of Nations.<sup>12</sup> Five editions of the Constitution or Charter appeared during these years including several English ones.<sup>13</sup> Theodore Marburg, formerly American Minister to Belgium and active in the League of Nations movement in the United States, was sent a copy of an English translation in 1917. He was rather sceptical of its value:

It proposes to establish sanctions by which the States will be compelled not only to submit their disputes—both conflicts of political policy and questions of law—to the Council of Conciliation or to the Court, as the case may be—but likewise to enforce the decisions. It plans to violate not only the neutrality guaranteed in the ordinary way by international law, but that of specially neutralised States. How can we expect a prospective belligerent to have any respect whatever for the neutrality of a neighbouring state if he knows beforehand that the League will not respect that neutrality? It would make an end of neutrality.

It sets up an International parliament to govern the world, provides that its acts shall be binding, except as to certain optional legislation, without requiring the ratification by the States of the League, manifestly contemplates admitting all States who may seek admission to it, refers to delegating legislative power though ineffectively, would give separate representation to nationalities independently of the State that governs them, and would empower parliament to fix the maximum and minimum armies and navies, all of which I regard as impractical in our day, some of it ill-advised at any time.<sup>14</sup>

On further reflection Marburg did acknowledge that Otlet's suggestion that half the membership of the Society of Nations should be official representatives of States and half drawn from «transverse sections of society representing international associations and unions», was novel and should be «noted» for it ensured that «the interests of labor, capital, education, science, etc. are... represented as a whole».<sup>15</sup> There is little evidence to suggest that, though the framers of the League of Nations' Covenant were aware of Otlet's plan, they were influenced by it.

Because of his indefatigable work for the League of Nations idea, his frequent lectures on it, the regular appearance of articles by him in newspapers and journals, his concern for the future of neutral powers after the War and his apparent lack of hostility to the Germans, Otlet was accused of being disloyal to Belgium, possibly a traitor to the Allies. At the end of 1915 some steps were apparently taken to deny him entry into Paris and he sent a note to the Prefect of Police explaining his attitude to the War, distinguishing between a pacifist which he was not, and an internationalist and patriot, which he was.

I have come to Paris to make propaganda for peace, but like every man who thinks and reflects, I am completely preoccupied by the origins and by the development of this war, by its purposes and by what should follow it. I have given myself over to the study of these questions... in order to be able at last to find for them some objective basis, which is required for the solution according to scientific methods of any problem. Towards this goal I have had conversations here with various personalities in the worlds of Science and Politics, long standing acquaintances for the most part, and I have given a course of five lectures at the School of Advanced Social Studies called «After the War: origins, causes, problems and solutions». I have taught at this School on two different occasions before the war, and the course was as much requested by the Administration as urged upon it by me.

For twenty years, the study of international questions has been one of my occupations. I founded in Brussels with the patronage and material support of the Belgian government, the Union of International Associations, which attempted to concentrate and co-ordinate the international movement of which Belgium had spontaneously become the headquarters fifty years ago. I am one of the originators of the great Congresses of this Union. I direct its office and publications as well as its Museum, set up in State buildings.

This is to say that I am an internationalist. I will add that I am not a pacifist. The distinction, which is not always made, is a valid one. At the same time that the means of communication make the world smaller and smaller, the population which lives in it, is increasing greatly. It follows that it is impossible to keep each group in its own territory. International contacts are established and multiply: a world-life is manifested in every domain. There is a two-fold result: on the one hand interests become established beyond political frontiers, every one being more or less involved in the universal circulation of men, products and ideas; on the other hand, antagonisms multiply along with the points of contact, and the spheres of friction grow larger. As a rule, governments have not been sufficiently aware of this profound transformation. As a result, all of this international life, both so lucid and so dangerous, has been left almost completely to its own devices, rather than being framed in institutions which could give it organisation and establish necessary checks and balances. It is necessary to search out the deep causes, not of this war—there have always been wars—but of the universal character of this war, of its implications, direct and indirect, for every element of the civilian population.

The pacifist wants—to be more exact—peace at any price. His feelings delude him about human goodness and do not lead him to reason about sociological causes. He is like the charitable man

who gives from the very first without bothering to determine whether his generosity will constitute effective aid. This it is, on the contrary, which is the principal concern of men of action and politics, who desire social reform capable of reducing suffering at its source.

Internationalism itself is waiting for a lasting peace, for a better organisation of relations between peoples, of which it would be the mature fruit. Peace at any price, peace without justice, peace today without surety that it will persist tomorrow, cannot concern it.

These different points of view, involve quite difficult consequences. The evil which should be done away with is international insecurity, an evil that made its ravages felt long before the war itself, for the armed peace, with its continual alerts, was really latent war, and permitted the foundation of nothing stable. Internationalists consider that, in the future, security should be demanded for the organisation of a Society of Nations after the same fashion in which national security has been organised. There should be a common power to decide what it is necessary to do in this domain, a Justice to which all conflicts are compulsorily submitted, an executive body enforcing sanctions, worldwide and economic in the first stage, military in the last stage (an international allied army). But the Society of Nations should be founded on liberty and equality, repudiating any hegemony, any domination by one state of other states. It will directly oppose the German concept of Universal Empire, or a European federation under the sway of Prussia. This is why we must continue to fight «Until Victory» (Briand). But clearly understanding what must follow it—that is to say, a victory which will represent the triumph of «public law of Europe» (King George) ...

I sojourned several months in Holland and Switzerland, there looking up again old friends with whom I have worked. I was able to ascertain there the real state of mind of neutrals belonging to some select groups, and observed how insufficient was our propaganda to our allies. In their eyes the allies do not form the block that they do for us. Of France, which has always fought for liberty and progress, they are confident. The evidence is the same for Belgium. But they already have reservations about England. The Boer War is not forgotten, nor the methods of conquest which prevailed in former times in England, the mistress of the seas and of her dominions. As for Russia, the neutrals are not only sceptical, but extremely indignant about what happened after Galicia and about the «render barren» policy which sacrifices whole nations in the face of the German invasion. These recent affirmations of an autocratic mysticism are hardly calculated to sustain the world's enthusiasm. Now, what interests the neutrals is not so much the war itself as what will come afterwards. That is to say, the objectives of the war and the future plan for Europe and therefore for the world. If we, the Allies, had said very clearly and exactly what our program was, instead of keeping to generalities, if we had made out a part for the neutrals in this program our position with respect to them would have been strong. Instead of this, we have said to whomever wanted to listen, that at the end of the war the neutrals would be treated as negligible quantities, and our Press, speaking out beyond its frontiers, has declared that «no one has the right at the present time to fix by formal demands... the political results which will be obtained by the military effort of the Allies...» (The Times). When they read this, the neutrals drew from it that the Allies will by no means content themselves with the restoration of violated rights, with punishing the German aggressor... but that they intend to gain the maximum profit for themselves from their victory, in other words, to continue the game of old-fashioned politics. And so we do not have the means

of making the neutrals understand ... what the difference will be upon our victory, between their situation and that of our enemies. Just the opposite would be the case if they could see the place and the rôle reserved for them in a well organised Society of Nations ...

The events of the war have therefore confirmed me in my internationalist opinions. They furnish me with the explanation of the war ... they permit me to see clearly the motives of the neutrals with respect to us.

These opinions agree deeply with my patriotic faith, for the interests of Belgium are linked to the final triumph of these principles. It is for its liberty, for the honour of its given word, for the cause of its violated rights that my country has accepted its martyrdom (King Albert, his ministers, all of the Belgians). It is because of this that my two sons, my only children, have gone to fight. The younger, voluntarily enlisted with my consent, has been reported missing in the Battle of the Yser. If this war should not end in the establishment of a stable Society of Nations, all of our sacrifices will have been in vain ... It alone ... will give precious meaning to the words which are our battle cries ... But again, this new regime, impossible if we do not triumph, will not be established by itself on the morrow of victory if we have not prepared for it and pushed it forward by study, discussion and exposition to selected groups.

Believing that men who have given pledges of deep attachment to their national cause and who continue themselves to offer battle to the enemy by word and pen, being no longer of an age to do otherwise, should give themselves to such preparation as they can carry out without danger to any one, I have adopted such a line of conduct.<sup>16</sup>

In these words which summarise and explain so much of what Otlet wrote during the war years, is revealed the scholar, the idealist, the generalist, the patriot. That he should have been frequently maligned seems improbable. Yet when the patriotic society, «Belges Partout—Belges Toujours», a society in the formation of which he had been active and of which he was President, met in Switzerland in July 1916 he found it necessary to make a vigorous complaint about «the measures taken against him and the attacks of which he is the object». The meeting, to which he had invited some of his adversaries to debate their accusations but who did not appear, expressed its «lively regret» that its «eminent compatriot» had been the victim of base political manoeuvres and paid homage to his character and to his «ardent and pure patriotism».<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, Otlet continued to be the victim of scurrilous attacks. The French socialists with heavy irony ridiculed him as one of what they called «national socialists». They alleged that Otlet and his ilk wanted «to awaken the traditions of the French revolution and French socialism against German Marxism. To the battle of the classes, they oppose the organisation and co-operation of the classes, placing on the first level of preoccupation, the organisation of a Society of Nations and the association of work, talent and capital».<sup>18</sup> In an issue of *La Victoire* which appeared not long after this, an attack on German periodicals and ideas, especially ideas about

a Society of Nations, was made. «Who expresses this propaganda in our country at the moment?», the pseudonymous author demanded rhetorically, «foreigners! yes, foreigners who come to set themselves up in France in these last months under the pretext that they are intellectuals...» One of these men «is a Belgian pacifist», who transposes «into French all the woes of the Germans who pretend to have been forced to take up arms because they had not enough elbow-room for commerce, navigation, etc.» The argument against the unnamed Otlet is clinched thus: «This Belgian also comes from Switzerland, no one will dispute this point any more: he it is who presided over the false congress of nationalities organised by the Germans.»<sup>19</sup>

As the War drew to a close, the movement to create a League of Nations gathered strength. Otlet continued to espouse it, but he also began to think about the future of documentation and the Union of International Associations in the new world order he saw emerging. In 1917 and 1918 he published a number of articles about aspects of the national and international co-operation he saw as necessary for the transmission of scientific information. They summarised much of this pre-war thinking about the fundamental rôle of the International Institute of Bibliography in a world organisation of documentation.

In October 1918 a program was prepared in London for a meeting of the Inter-Allied Conference of Academies to be held in November of that year in Paris to consider the formation of an International Research Council. Otlet on behalf of the UIA addressed two resolutions to its organisers:

1. That the general plan of organisation should embrace the different kinds of questions between which the World Congress of International Associations has demonstrated such close links;
2. That in any organisation proposed to introduce this plan, measures should be set down to ensure the co-operation of official bodies with free of mixed ones.<sup>20</sup>

He urged the Conference when it met, to study the idea of transforming the International Institute of Bibliography into a Union along the same lines as existing scientific unions. The International Research Council was formally set up at a meeting in 1919 in Brussels. Otlet submitted a memorandum to the meeting setting out his ideas more fully and incorporating draft statutes for the proposed Union. They were adopted in principle.

When the Peace Conference assembled in Paris on 18th January 1919 with its multitude of ministers, deputies, secretaries, clerks, journalists and others,<sup>21</sup> Otlet and La Fontaine were of the number. Paul Hymans, the principal Belgium Minister to the Conference introduced a resolution that an article



should be added to the proposed covenant for the League of Nations providing for the establishment of an organ to deal with international intellectual relations. It was not discussed and Hymans withdrew it.<sup>22</sup> On February 5, Otlet and La Fontaine on behalf of the UIA presented the Conference with a memorandum, «The Charter of Intellectual and Moral Interests». In this they spelled out their belief in the need for the League of Nations to take under its protection institutions and associations dealing with cultural matters. They suggested that an International Council for Intellectual Interests should be set up, and act as one of the organs of the League. They reaffirmed their belief that the international associations should act as a kind of superior, expert, consultative council for administrative unions and for the officers of the League. They urged that the League, when set up, should sponsor a law to give non-governmental international associations the legal status they now lacked. Moreover they reiterated their view that the League should take up its headquarters in a capital whose site would be «internationalised» and removed from the jurisdiction of any State.<sup>23</sup>

For various reasons the Conference did not act on the UIA memorandum.<sup>24</sup> But Otlet continued to publicise aspects of it. Even before the Conference opened he published an article in *Scientia* on «the Intellectual Society of Nations».<sup>25</sup> Late in 1919 he published «A World Intellectual Center at the Service of the League of Nations».<sup>26</sup> The problem of the capital of the League, one that had exercised him before the War, was taken up separately.<sup>27</sup> It was inevitable that he should eventually join those who, led by Paul Hymans, vigorously asserted the claim of Brussels to the seat of the League,<sup>28</sup> and continue to press for this even after Geneva had been chosen.<sup>29</sup> This was not as belated as it may seem because the Covenant of the League reserved the right to the League of changing its headquarters should it so desire. Indeed, Morley contends that it was «not until the laying of the cornerstone of the permanent League buildings on September 7, 1929» that it could be said that «the Swiss city would continue to be the seat of the League».<sup>30</sup>

#### BRUSSELS, THE LEAGUE, THE GOVERNMENT, DEWEY

When Otlet and La Fontaine returned to Brussels to gather up the threads of their work, they did not face the heartbreakingly difficult task of reconstruction which must have confronted many returning from the War. Masure, with justifiable pride, had managed to keep the OIB-IIB open and intact during the German occupation. As he later informed the

Director-General of the Ministry of Sciences and Arts, the organisation had, in fact, continued its work during «all that troubled period». «The service of bibliographic information had continued as in the past», and the OIB had concentrated as far as its collections was concerned on the «documentation of the war» and on obtaining journals.<sup>31</sup> When necessary, though not always successfully, Masure had called on the occupation government to protect the fabric of the installations under his care — drains, lights, leaks, descents of soot.<sup>32</sup> During the War, he had continued to co-operate with the Bibliothèque Royale in the publication of the *Bibliographie de Belgique*, several issues of which, much reduced in size, had appeared. He wasted no time in re-establishing contact with the government upon its return from exile. On November 22nd, 1918, King Albert and Queen Elizabeth rode triumphantly into Brussels. In January 1919, Masure wrote to the Ministry of Sciences and Arts requesting the resumption of the OIB's subsidy. There was no indication in his letter of doubt that the OIB should continue to receive it. He pointed out, indeed, that the OIB was the only Belgian institution «whose budget has not increased since 1901 despite the development of its collections». The OIB was granted 30,000 francs for 1919 and a supplement of the same amount in the next year. At this time Masure signalled his intention to ask for an increased subsidy of 50,000 francs. This was granted and paid half-yearly in 1920, and then raised again and paid in quarterly instalments of 25,000 francs in subsequent years.<sup>33</sup> Masure also proposed to continue his work with the *Bibliographie de Belgique*. Issues listing books only and published by the Bibliothèque Royale as before the War appeared for 1919 and 1920. In 1921 a new series was begun, issued now by a Service de Bibliographie and des Echanges Internationaux. Masure was given responsibility for continuing the index to Belgian periodical literature that had appeared as Part II, «Bulletin des sommaires», of the bibliography. It was retitled and both parts of the bibliography were classified by the Universal Decimal Classification. The association between Masure and the bibliography continued until 1926, the year before Masure's death. From that date all connection with the OIB ceased; the index to periodicals was discontinued and the arrangement of entries entirely changed.

The Peace Conference meeting in plenary session on April 28, 1919 adopted the Covenant of the League of Nations. A week later Sir Eric Drummond,<sup>34</sup> appointed as the League's first Secretary-General, set up a provisional secretariat in London and, with his colleagues, began to plan the organisation. Article 7 of the Covenant provided for Geneva to be the seat of the League, and article 24 permitted the League to bring under its aegis international governmental organi-

sations created by diplomatic treaty. Dr. Inazo Nitobe was appointed one of two Under Secretaries-General.<sup>35</sup> Otlet's personal contact with the officials of the League was initiated by a letter to Colonel House in Paris. House was friend and close adviser of President Wilson. He had drafted for Wilson the articles and a preamble to the League's Covenant. Otlet wrote asking how the UIA could be of help to the League, pointing out that behind the UIA there lay «the very conception of a Society of Nations... but more particularly in connection with the needs of the scientific, moral, intellectual and social order of such a society, leaving the needs of the political order to diplomatic action».<sup>36</sup> A vigorous correspondence ensued between Otlet and La Fontaine and Sir Eric Drummond, Nitobe and other officials of the League. An early culmination of the contact thus initiated was a visit by a group from the League including Nitobe, to the offices of the UIA for talks with Otlet and La Fontaine. The visit was preceded by a dispatch from Brussels of a file of publications and notes about the UIA and about a World Congress it was proposing to hold in 1920.<sup>37</sup>

After the visit Otlet and La Fontaine prepared a Memorandum for Drummond setting out what they saw as the rôle of the League with respect firstly to individual international associations and secondly with respect to the UIA. They observed that the co-operation of the League with international associations was provided for in Section 24 of the Charter, specific responsibilities for inter-governmental bureaux and commissions being set down there, but with provision also for general assistance to other forms of international association. The League should, therefore, they insisted, take pains to recognise the work of the international associations in full. It should co-operate closely with them, especially as they dealt primarily with matters of the intellect as opposed to political and diplomatic matters. More specifically, they suggested that a process should be devised so that the international associations, assured of an attentive hearing within the League itself, could communicate more freely with it. Delegates from the League should be sent to the meetings of the associations. The League should sponsor a law to accord them proper international legal status. Above all in its various deliberations the League should call on the information and expertise available in relevant associations.

Special attention, however, Otlet and La Fontaine observed, should be given to the UIA as the central, federative body of so many international associations. The League should regularly use the services and collections of the Union. It should have a permanent delegate to its offices. It should offer financial and other aid to help it carry out various

projects. One of these should be a survey of all the international associations in order to continue the *Annuaire de la vie internationale*. It transpired that Otlet envisaged a contribution of £10,000 from the League to support the UIA's publishing program. Nitobe was shocked by the magnitude of the sum. It was «very much larger than I had in mind, and if we present it to the Council I don't think we could get it for you».<sup>38</sup> Otlet and La Fontaine's final point was that the League should immediately consider installing the central services of the UIA, its services of documentation, in an international public building.<sup>39</sup>

To all of this, Sir Eric Drummond replied politely:

I am pleased to hear that you are favourably disposed towards co-operation with the League. I hope you learned from our delegates that the International Secretariat will be only too glad to work with any organisation in the furtherance of the cause of peace and internationalism. As to the several points raised in the memorandum, I have noted them carefully and they will receive due consideration.<sup>40</sup>

Encouraged by Drummond's cordiality, Otlet and La Fontaine wrote urging the creation by the League of an International Documentary Union, so much discussed before the War, and called upon the League to sponsor a conference of nations for the purpose.<sup>41</sup> Nitobe, who proved himself a good and patient friend during these years, answered this letter with a confidential note. He suggested that Otlet and La Fontaine seek the support of the Council of the League not directly through the International Secretariat, but indirectly through the Belgian Government. He sounded, too, a note of warning. The UIA, he said, «will be a great convenience to the League, but such a recognition of your good offices should not preclude the League from dealing with the private associations directly when necessary or desirable».<sup>42</sup>

Nitobe also had a quite practical suggestion for co-operation. He informed Otlet and La Fontaine that the League would find a list of international associations useful, and he proposed that the League reprint with appropriate acknowledgment the Index to the 1910-11 *Annuaire des Associations Internationales*. To this Otlet and La Fontaine agreed, and the list, edited and revised by them, appeared less than a month later.<sup>43</sup>

Otlet and La Fontaine proceeded at home much as they had done with the League. Though the immediate post-war Belgian government was only provisional and general elections were called for November 1919, they sought immediately to establish close relations between it and the UIA. They asked each government department to nominate representatives to study with representatives of the UIA «the best means of reciprocal collaboration».<sup>44</sup> To the Prime Minister,

Léon Delacroix, they wrote, «our desire is to move in complete agreement with your government, from whom we wish to obtain the special support of legations, heads of missions and various departments».<sup>45</sup> Delacroix granted them an interview in which various matters concerning the government, the League and the UIA were discussed. It was a most successful interview. Delacroix agreed to put the large Parc de Woluwe on the road to Tervuren at the disposal of the UIA for the erection of a Palais Mondial as its headquarters. The plans for this edifice were entrusted to the government architect and his preliminary sketches were described as «fully satisfactory for the program developed».<sup>46</sup> Moreover, Delacroix asked for a draft notice about the UIA for transmission to various Belgian representatives abroad and this was prepared and sent to him a few days later. He also agreed to consider recommending to Parliament that it grant an annual subsidy for the support and use of the UIA's services. A minimum annual budget was now assessed at 500,000 francs.<sup>47</sup>

The resumption of the OIB's subsidy together with two other events secured the UIA in a small measure against the uncertainties of the future. On the 25th October 1919, the Belgian parliament finally passed a law, first debated before the War, to accord «civil personification» to international associations. The law was gazetted in the *Moniteur Belge* in November, and the first association taking advantage of its protection was the UIA.<sup>48</sup> The Prime Minister had presented the law in the Lower House in July 1919 specifically to be of assistance to Otlet and to help achieve some of the desiderata set out in *A World Center at the Service of the League of Nations*, for, he declared, these desiderata had all his support.<sup>49</sup> Thus ended a long struggle for such a law, a struggle in which Otlet, La Fontaine and the UIA had played no small part.

The other event was a development stemming from negotiations with the government for the provision of a central location for all of the parts of the UIA and the various associations federated with it. The government agreed to permit Otlet to bring them all together into one wing of the Palais du Cinquantenaire, in part of which the International Museum had been set up after 1910.

The elections, which took place for the first time with universal male suffrage according to the provisions of a new law, changed the composition of the Lower House of the Belgian Parliament «out of all recognition». Both the Catholic party and the Liberal party lost a large number of seats and the overall Catholic majority disappeared in the face of social-gains.

It was clear that just as the old order was changing everywhere else in Europe, so was the balance of power shifting in Belgium. The Liberals of the old school had had their day. And so now had the Catholics.<sup>50</sup>

An uneasy coalition government was formed under the leadership of M. Delacroix. Otlet and La Fontaine sought to have his earlier promises confirmed.<sup>51</sup> Early in 1920 the Minister for Public Works informed Otlet that he would urge the Council of Ministers to implement the project of constructing a Palais Mondial in the Parc de Woluwe according to the plans now completed by the government architect. He also confirmed the government's permission to allow the UIA in the meantime to centralise its constituent parts in the Palais du Cinquantenaire.<sup>52</sup> A subsidy was provided to support the move of collections, offices and personnel from the several locations they occupied in the center of Brussels. The move cost nearly half a million francs, a sum provided by the government, it was alleged, only because of La Fontaine's friendship with the Minister.<sup>53</sup>

For Otlet, there were two great tasks in 1919 and 1920: this move, and a series of conferences by which the UIA and its constituent parts, especially the IIB, would once again become powerful international influences. He was, characteristically, formidably dedicated to these tasks. His friend Léon Losseau, interested above all in the OIB-IIB, developed a plan for its work after the War. He submitted his plan to Masure for comment before sending it to Otlet. Masure discouraged him. «I don't really think that it will be necessary to speak to Otlet just now. For the moment his sole objective is the transfer of the IIB (nothing, only that) to the Palais du Cinquantenaire and the organisation of a great congress for next year—all things which will advance the tables of classification, and the work of developing the repertories.»<sup>54</sup> This was in October 1919. By July 1920 the move was well under way and Otlet was less than ever available. «I don't see Otlet regularly», wrote Masure to Losseau. «Our paths cross but we don't meet. The documents from the Rue de la Régence are already removed; those in the Chapel [Ancien Chapelle St. Georges] will leave in three weeks, and the Repertory in our first location, Rue du Musée, will be transferred afterwards.»<sup>55</sup>

Despite the urgency of these matters, Otlet made an effort in the middle of 1919 to gather up one more thread of his pre-war work, contact with Melvil Dewey in the United States. He wrote a letter of greeting to Dewey expressing hope for the future, announcing the beginning of new work in Europe of revising and expanding the parts of the Decimal Classification for the applied sciences, and asking for the latest



American edition of the classification.<sup>56</sup> A cursory examination of the copy sent him by Dewey «grieved and bothered» him because of the further evidence it provided of the widening gap between the American and European versions. He expressed again the bitter pre-war complaint that with divergence «we lose the benefit of the immense effort we made in 1895 to graft developments on to your tables, despite criticisms that could have been made by those who adopted them. What should be done?»<sup>57</sup>

Otlet painted a most favourable picture of the IIB's post-war prospects and discussed some of the difficulties in faced:

It has come through the war materially unharmed, and sympathy for it increases. At the Inter-Allied Conference of Academies last July, the Institute was adopted as part of the new scientific machinery (International Research Council). The conflict with the Royal Society has been smoothed away, and we negotiate directly with the League of Nations (Sir Eric Drummond) so that IIB should become an International Bureau for Bibliography and Documentation recognised and assisted by the League (Art. 24 of the Covenant). A diplomatic conference will probably be held to examine the question. But there are three difficulties:

1) We have not had a reply to our appeal from the Americans who were assured that they had very good friends in us. The movement for universal documentation should be the work of the Americans and our Institute (Belgium—America). When our ideas triumph and become those of the whole world, we will be released from collaboration and we will no longer work together;

2) We are rich in future hope, and poor at the present moment. No resources even for beginning to publish our *Bulletin* again, all being absorbed by interior services! The French tables of the *Classification Décimale* are exhausted and we cannot reprint them;

3) We need more concordance between DC and CD. This is serious for us who have attempted to edit a very detailed classification on the former trunk of the DC, so serious that the question has been raised as to whether we should go to the official conference with the old classification, or whether we should give way to various people who demand a quite new classification. It is certain that our argument that real unity exists between Europe and America is strongly compromised by the discordance recently created.<sup>58</sup>

There can be little doubt that Otlet's suggestion that the Institute might abandon the Decimal Classification was merely a threat and in 1920 a very brief «Alphabetical Summary Index» to the divisions 62 to 69 of the classification appeared,<sup>59</sup> together with a short account of the classification and the re-impression of the first thousand divisions.<sup>60</sup>

Two other bibliographical matters called for Otlet's attention as 1920, that busiest of years, broke around him. In March he was invited to Rome to survey the documentation services, needs and collections of the International Institute of Agriculture. He spent more than a fortnight at this work and the report of his study was published in 1921.<sup>61</sup> Much more im-

portant than this was the request for information about bibliographical classification and the management of libraries from a young Dutchman, Frits Donker Duyvis, who had been instructed to form a library at the Dutch Patent Office. Donker Duyvis soon paid a visit to Brussels to cement the acquaintance begun by letter and to study the methods of the IIB at first hand. In Brussels he found, as has been so eloquently described,

an institution that was trying to get itself going again after the War; interrupted relations had not yet been resumed; subscriptions were non-existent; the sections of the IIB no longer gave evidence of life. In the midst of this imbroglio two men laboured, Otlet and La Fontaine, the two idealists each of whom had sacrificed time and money to their work. Donker Duyvis was of the same cast and decided to put himself at the command of the two Belgians... he was overwhelmed by the grandness of the work, by the disinterestedness of its founders, by the magnitude of what remained to be done, and for forty years afterwards he did not depart from this attitude.<sup>62</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

1. G. Lorphèvre, «Otlet (Paul)», *Biographie Nationale* (t. 32; Bruxelles: L'Académie Royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, 1964), Col. 553.
2. *Testament — Paul Otlet*, No. 18, 1918—07—10, «Celles-ci sont mes dernières volontés qui annulent toutes les autres», Otletaneum.
3. Henri La Fontaine, *The Great Solution: Magnissima Carta* — Essay on evolutionary and constructive pacificism (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1916).
4. In introducing Otlet to the Monday, 24 February meeting of the French Association for the Advancement of Science, General Sebert remarked that Otlet had taken refuge during the war «in Holland, then successively in England, France and Switzerland». Paul Otlet, *L'Organisation des Travaux Scientifiques*, extrait du Volume des Conférences de l'Association Française pour l'Avancement des Sciences (Paris: L'Association, 1919), p. 3. Otlet himself in his memorandum to the Paris Prefect of Police in 1915 says only «I sojourned several months in Holland and Switzerland» (See Note 16 below).
5. Paul Otlet, *La Fin de la Guerre: traité de paix générale basé sur une charte mondiale déclarant les droits de l'humanité et organisant la confédération des états* (Bruxelles: Union des Associations Internationales, Octobre 1914).
6. Paul Otlet, «Déclaration des droits des nationalités (projet)», *Compte-Rendu sommaire... de la Conférence des Nationalités*, organisé par l'Union des Nationalités à l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes Sociales de Paris, le 26—27 juin, 1915 (Publication No. 6; Paris: L'Union, 1915), 15—18. The specific aims of the conference and of its commission are set out in J. Galbry, «La Conférence des Nationalités et les travaux de sa commission permanente», *Les Annales des Nationalités*, V (1916), 11—12.
7. Paul Otlet, *Une Constitution Internationale: projet présenté à la Ligue pour une Société des Nations...* (Publication, No. 3; Paris: La Ligue, May 1916).

8. A note indicates that among the preliminary documents of the Lausanne Conférence des Nationalités was Otlet's *les Peuples et les nationalités: problèmes et solutions*, (Lausanne: Union des Nationalités, 1916).
9. Paul Otlet, *Mesures concertées prises entre les états: L'exécutif international* (La Haye: Nijhoff, 1916).
10. Paul Otlet, *Les Problèmes internationaux et la guerre* (Genève: Librairie Kundig; Paris: Rousseau 1916). Otlet later gave the work the number 50 in the Publications of the Union des Associations Internationales.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 490—491. The letter of acknowledgement from the King's Secretariat is dated 8 May 1916 and is in the Otletaneum.
12. Paul Otlet, *Constitution Mondiale de la Société des Nations* (Union des Nations Publication, No. 51; Genève: Editions Atar; Paris: Editions G. Crès et Cie, 1917).
13. For example, *A World Charter Organising the Union of States* translated by Ada Cunningham (London: Women's Union for Peace, 1916). Another is listed in the advertising matter of *Constitution mondiale*.
14. Theodore Marburg, *Development of the League of Nations Idea: Documents and Correspondence of Theodore Marburg* edited by John H. Latané (vol. I; New York: Macmillan, 1932), pp. 327—328.
15. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 768.
16. Note headed «Explication» with a manuscript minute by Otlet: «Note remise à M. Durand, Préfet de Police, à Paris, le 21 décembre, 1915», Otletaneum.
17. Typescript headed «Monsieur Otlet fait cette déclaration à l'assemblée». The resolution of the meeting was stencilled and run off in green ink against a stamp «Belges Partout—Belges Toujours, Groupe de Genève».
18. «Socialisme National», *Le Populaire*, 25 Juin, 1917.
19. «Le Complot, par l'analyse», *La Victoire*, 12 Juillet, 1917.
20. Paul Otlet, «Les Associations internationales et la reconstruction de l'après-guerre», *Revue générale des sciences*, xxx (28 February, 1919), p. 115.
21. Gerald J. Mangone, *A Short History of International Organisation* (N. Y.: McGraw Hill, 1954). Chapter 5, «The First Period of Collaboration: The League of Nations», has a brief account of «The Drafting of the League of Nations Covenant», p. 129.
22. Jan Kolasa, *International Intellectual Co-operation* (Travaux de la Société des Sciences et des Lettres de Wrocław, Série A, NR. 81; Wrocław, Poland: Wrocław Scientific Society, 1962), p. 18. Paul Hymans, 1865—1941, entered the Belgian parliament in 1894 at the same time as Henri La Fontaine, though they were of opposing parties. Previously Hymans had lectured on comparative law at the Université de Bruxelles. During the War he was part of a mission to the United States attempting to interest President Wilson in the fate of Belgium, and was subsequently Minister Plenipotentiary in London of the exiled Belgian government.
23. *La Charte des intérêts intellectuels et moraux*. Mémoire adressé à MM les délégués de la Conférence de la Paix à Paris, par l'Union des Associations Internationales (Bruxelles—Paris: UIA, 1919).
24. Kolasa, p. 19.
25. Paul Otlet, *La Société Intellectuelle des Nations*, extrait de *Scientia...* (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, janvier, 1919).

26. Paul Otlet, *Centre mondiale au service de la Société des Nations* (Publication No. 88; Bruxelles: Union des Associations Internationales, 1919).
27. Paul Otlet, «Sur la Capitale de la Société des Nations», *Revue Contemporaine* (25 janvier, 1919), pp. 1—52.
28. *Le Palais de la Ligue des Nations à Bruxelles (projet Francotte)* (Bruxelles: Union des Villes et Communes Belges and Union des Associations Internationales, s. d.). «The object of this brochure is to present to the President and to the Members of the Peace Conference and the chief Administrators of the League of Nations» the claims of Brussels to the headquarters of the League (p. 2). It based its claim on the Expositions and Congresses of the International Associations in Brussels and the presence there of the Center of the Union des Associations Internationales. The brochure is also based on Henry Anderson's «Centre Mondial de Communication» which appeared in 1914. The center was to be located near Brussels. The brochure is part of a dossier sent by the UIA to the League of Nations 11 September, 1919.
29. Paul Otlet, *Sur l'établissement en Belgique du siège de la Société des Nations* (Bruxelles: UIA, 1919). At the end of this work is an annex which gives excerpts from a debate in the Belgian Parliament on the matter and the resolutions of a joint conference in Brussels of the Union Internationale des Villes, the International Garden—City Association and the UIA.
30. Felix Morley, *The Society of Nations* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1932), p. 19.
31. Masure to Beckers, 27 January 1919, Dossier 368a, «Ministère des Sciences et des Arts», Mundaneum.
32. Dossier 446, «Bâtiments civils», *passim*, Mundaneum.
33. Dossier 368a, «Ministère des Sciences et des Arts», *passim*, Mundaneum.
34. Drummond, who became the 16th Earl of Perth, entered the British Foreign Office in 1900 and was subsequently private secretary to various important figures including Prime Minister Herbert Asquith and Foreign Secretaries Arthur Balfour and Sir Edward Grey. He was knighted in 1916. He was an active member of the British delegation to the Paris peace talks and Lord Balfour suggested to the allied leaders that he be appointed Secretary-General to the new League. He resigned from the League in 1937 to become British Ambassador to Italy, retired in 1939 and died in 1951.
35. Nitobe, a Japanese lawyer, had responsibility in the League Secretariat for relations with international organisations and later also assumed the Directorship for Intellectual Co-operation.
36. Otlet to House, 20 May 1919, Dossier 39, «Société des Nations», Mundaneum.
37. «Dossier envoyé à la Soc. (sic) des Nations, 19—09—11, copie», *ibid.*
38. Nitobe to Otlet and La Fontaine, 13 November 1919, *ibid.*
39. Draft «Mémoire des réunions qui ont eu lieu à Bruxelles des 25, 26, et 27 août, 1919, entre les délégués de la Société des Nations et les Secrétaires Généraux de l'Union des Associations Internationales», *ibid.*
40. Drummond to Otlet and La Fontaine, 24 September 1919, *ibid.*
41. Otlet and La Fontaine to Drummond, 27 October 1919, *ibid.*
42. Nitobe to Otlet and La Fontaine, 13 November 1919, *ibid.*

43. Nitobe to Otlet and La Fontaine, 11 October 1919, *ibid.*, and Société des Nations, *Liste des unions, associations, institutions, commissions, bureaux internationaux, etc.* (s. l., s. p., 4 November 1919). This was printed by His Majesty's Stationery Office in London, the League's secretariat still being located in London at that time.
44. «Note concernant la collaboration des départements ministériels de Belgique au Centre International», unnumbered file. «Le Gouvernement Belge», Mundaneum. This is a draft with a letter of transmission signed by Otlet and dated 21 June, 1919.
45. Unsigned copy of a letter to the Prime Minister, M. Delacroix, 25 June 1919, *ibid.*
46. «Memorandum exposant la demande de l'Union des Associations Internationales au Gouvernement Belge, 1919—10—06», *ibid.*
47. «Canevas de la note à envoyer aux représentants de la Belgique à l'étranger», *ibid.* The unsigned copy of the letter of transmittal is dated 7 July 1919.
48. *Moniteur Belge* (5 novembre, 1919), p. 5872. The text of the Royal Decree granting UIA «personnification civile» is reproduced in UIA, *Centre International*, (Bruxelles: UIA, août 1921), p. 112.
49. Léon Delacroix (Prime Minister) to Otlet, 19 July 1919, *Les Titres du Palais Mondial*... (Publication 110; Bruxelles: UIA, 1923).
50. Vernon Mallinson, *Belgium* (London: Ernest Benn, 1970), p. 96.
51. «Mémoire exposant la demande de l'Union des Associations Internationales au Gouvernement Belge».
52. E. Anseele (Minister for Public Works) to Otlet, 27 February 1920, *Les Titres du Palais Mondial*, p. 9.
53. «Extrait: Sénat Compte-rendu analytique, séance du mardi, 7 décembre, 1920; carbon typescript, Mundaneum.
54. Masure to Losseau, 20 October 1919, Dossier No. 256. «Losseau», Mundaneum.
55. Masure to Losseau, 3 July 1920, *ibid.*
56. Otlet to Dewey, 12 May 1919, Dossier No. 259. «Dewey», Mundaneum.
57. Otlet to Dewey, 27 October 1919, *ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*
59. IIB, *Classification Bibliographique Décimale appliquée à la science de l'ingénieur (Divisions 62 à 69): index alphabétique résumé* (Publication No. 63, Fasc. 38; Bruxelles: IIB, 1920), 16 pp.
60. IIB, *Classification Décimale de l'Institut International de Bibliographie: notice et table méthodique des mille premières divisions* (Publication No. 126; Bruxelles: IIB, 1920).
61. Paul Otlet, *La Documentation en agriculture: rapport sur la mission à l'Institut International d'Agriculture* (Rome: The Institute, 1921).
62. Georges Lorphèvre, «Donker Duyvis et la Classification Décimale Universelle», *F. Donker Duyvis. His Life and Work* (Publication series 2, No. 45; The Hague: Netherlands Institute for Documentation and Filing, 1964), p. 17.

## Chapter X

### THE PALAIS MONDIAL

#### ORGANISATION OF THE FIRST QUINZAINE INTERNATIONALE

Early in 1920, Otlet decided that the period from the 5th to the 20th of September would be designated an «International Fortnight» or «Quinzaine Internationale». It would be an occasion for meetings and conferences and would see, he hoped, the beginning of a new lease of life for the organisations in which he was interested. A Conference formally to constitute the International University, his newest venture, was to meet on the afternoon of the 6th of September, although Sessions of the University were to take place during the whole fortnight. A conference for bibliography would be held from the 7th to the 10th of September and that of the Union of International Associations, culminating those for bibliography and the university, would follow from the 13th to the 15th. Meetings of the associations themselves and of other bodies, would be scheduled as necessary. The Quinzaine Internationale, he believed, could become an important, regular international «event» with the Palais Mondial and the UIA at its center.

The most important work of the proposed Conference of Bibliography in Otlet's view, was to be the study of the idea of transforming the OIB—IIB into an International Union for Bibliography and Documentation, an idea adopted in principle by the International Research Council when it was set up in 1919. As an International Union it would have the States as official signatories to its convention and would at once be eligible for management by and support from the League under the terms of Article 24 of its Covenant. As Otlet saw it, however, the Union for Bibliography and Documentation should have two kinds of membership, one official, one free. It should rest

on the one hand, on National Councils of Bibliography which would bring together all the interests of one country; and on the other hand,



on international sections placed under the control of the International Associations — a central institute (IIB) would establish the necessary links between them and would provide a central location for the deposit of their collections. It would act as an International Bureau and would be attached to the League of Nations by virtue of Article 24 of the Paris Pact.<sup>1</sup>

In the invitation to the Conference, therefore, Otlet posed four questions to be considered by those interested:

1. In principle are you of the opinion that there is a need to establish an international union... In the affirmative, what amendments would you propose in the draft [statutes] prepared?
2. Are you prepared to co-operate with the union and in which of its sections?
3. Will you agree to take part in the September conference?
4. Are you prepared to undertake with other interested persons from your country the task of setting up a national council and of stimulating its immediate provisional formation in order to ensure unified representation of your country at the next conference.<sup>2</sup>

During this period of preparation for the conferences of the *Quinzaine Internationale*, Otlet probably worked hardest for the International University which he hoped to establish at that time. The idea had been germinating slowly in his mind for a long time. La Fontaine had suggested it in 1894. It had been discussed at the 1913 World Congress of the UIA,<sup>3</sup> and Otlet had raised the possibility again in *Les Problèmes internationaux et la guerre*.<sup>4</sup> Now he judged that the time was ripe and in February 1920 published a full-scale study of the University. He addressed his study to «the Universities of the World, to the International Associations and to the League of Nations», each one of which was to have a carefully prescribed rôle to play in the creation and support of the University. As Otlet envisaged it, the University would «act as a great international teaching center, a center for research into comparative education. International organisations concerned with education would find it advantageous to group themselves around it.»<sup>5</sup> He proposed that the University should be established under the 1919 Belgian law according legal identity to international associations set up in Belgium, and should also be protected by Article 24 of the League of Nations' Covenant.

The program of the University, as he saw it, should fall into two parts. The first would be specific and would deal with the War, the League and the Paris Peace Pact. The second would be more general and would embrace all matters of international import. Revealing yet again the bent of his early studies and aspirations, he observed that the University should encourage «systematic collaboration towards synthesis and the encyclopedia of the sciences — their history, the improvement of their methods, the exposition of their problems

and their results». The University, like the great international expositions towards the end of the previous century, should be a manifestation of the positivist spirit. Courses, lectures, expositions would be brief. Professors would be recruited from among the most distinguished scholars and teachers in the various universities in the world and from those nominated by particular international associations because of their eminence within the association or because of their eminence in some aspect of the association's field of interest. Students would be mature, and as a rule, almost at the end of their formal studies. Many of them would be intended for an international career in the League of Nations or elsewhere. The University's seat would be at Brussels and the languages of instruction would be the League's official languages, French and English.

Otlet envisaged a series of publications emanating from the university: a Review, an Annual and a Monograph series in which would be published the best lectures or courses. «These works», he observed «would rapidly constitute a 'summa' synthetically treating the most important questions of the moment». He suggested that financial support for the venture might flow from the League, from individual universities, from the international associations and from governments in the form of grants, sponsored professors, scholarships for students and endowed chairs.

In 1919 a number of international organisations set up their headquarters in Brussels, thus continuing after the interruption of the War, the long, steady growth of Brussels as an international center. Among these organisations were the Union of Associations for a League of Nations, the International Research Council, and the recently formed International Federation of Students. Acting on the initiative of Otlet and La Fontaine, the International Federation of Students and the Union of Associations for a League of Nations passed resolutions directed at the League of Nations urging it to create an organ for intellectual matters and to support the International University which the Union of International Associations proposed to create. These resolutions were at once transmitted to Sir Eric Drummond, the League's Secretary-General, who, as 1920 progressed, was kept closely informed of all developments in the UIA and the International University.<sup>6</sup>

Otlet and La Fontaine hoped for three kinds of support from the League, and they used every means in their power to obtain it. First was to see the League deliberately take up the rôle of organising international intellectual work along the lines suggested by them with a firm, central, useful position reserved to the UIA in its Palais Mondial. Second, they

hoped to get the League to acknowledge publicly the creation of the International University by accepting the patronage of it, perhaps even supporting it financially. Third, they hoped to receive a subsidy from the League to carry out part of their publishing program for the UIA. Once again Nitobe had a specific plan. Before the War, the second World Congress of the UIA had discussed the possibility of compiling all the various resolutions of international conferences into a single document, what became known as a *Code des Voeux*.<sup>7</sup> Nitobe thought this a project in which the League might be interested and later Otlet and La Fontaine were informed that Drummond would be prepared to recommend to the League's Council that they be granted a subsidy of £1,500 (or 90,000 French francs) if they agreed to complete and publish it.<sup>8</sup>

When the Council of the League had a series of meetings at San Sebastien and at Rome in the middle of 1920, Otlet and La Fontaine addressed letters to Drummond, Léon Bourgeois, then French Minister to and President of the Council and to Jules Destrée, the Belgian minister to the Council, urging the League to accept the patronage of the International University and to create an organ for intellectual work at the League. Destrée had not replied to an earlier letter requesting his intervention in the Council's deliberations on behalf of the UIA and had been sent an anxious telegram soon after. Now he received a long, flattering letter. Otlet puts his case thus:

The Belgians say: there is a political League of Nations. There is an intellectual and economic League of Nations. You have set up first in Geneva; the second, represented until now by the international associations, is installed in Brussels. It has a Centre there; it is growing bigger; every day it receives new elements. The League of Nations, as a State does for national associations, should help the international associations—patronage and subsidy. That is the general idea. It has already received a blessing. By official letter of the 1st May, the Secretariat of the League has informed us that it will contribute a sum of £1500 (90,000 French francs) for the publication of the ... *Code des Voeux*. This work is destined to serve as the basis for the work of the congresses at Brussels in September next. The principle of co-operation between our Union and the League is already established. Moreover, M. Léon Bourgeois agrees completely with the resolution we presented and reviewed a year ago, that there should be created at the League a Bureau, analogous to that for work, ... charged primarily with being an organ of liaison with the International Associations of an intellectual order.

We ask that protection granted ... [The Red Cross] be extended to all the free international associations of importance, and already, in a document published by Sir Eric Drummond's Secretariat in co-operation with our Union (*Liste des Associations Internationales*, Introduction), this point seems to have been recognised in principle.

Here are the elements of the situation. One should make them concrete in an immediately practical formula for us, leaving developments to the future: that the International University now formed by the

UIA should receive from the Conference of Rome, the patronage of the League of Nations ... The new Rector of the University of Paris, the Committee of English Universities, several American universities, not to cite our Belgian universities and our International Associations, are favourable to the project. But it is important that Destrée, at the same time Minister for Sciences and Arts of Belgium, intellectual socialist, who supports the *Quinzaine Internationale*, should become the great protector of the new International University which will function at Brussels, should obtain recognition for the University. — And then we should have fixed in Belgium something which will be the foundation of something more — see, see one day, the Headquarters of the League of Nations.<sup>9</sup>

In June Nitobe visited Brussels to see for himself how preparations for the much advertised University were progressing. Drummond wrote very encouragingly to Otlet and La Fontaine as a result of this visit.<sup>10</sup> On the 31st July, Drummond reported that the Council

unanimously agreed in recognising your project of an International University as an enterprise worthy of all encouragement. I have accordingly been instructed to communicate to you the result of their deliberations. The Council while reserving the question of formal patronage at this early stage of the formation of the said University when many elements of its successful operation are still indefinite, none the less wish to convey to you the expression of their deep sympathy with the new work you have undertaken as well as their most sincere good wishes for its success. They also wish to give you the assurance that the Secretariat of the League of Nations is authorised to facilitate to the fullest extent in its powers the achievement of the work of international interest which the University is undertaking.<sup>11</sup>

Drummond also informed Otlet and La Fontaine that the Council had formally agreed to his request that the League subsidise the publication of the *Code des Voeux*.<sup>12</sup> The conventions for this were signed and delivered in August. La Fontaine assumed the responsibility for preparing the work. A difficulty had arisen by this time. The printer had told him, he wrote to Nitobe, that it was

indispensable to buy the paper necessary for the publication of the *Code des Voeux* beforehand. The scarcity of paper, the difficulty of obtaining paper of the same quality after a few weeks and the constantly increasing price obliges us to take precautionary measures so that the printing of the *Code des Voeux* can go ahead without interruption. In these circumstances, it will be necessary for us to draw from a credit opened for us a sum large enough to buy the paper, and it is probable that this sum would amount to 20,000 francs. I think the terms of the agreement ... will not be against this sum being put at our disposal with the briefest delay possible.<sup>13</sup>

He pointed out also that work on the *Code des Voeux* would be delayed briefly because of the approaching *Quinzaine Internationale* which was absorbing all of his and Otlet's time. They hoped, however, that printing could begin in mid-September.

Otlet wrote to Nitobe and others thanking them for their support at the League's Council meeting. In his letter to Léon Bourgeois he expressed the importance of the events of 1920 thus:

We cannot wait to tell you how precious your sympathy has been for us. Here we are installed in a vast edifice put at our disposal by the Belgian government, where it is possible to show by the results already obtained in the collections already gathered... the significance of a quarter of a century of sustained effort. It is very satisfying to us and to our numerous and modest collaborators, who have been animated by the same faith as ours, to observe that the highest authority now existing in the world has not hesitated to give it encouragement...<sup>14</sup>

#### THE FIRST QUINZAINE INTERNATIONALE

The first Quinzaine Internationale, for which the King agreed to be Patron,<sup>15</sup> seems to have been a success. The move to the Palais du Cinquantenaire was more or less completed by the time it opened. The International University was well attended by students and professors alike. Fifty professors from eleven countries discoursing in at least four languages, French, English, Spanish and Esperanto, delivered 106 hours of addresses divided into fifty-three courses to about a hundred formally enrolled students and to about a hundred «auditors».<sup>16</sup> Nitobe after some hesitation was instructed to lecture on the League and various other members of the League's Secretariat attended as auditors to particular sessions of interest.<sup>17</sup> The conference formally to constitute the University adopted the statutes proposed by Otlet for it. On several occasions when debate became involved and angry about the name of the University, the possible problem of national bias and the perfidy of some German scientists, Otlet intervened to great applause with fervent and elevated expression of his hopes for the University. When all was satisfactorily done, both Otlet and La Fontaine praised and congratulated, Otlet declared:

Renan has defined patriotism as the sentiment which unites men of one place by the memory of great things done together and the hope of accomplishing more of them. When one can say this of humanity, when, thanks to the great international foundations, and notably this University just constituted, all men on the whole of the earth will be united by this sentiment, by the memory of great things done together and the hope of accomplishing more of them, that day will mark the beginning of a new era and I hope that we will have contributed here to its coming (sustained applause).<sup>18</sup>

There were delegates from Holland (Donker Duyvis was one), Luxembourg, Czechoslovakia, Spain, Italy, Poland and France to the Conference of Bibliography. There were no delegates from England (the Library Association was meeting at the same time as the Conference of Bibliography), and only

a few from America. The Conference began with ceremony. La Fontaine spoke about the history of the IIB. Otlet looked into the future and registered the twelve millionth card in the Universal Bibliographic Repertory. The devoted work of Masure was acknowledged and a formal reply prepared to a letter addressed through Otlet in 1918 to «the Librarians of Belgium» from the American Library Association. At its Annual Conference in 1918 the American Library Association had pledged its help to rebuild the library of the University of Louvain, wantonly destroyed by the Germans. It conveyed this offer of help in a letter to Otlet in which, at the same time, it expressed «the hope that the valuable *Répertoire* of the Institut International de Bibliographie, a unique treasure house of world service, may prove to have been left untouched by the occupancy of Brussels...»

The Conference resolved that an International Union or Federation of Bibliography with National Councils reporting to it, should be created. The international bureau or center would be the IIB. A primary aim of the Union or Federation would be the further development of the tables of the Decimal Classification. This subject was discussed at length. It was agreed that the tables should be reissued as soon as possible and a machinery devised for revising them and keeping them up to date. The Dutch delegation proposed that the most «important studies and scientific discussions held at the IIB with groups of its collaborators for the extension of the Decimal Classification, should be published». The Conference applauded the work of the IIB, but recognised that there was much to be caught up on because of the interruption of the War. It took the opportunity, too, «to distinguish henceforth between the scientific and collecting work of the Institute and its work of organising co-operation which would be appropriate to a Federation of which the Institute would be an integral part». As for the RBU, the Conference adopted the following resolution:

Considering the importance that documentation has assumed in scientific and practical affairs, especially in the course of the war; considering the great effort expended under the leadership of the IIB by purely voluntary co-operation, but observing the powerlessness of following the work actually begun with the means at its disposal up till now, it is desirable that the *Répertoire Bibliographique Universel* become an international public service. It is for the League of Nations... to take the initiative in the creation of such a service.<sup>19</sup>

Though superficially a small but worthy successor to the earlier conferences of the IIB, one can see, with some of the wisdom of hindsight, in the results of the Conference the beginning of the disintegration of the IIB as originally conceived by Otlet. The formal recognition that the management and development of the RBU could be separated from its



work of international organisation of co-operation in documentation was a beginning that ended in the realisation that they must be separated. Phrased as the resolutions were, they could only suggest approbation of and concern for the future of two essential activities of the Institute. But they were in a sense the first of a slow series of revolutionary realisations which led to transformation as various misfortunes befell the OIB in Brussels.

The emergence of a strong Dutch interest in the Decimal Classification also had far-reaching consequences not at once evident. The delegation went back to Holland with a different understanding from that which Otlet had hoped the Conference might encourage. «The idea of creating a world center for documentation looked impossible under the circumstance of the time» and Donker Duyvis «thought another road should be taken: that of creating in each country a national center for documentation, forging close co-operation between them and then only, contemplating the making of a world unified center». This idea was similar to but ultimately quite different in its emphasis and in its consequences from Otlet's idea of national councils and a World Federation or Union. Donker Duyvis, to begin carrying it out, set about organising the Nederlandsch Instituut voor Documentatie en Registratuur (Nider) in 1921. It proved to be successful and became «an imposing factor in providing scientific and technical literature to services and industrial concerns». It was, indeed, given the ineffectiveness of the Bureau Bibliographique de Paris, the existence of which few later students seem to have been aware, «the first among the group of national bureaux of this kind».<sup>20</sup>

The Congress of the Union of International Associations also followed the pattern of previous congresses. It had three general aims: first, «to determine the role of the International Associations in the new order created by the League of Nations»; second, «to define and enlarge the role of the Union of International Associations»; and third, to assist in «the mobilisation of energy which will lead to the systematic organisation of all the material, moral and intellectual forces of the world».<sup>21</sup> The main result of the congress was a resolution directed at the League of Nations:

That the League of Nations be responsible for the creation of an international organisation for intellectual work analogous to those already created for manual work, for hygiene and for economic matters; That this organisation, inspired by the particular necessities of intellectual work, should enjoy considerable autonomy of the kind assured to the International Bureau of Work. Its aim will be to aid the rapid development of the sciences and of education by co-ordinating the activity of three groups of organisations: the great national intellectual institutions of the various countries; the great international associa-

tions either existing or to be created which pursue aims of study and research; the great international intellectual establishments existing or to be created (Scientific Bureaux, International University, International Institute of Bibliography, International Library, International Museum, International Laboratories, International Office of Inventions and Patents, Institute of Standards, Institute of Social Research, etc. etc.);

To this end, it would be desirable that the League of Nations with the briefest of delays call together an International Intellectual Conference charged with the task of drawing up the statutes of such an organisation, charged also with the task of formulating for the problems of international reconstruction, conclusions and recommendations of a scientific kind...<sup>22</sup>

## THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

At the end of September, Sir Eric Drummond, the League's Secretary-General, paid a visit to the Palais Mondial and spent over an hour looking through it. Otlet took the opportunity personally to urge the League to set up an organ for intellectual work whose first tasks should be «the full development of the International University and Universal Documentation».<sup>23</sup> He then went away for a short holiday.<sup>24</sup> He was anxious to be back in Brussels for the meetings of the League of Nations' Council scheduled to begin there on the 20th October, 1920. On the 23rd, he and La Fontaine formally passed on to the Council the resolutions of the Congrès Mondial.<sup>25</sup> Paul Hymans, then Belgian Minister to the Council, presided over its deliberations in Brussels. He asked Otlet for a report on the International University, and Otlet at once sent one off not only on the University but on the whole of the Quinzaine Internationale and the international program he and La Fontaine were sponsoring, and officially invited the members of the Council to visit the Palais Mondial.<sup>26</sup> Hymans, it seemed, did nothing about Otlet's reports and letters.<sup>27</sup> Nitobe, who was also sent a copy of Otlet's report which he circulated within the League Secretariat, cautioned: «the plan you propose [for an intellectual organ at the League] has been suggested by a number of bodies in different forms and by different countries, and I think the time will come to co-ordinate them and carry the plan into effect. In what form this will be, I am, of course, not in a position to predict».<sup>28</sup>

The first General Assembly of the League of Nations met in Geneva on November 15, 1920. Paul Hymans was elected its President and La Fontaine attended as one of the Belgian representatives. As the deliberations of the Assembly got under way, Otlet sent the following telegram to Hymans:

Please communicate to Assembly our resolution asking for creation of international organisation of intellectual work. Hope first world assembly will indicate sympathy for scientific interests as for economic interests and will decide on project.<sup>29</sup>



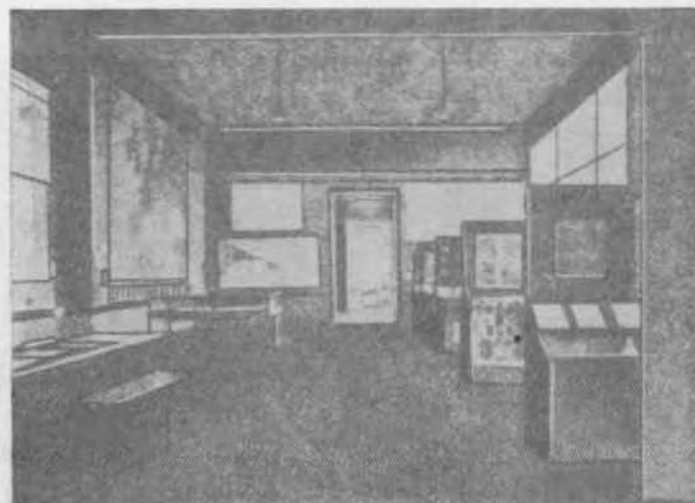
The Palais Mondial  
The International Library



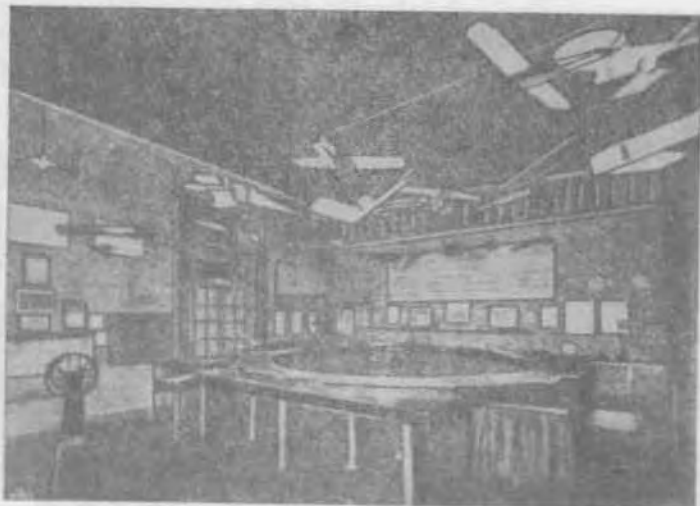
The Palais Mondial  
The International Library



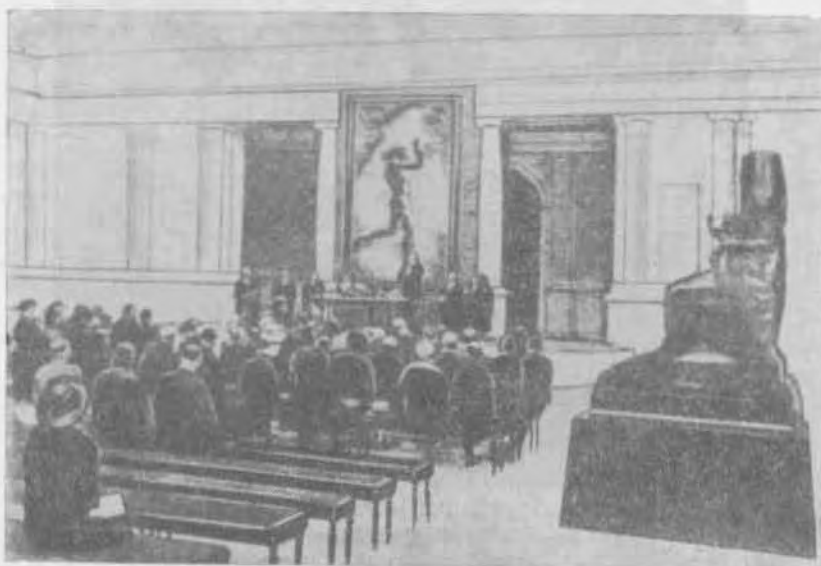
The Palais Mondial  
The Universal Bibliographic Repository



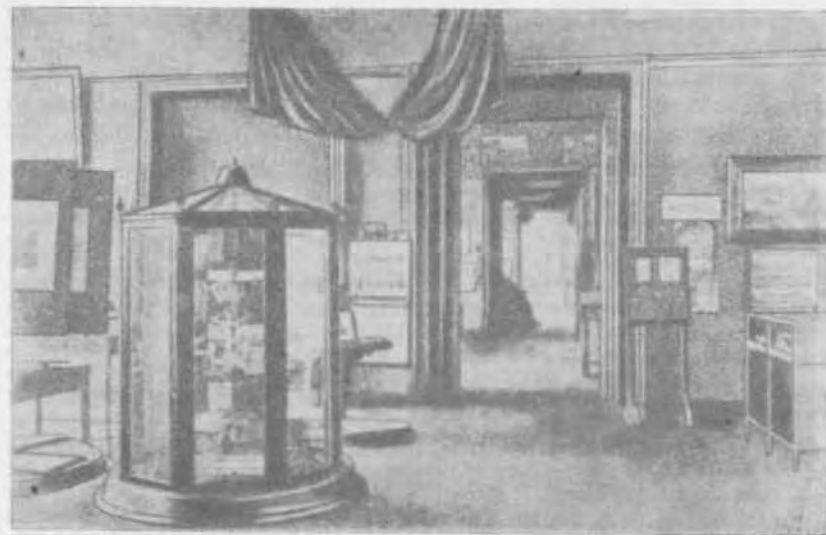
The Palais Mondial  
The Room for Legal Services, International Museum



The Palais Mondial  
The Aeronautic Room, International Museum



The Palais Mondial  
The Auditorium of the International University



The Palais Mondial  
The Spanish Room, International Museum



The Palais Mondial  
Rooms of the Documentary Encyclopedia



The Assembly appointed a number of committees to study various matters before it. La Fontaine acted as *rapporteur* for Committee No. 2, Technical Organisations, among whose business was his own proposals concerning the organisation of intellectual work at the League. On behalf of his committee he presented this resolution to the Assembly:

The Assembly of the League of Nations, approving the assistance which the Council has given to works having for their object the development of international co-operation in the domain of intellectual activity, and especially the moral and material support given to the Union of International Associations on the occasion of the Inaugural Session of the International University and of the publication of the list of Recommendations and Resolutions of the International Congresses [*Code des Voeux*], recommends that the Council should continue its efforts in this direction, and should associate itself as closely as possible with all efforts tending to bring about the international organisation of intellectual work.

The Assembly further invites the Council to report favourably the efforts which are already in progress to this end, to place them under its august protection, if it be possible, and to present to the Assembly during its next session a detailed report on the educational influence which it would be their duty to exert with a view to developing a liberal spirit of goodwill and world-wide co-operation, and to report on the advisability of giving them shape in a technical organisation attached to the League.<sup>30</sup>

La Fontaine spoke eloquently in support of the resolution rallying to him a number of tired and hungry listeners, «and there was a great deal of applause».<sup>31</sup> A debate ensued for there were some, especially an English Labour Member of Parliament, who opposed the resolution mistaking it according to an American observer, Princeton University's Librarian, Ernest Cushing Richardson, as a call for the unionisation of intellectual workers. This was a misunderstanding La Fontaine clarified, according to Richardson, «in a capital speech which showed all the best traits of the trained parliamentary debater». The losing and passing of various procedural motions which followed «was done so rapidly under the skilled driving of M. Hymans, that it sounded like a machine gun, and it was about as hard to follow as the gun's bullets».<sup>32</sup> The upshot of it all was that when La Fontaine's motion was put «the representatives of thirty-four states rose to their feet».<sup>33</sup> Here, then, was considerable support for the UIA, and a willingness to pursue the implications of its elevation to a technical organisation attached to the League.

Nevertheless, Nitobe, reporting to Otlet after the Assembly dispersed, was still cautious and observed only that «the organisation of intellectual labour is in prospect... I am afraid we shall have to work pretty hard during the next few weeks if we are to expedite the matter, but I know your soul is in it».<sup>34</sup> Nothing could be truer than this, and work

hard and hopefully he did. During January he and La Fontaine prepared a draft convention for an international organisation for intellectual labour, copies of which were sent off in early February to Drummond and Nitobe, together with various persuasive letters to members of the Council. «We have drawn inspiration», they reported to Drummond, «from the texts of resolutions voted and of articles contained in the conventions which have created the different technical organisations of the League». They also suggested that the Union of International Associations «be charged with the physical preparation» of the conference that would need to be called to discuss their draft in order to prepare one formally for the League's Assembly. This conference, they observed, should «be held in Brussels in the middle even of those institutions which it is asked to elevate to the degree of international establishments attached to the League of Nations».<sup>35</sup>

Nitobe warned them of various difficulties their proposals would encounter,<sup>36</sup> but this did not prepare them for the report which was adopted by the Council at its meeting in Paris on the 1st March, 1921.<sup>37</sup> In this report were discussed the various matters raised in the Assembly's recommendations to the Council in 1920 in relation to the UIA. The *rapporteur*, the Spanish representative, Quinones de Leon, summarised the League's relations with the UIA. He referred to the subsidy granted to the UIA to publish the *Code des Voeux* as fulfilling that part of Article 24 of the League's Covenant involving it in non-governmental international organisations, and observed that to fulfil the Assembly's charge concerning Article 24, more of such assistance «in the same line and in the same spirit» should be granted as more and more demands were made upon the League as confidence grew in it. He referred to the encouragement given by the Council to the International University, although formal patronage had been denied it. The report submitted to the Council on the work of the University's first session, he observed, made it evident that it had «achieved considerable results». As for Otlet and La Fontaine, «the Council will not stint their admiration for the high spirit which guided them in this enterprise». In view of a proposal to hold a second session of the University later in 1921, de Leon thought that «if the Council still view it with approval and interest, it will perhaps authorise the Secretary-General to render such assistance as lies within his power». He pointed out that the Assembly's request to the Council for a report on the educational influence of the UIA had been accepted and would be presented at the next meeting of the Assembly. Finally, he dealt with the Assembly's request that the Council report on the idea of creating an international organisation for intellectual labour to be attached to the League.

In de Leon's view there were two possibilities: to elevate the existing UIA, as Otlet and La Fontaine hoped, to the status of a technical organisation attached to the League, or to create a new organisation. To take either course, however, seemed to de Leon to raise two serious considerations. One was the problem of whether nations were ready for «an enterprise similar to the International Labour Bureau», the model upon which its advocates would have the new organisation based. But the greater difficulty was posed in de Leon's view, by the problems of financing the creation of a new organisation «not to speak of maintaining it on a scale commensurate with its high purpose». Moreover, he went on, «the record of the Union of International Associations shows that voluntary efforts can achieve great results and we believe that it can do more in future. Would it not be a mistaken policy to hinder these voluntary efforts by turning them into an official channel?» Other difficulties were raised by various similar proposals presently before the Council and he suggested that these matters should be referred back to the Secretariat of the League for further study and that a report be made to a subsequent meeting of the Council.

The day after the adoption by the Council of de Leon's report Nitobe wrote a long letter to Otlet and La Fontaine marked «strictly confidential», a letter which suggests that Nitobe himself may have been an influence against the Belgian plan:

The result is just what we expected... But, as I have said before, as the secretary charged with drawing up a plan with an immediate practical end, I frankly confess your scheme of intellectual organisation strikes me still as a little in advance of time, and in talking with a number of people who know the signs of the time better than I do, I have found none who spoke in favour of adopting it at present. I think you will have to wait perhaps three or four years longer for realisation, and in the meantime let us do everything in our power to make the idea more generally known. To return to the decision of the Council, I rather looked forward to some expression of interest in, if not support of, your views from some of the members, but the only mention that was made by them was a mere reference to a letter you wrote to some of them. This is no reflection upon their interest in the scheme, I believe, but like the rest of us I think they keep silence because they think the scheme is a little premature. I hope this gloomy report will not cause you despair because I am sure that in your long concern for the cause of internationalism you have had many occasions of a more discouraging nature... I believe in some form the question will be resuscitated and grow in the near future. Speaking of gleams of hope... I believe the Council is quite prepared to continue its sympathy for the work of the university, and I imagine that it may be inclined to go a step further in assenting to give its patronage... The Council is not ready to advise the Assembly to create a new technical organisation, but even here there is ultimate hope.

At yesterday's meeting, the Council decided to take under the authority of the League even private international bureaux. Of course some

necessary conditions will have to be fulfilled before we can take them. Anyhow, international associations assume a new status in our eyes and the Secretariat can deal with them more intimately. Don't you think this is a decided step forward?

One more immediate question... subsidy to the International University. You wrote of it in your letter to me and I observed the same point in your letter to M. Hymans. You may well imagine that the Council, not to speak of the Secretariat, has been approached by several associations for subventions and other forms of material assistance. You must have seen in the Council's resolution granting £1,500 to the Union that a reason was especially given for justifying it, namely, that you could do at less expense the work which the Secretariat would have to do itself... the general principle arrived at (in the Secretariat) is that subventions are a bad policy. We had to refuse two or three applications which came from very influential quarters. I do not see any possibility for the present of a subvention to the International University. I rather think M. Hymans knew this and merely abstained from mentioning it at the meeting.<sup>28</sup>

Otlet's reply was typical and suggests how confident he had been of a different outcome from the Council's deliberations. He had underlined certain words in Nitobe's text such as «premature» and «despair». A draft reply in Otlet's hand contained manuscript corrections by La Fontaine. There can be no doubt of the impact of the Council's decision and of Nitobe's letter on him, the sudden access of bitterness about the utility at all of the League, dominated as it seemed to be by a Council of great powers, its multitudinous assembly weak and ineffective by comparison:

Your letter will mark a date in our history. It is a deception, a great deception that only one thing lessens, the manner, the profound manner in which you act towards the idea, the warmly sympathetic manner with which you treat our persons, the consideration of the forms which the Council and its members have expressed. The deception is great because the great rock that we have tried to get to the top of the mountain has fallen heavily back. Sisyphus knew this — and we also. It is not the first rock-fall, only those before weighed less because our effort through the years has added increasingly to the substance... Certainly our work will not be lessened. But the rock, the poor tumbled rock, despite its robustness, is going to experience much ill and risk of breaking and crumbling.

The idea comes to this: to give a place to the things of the mind, in the new order beside those that have monopolised the powerful; and with money, to have this place taken by the League of Nations itself, that new organism which was born so much in hope and which is an idea, an idea at the same time as it is a concrete institution, which incorporates the idea and makes it real.

Alas! At Geneva already, before the great political problems of the moment, the Assembly has hesitated, it has failed. And now before all the great intellectual problems, the Council in its turn does not know how to take a resolution. Believe me that it is saddening to be present at the spectacle of the day revealed by this very morning's papers: a twenty line account of the activities of the League drowned in the deluge of information about the activities of the Council...

Yes! This is very much the Supreme Council, which will continue to rule human affairs by force, by ruses, and in secret, for the benefit

of the privileged. And the League of Nations, that in which «good people had all their hopes», dispirited by its bad shepherd [the Council?], the League of Nations resigns itself to self-effacement, to becoming secondary... Deception! Disillusion!

In what concerns us, there is still hope you say. And in a very friendly way you have indicated rays of the absent sun which, despite the thickness of the clouds, has continued to shine. Certainly your considerations appear to have foundation... but you yourself risk giving a time: three or four years you say... Each morning there is a little less place for the mind. In a society in which capital and modern labor dominate, conditioned by the politics of conquest and armaments, poor intellectuals are pounded down.

Discard particular facts and persons. It will no less be so that the League of Nations which should have pronounced formally on a vital question... has replied by default... the League of Nations replies to the call of the intellectual forces of today by a platonic expression of sympathy... It declines the task of organisation itself, and does not decide on a gesture of aid to those who propose to organise in its stead.

Here are, then M. Nitobe, the first impressions from which it will be necessary to disengage ideas—«Keep cool»—if the love for the work has been deceived, the friendship for the people remains.<sup>40</sup>

Otlet and La Fontaine received Drummond's official notification of the Council's decision a week later.<sup>40</sup> They expressed their feeling of deception in replying to it but circumspectly, and stressed their pleasure at the evident esteem in which the Council continued to hold their work. They asked Drummond to push the member Governments of the League to join the bibliographic union they had proposed for the International Institute of Bibliography. They also pointed out their intention to hold a second session of the International University late in 1921, and requested the same sort of assistance that had been granted in 1920.<sup>41</sup> The Secretary-General's reply was a model of tact. He noted the tone of the letter with regret, but observed «I will be happy to transmit to the Minister for Public Instruction of all the governments who are members of the League, all information concerning the next session of the International University which you would send me...»<sup>42</sup> At the same time, while pledging his support for the University and indicating that the League would participate in its sessions in the same way as in 1920, Drummond carefully avoided committing himself and the League to the Union of Bibliography or to any further financial assistance to the Union of International Associations.

#### THE SECOND QUINZAINE INTERNATIONALE, THE SECOND LEAGUE ASSEMBLY

The next session of the Quinzaine Internationale was announced for the period from the 20th August to the 15th September, 1921, during which, as at the first Quinzaine, a

number of congresses were to be held as well as the second session of the International University. Among the congresses was one of particular interest: the Congress for Intellectual Work, which Otlet and La Fontaine had decided to call themselves, the League having refused to do it. Another, a Pan African Congress stimulated much local ill-will because of the expression of anti-colonial, radical views which took place within it. In June a report was published on the need for an international technical organisation for intellectual labour together with Otlet and La Fontaine's draft of the statutes of an international convention for it which the League had rejected.<sup>43</sup> A number of other documents were also issued to coincide with the opening of the second Quinzaine Internationale. The most important one of these was *Centre Internationale*.<sup>44</sup> This set out systematically the ideas underlying Otlet and La Fontaine's work for internationalism, and described fully the elements comprising the International Center: the International Museum, the International Library, the International Institute of Bibliography and its International Bibliographic Repertory, the Documentary Encyclopedia, the Central Office of the International Associations, the Congresses of the Union of International Associations, and the International University. A group of these documents were sent off to Drummond on the 20th August to serve as the basis for his report to the second Assembly of the League on the educational influence and value of the UIA.<sup>45</sup>

The second session of the International University was as successful as the first. As before, the League sent participants, and 339 academics from 22 countries pledged their support, while 174 hours of instruction were actually given by 69 lecturers during the period. The Assembly of the University met to discuss its future which, despite lack of funds, still seemed bright. A formal meeting of delegates from the International Associations forming the Union of International Associations was held. It was agreed at this meeting that a third Quinzaine should be planned for 1922, that the International University should continue to be supported by them, that the work of the International Center should be extended as much as possible, and finally, that a National Center for International Action should be set up in each country.

The International Institute of Bibliography also held a meeting at this time. It concentrated on developing plans for revising the Universal Decimal Classification. A committee for its revision in which Donker Duyvis became active was set up, and the meeting was informed that steps were being taken to try to persuade the League of Nations to provide the means for printing it. Two sections of the Classification had been



printed that year, the Abridged Tables with a new introductory explanation of how the classification worked,<sup>46</sup> and part of the tables for the division 62,<sup>47</sup> and attention was drawn to them.

The conclusions of the International Congress on Intellectual Work, responses to the following questions, were predictable:

1. What is the rôle of the intellect and of intellectuals in present day society ...?
2. What organisation should be given to intellectual work considered from the point of view of its tools, co-operation and international public services ...?
3. What organisation should be given to intellectuals ...?
4. What connections should be established between the organisation of scientific work on the one hand, and that of scientific workers on the other? How should the League of Nations and the Bureau of Work be involved as representatives of international public power?<sup>48</sup>

The Congress had, in effect, to rationalise the place in the order of intellectual things of the League of Nations, the Union of International Associations, the Confederation of Intellectual Workers (CTI), a sort of trade-union movement begun in France after the war and quickly spreading to other countries,<sup>49</sup> and an International Bureau of Education, the formation of which was being debated at this time. It was resolved that the Universal Bibliographic Repertory, the Documentary Encyclopedia, the International Library, the International Museum and University, and the Center for International Associations had done so much for intellectual work already that they should be elevated to the rank of «public international services provided with resources capable of assuring to them the incontestable advantage of being developed together, and of being organised in such a way that they may be in fact at the disposition of any intellectual working in any region of the world».<sup>50</sup>

Otlet saw the Congress as bringing «decisive contributions» to the Quinzaine Internationale and looked forward with hope to the opening in Geneva soon afterwards of the second Assembly of the League, to which La Fontaine again repaired as a Belgian delegate. Drummond presented his report on the «Educational Activities and the Co-ordination of Intellectual Work Accomplished by the Union of International Associations», as requested by the first Assembly.<sup>51</sup> It contained a full description of the IIB and the Union in two parts: «up to 1914» and «since the formation of the League». The Secretary-General mentioned the financial dispositions of the Union briefly. «The cost of the work accomplished by MM La Fontaine and Otlet has amounted since its beginning to approximately 1,200,000 francs...» But, Drummond also observed that «the activity of the Institution created by MM

La Fontaine and Otlet hitherto owes its success to these two personalities, and the question of further control is as great a cause of uncertainty as the question of material resources». At this time Otlet was 53 and La Fontaine 67. This most revealing comment was, however, obscured by the final remarks of the Secretary-General:

Surveying as a whole the picture we have just drawn, the work of the founders of the Union of International Associations, a work of documentation and information, of co-ordination of effort, of general education, appears as a vast enterprise of international intellectual organisation characterised by the breadth of its conception and design. Its action is two fold as regards principles: it owes to the logical force of the ideas which it has brought forward an educative influence which is highly conducive to the development of the ideas of union and international organisation. As regards facts, it has proved its efficiency by the institutions which it has created. The Union of International Associations, its Congresses, the publications connected with them, and the International University, form particularly effective instruments for the «diffusion of a broad spirit of understanding and world-wide co-operation. The League of Nations should regard these institutions to-day as most valuable organs of collaboration».

Though the Council had decided earlier in the year that it would be «premature to create a technical organisation attached to the League»,<sup>52</sup> the matter was raised again in the Council on September 2nd, 1921 by the French member, Léon Bourgeois, who had been studying it at the Council's request. A few days later, in the name of the Council, he placed before the Assembly a draft resolution in which he proposed that a committee, consisting of not more than twelve members and containing both men and women, should be appointed to study «the means of simplifying, strengthening and extending the international intellectual relations that already existed».<sup>53</sup> Gilbert Murray, Professor of Greek at Oxford and delegate of South Africa, was *rapporteur* for the Assembly Committee appointed to examine the proposal. In the course of his remarks to the Assembly he paid tribute to «that monument of international industry which we owe to Mr. La Fontaine and Mr. Otlet, the *Centre International* established at Brussels».<sup>54</sup> On the recommendation of Murray's committee, the Assembly approved Bourgeois resolution.

The Council did not hurry to make any appointments to the committee, but as the year drew to its close, Otlet and La Fontaine must have felt themselves nearer to achieving their goal of a technical organ at the League concerned with intellectual matters. The matter was before the Council and required some action before the third Assembly convened in 1922. The only major problem Otlet and La Fontaine seemed to face at this time was the *Code des Voeux*. At the beginning of October, Nitobe asked La Fontaine what was happening to it. He had been sent some time earlier some specimen pages

of it which had pleased him, but the printing, in fact, had been underway for over a year. This elicited no reply, and Nitobe sent a telegram to La Fontaine asking for details: «the financial department is anxious to have it before Christmas». La Fontaine explained the great difficulty encountered was that of obtaining qualified personnel, and that one of the Secretaries-General of the Union (La Fontaine himself, in fact) had been able to pick up the work himself only a few days ago. He suggested that money remaining to the Union's credit be transferred to 1922 and expressed the hope of completing the major part of the work before the League Assembly met in 1922.<sup>55</sup>

#### THE PALAIS MONDIAL

During a Fair held in April 1921 in the Parc and Palais du Cinquantenaire in Brussels, two thousand visitors a day streamed through the hundred rooms of the Palais Mondial, «a glossy structure recalling distinctly a side aisle of the Crystal Palace». On Sunday, April 17th the number quadrupled.<sup>56</sup> A party of librarians from the Library Association of Great Britain also visited for four days beginning 15th April. They were very impressed by what they found. Berwick Sayers has left us a vivid account of what he saw there:

The Palais Mondial has a hall of reception where, by means of symbols, plastic and pictorial, the aims of the place are indicated: the sphere symbolising unity of the world; the planetarium allegorising the political evolution resulting in the League of Nations, a tree of the ages showing the development of life and the conquests of the spirit over matter, and so on. Thirty-six rooms are devoted to an international museum of a unique type, one room being devoted to each country, in which are shown a large map of its territory, charts indicating its history, political and social features, and its natural and industrial products, together with typical pictures illustrating these things. The student may pass from room to room gaining a definite notion of the outstanding features of each country, and, as many of the rooms have been arranged by the governments of the countries surveyed, the notion is an authentic one. The palace contains a lecture hall to accommodate an audience of a thousand, which hall is surrounded by smaller lecture, study and committee rooms. The remaining rooms that concern us are devoted to the great installations of the international bibliography, the international encyclopaedia, and the international library. The scheme, as you may suppose, has been planned on generous lines.

Picture a room about eighty feet long containing four ranks of card cabinets reaching to a height of seven feet. That is the repertory of bibliography. Two of the ranks contain author-entries, two subject-entries. The whole contains twelve million cards. The far-away goal of the founders is to produce a catalogue of all books and literary pieces, of all ages and of all times...

The international Encyclopaedia is another great experiment with tremendous possibilities. It is a vast vertical file, in which are arranged in holders, minutely classified, cuttings, pamphlets, articles from

periodicals, and the multiplicity of similar (usually) fugitive literary material in which the advances and the latest state of knowledge are conveyed. It is a current, ever-expanding repertory of knowledge, without any of the drawbacks of the encyclopaedia in book form, which is obsolete in many particulars on the day of publication. The International Library is confined to the Twentieth Century. The founders do not suppose it to be possible for them to collect an international library on general lines for all times; but they do think that they can obtain a representative collection for the Twentieth Century of every country; and this is their present endeavour.

The repertory of bibliography, the international encyclopaedia and library form the core of the institution, and ultimately the core of the International University, which, as M. La Fontaine remarked to me, «has been our goal from the beginning». The University came into being in 1920, when 200 students attended summer courses in international subjects under the guidance of twenty professors; this year similar courses have been held when the numbers were doubled in both cases. We have, therefore, another experiment here of some significance founded, as a university should be, around a library and a centre of bibliography.<sup>57</sup>

Sayers was enthusiastic but others were a little more sceptical. L. Stanley Jast, Chief Librarian at Manchester, suggested Sayers' description had, in fact been coloured by his enthusiasm. «It is not — of course it is not, though it might be under happier circumstances — what I should consider to be a working approximation to its ideal.» Jast pointed out that in the Section for Great Britain in the Museum, half a dozen pictures had been taken from illustrated magazines mounted, hung on the walls and labelled «British Art». To his remonstrances, Otlet had replied «Our idea is that we should make a start».<sup>58</sup> William Warner Bishop, an eminent American librarian, had also called into Brussels in the Fall of 1921. «I was greatly disappointed», he reported in reminiscences published some twenty-eight years later,

at the showing of the Palais Mondial. The union bibliographies on cards were not even sorted three years after the war, and a general impression of inefficiency and confusion remained with me from which I have not recovered, although on subsequent visits I was more favorably impressed.<sup>59</sup>

Perhaps, the most judicious evaluation of the Palais Mondial at this time was made by Ernest Cushing Richardson in the following year. Having described the various elements of the Palais Mondial and Otlet and La Fontaine's rationalisations of and plans for them, he said

These plans and their authors have been treated by many as grandiose, visionary and impractical, and have been neglected by us, but the authors of the idea have pegged away for twenty-seven years and have produced for the world of which we are a part, a going concern, with all these features of real usefulness and a concrete property of organized results. It is true that most of these are not only incomplete but in large part only sketchy. On the other hand at almost every point the material, so far as it goes, is organized in such a way as to be a concrete and permanent contribution toward the respective propo-

sitions, to which all accretion in the established methods will be a contribution toward a complete result. Even where unorganized in detail there is little that can be called confused.

It is an orderly, methodical result, all along the line — astonishingly so for the force at disposal.

Further than this it is a monument of concrete permanent result for the amount of money expended. When it is considered that the total amount expended is (considering the rate of exchange in the last few years) less than a million gold francs, or less than two hundred thousand dollars and that it has with this produced the repertory of twelve million cards, a library of a hundred and fifty thousand volumes, the Museum, Encyclopedia, Union Catalog and the operations of the University, it is little short of a marvel economically. Much more imperfection could be excused than can be found.

It is true that this result has been achieved at this cost only because Messrs. Lafontaine and Otlet have had no salaries and have given or loaned considerable sums to the enterprise. It is an open secret for example that the Nobel prize which Senator La Fontaine received was largely absorbed into this. Moreover the directors have had an extraordinary personal influence in enlisting voluntary collaboration and the accepting of positions at almost nominal salaries. Still at best the amount of cost is surprisingly small for the results.

While both the directors are men of ideal and enthusiasms, it is quite beside the mark to think of the men or their enterprises as visionary. To begin with, Senator La Fontaine has been for very many years a practicing lawyer and Belgian Senator. He has kept the leadership in the Socialist party, which has been growing stronger and stronger, and he is at present a vice-president of the Senate. Moreover, he and M. Otlet have not only put their enterprises in this well ordered position for development, but have selected and trained an unusually intelligent staff of workers to carry things forward. It is obvious that if they had more money it would be spent toward these objects with a minimum of waste. Now whatever the amount of enthusiasm, this kind of thing is the opposite of the visionary, who jumps at an idea, leaving a trail of confusion in his wake.<sup>60</sup>

For Otlet, when all the difficulties and the successes were placed in the balance, 1921 was an unsatisfactory year. It was characterised by all of the arduous labour of organising the second Quinzaine Internationale and of sustaining the protracted, complicated, unresolved, disappointing negotiations with the League of Nations. It was also a year of bitter personal disappointment. He had begun to feel that changes in Belgium were passing him by, that he had slipped from that position of eminence in the social and intellectual life of Brussels which he had occupied before the war, and which had given him an opportunity to be a force in the affairs that interested him. He confided this impression to George Lecoq at the Royal Observatory, a man who had collaborated with him in developing the IIB in the early days. There had occurred in Belgium, he wrote,

events where nobody wants my help. It is a question of the Bibliothèque Royale, the *Bibliographie de Belgique*, the Service des Echanges... Everywhere I meet the same situation. I am discarded, or eliminated. And I am let do or prevented from doing with the same indifference...

I work and battle for ideas, and they alone interest me. I conceive these ideas clearly. I see them very highly reported and, from outside contact, I am convinced they are not chimeras. My fellow country men do not understand me. Is it that I haven't yet been able to exteriorise them in a way suitable for their minds, or that my person is antipathetic to them? I experience natural regrets but cannot set about anything else.

These regrets — they are to feel a force unused which one loves, and to observe delay in the progress of one's ideas because of obstacles where there should be help. Alas! This country has a natural aversion to any idea which has in it some true grandeur. I do not urge them for the possibility of money, honours... But Belgium is not the world and the Belgians do not constitute the whole of humanity... It is necessary to say this at a time when fatigue and wear and tear, bad councillors, suggest that one should go and plant cabbages in some corner...<sup>61</sup>

Otlet was now a middle-aged man personifying an order shattered perhaps for ever by the War. His philosophy of world peace was not popularly understood and the *Centre International* was mocked in the newspapers. The invitation that resulted in the Pan-African Congress being held at the Palais Mondial in 1921 elicited considerable vituperative criticism of «the solemn fools of the 'Palais Mondial'» who were occupying valuable locations for storing cards.<sup>62</sup> After the Quinzaine Internationale, Otlet was portrayed by one commentator in his small, round, heavy glasses, with a stick of chalk in his hands rapidly writing «chimerical figures» in the air before him.

He speaks of cards, of pure sciences, of catalogs of statistics, and above all of mondialism. This last vocable is sung quite softly in his throat like a chant... as at the meetings of the first Christians. What is mondialism? It is necessary to ask him, for no one else is capable of defining it unless it is his colleague and friend Henri La Fontaine.

But this ironical commentator freely admitted «his disinterestedness and nobleness of intention».<sup>63</sup> The cards of the RBU particularly captured the imagination and provoked the indignation of his adversaries. Religion was not dead, a critic said. It lived on in the new faith of the «documentatifs» whose temple was the Palais Mondial. Worst of them all was M. Otlet himself, for he had confounded the Palais Mondial with himself: «M. Otlet, c'est le Palais Mondial, et le Palais Mondial, c'est M. Otlet».<sup>64</sup> And in the new year, Otlet and La Fontaine were the subjects of a sketch in a satiric review in which they were shown as not content with the Palais du Cinquenaire but wanting «to transform the whole of Brussels into a vast city of cards».<sup>65</sup>

In the midst, too, of threatened aspirations, rejections, vociferous and hostile critics, he suffered a dramatic resurgence of trouble with his half-brothers and half-sister. In 1920 he had visited one brother, Raoul, in Spain to try to



sort out some of the financial confusion continuing to exist in the family's Spanish affairs. Early in 1921 he became aware that another brother, Adrien, seemed to have finished with him. Moreover, «Rita has written horrible things to me. Gaston has disappeared from the horizon. Edo did not even inform me of his marriage». And now Raoul asked for further help, asked him «to mount a horse which I have left in the stable for so long», and even to go to Spain again.<sup>66</sup> Apparently, Adrien was suspected by his siblings of discreditable financial manoeuvrings at their expense. Eventually, in November, Otlet wrote a letter to Adrien and sent a copy to Raoul with the note «it is all I can do». He informed Adrien of the letters he had received from various members of the family who had invited him to intervene in the dispute and observed, «I feel a thousand bonds in these eternal and complicated affairs». He felt they should not be allowed to trouble the tranquility he had so dearly achieved. Nevertheless, duty was strong, and he hoped to solve the problems they faced by driving all concerned together in Spain.<sup>67</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

1. UIA, *Programme générale de la Quinzaine Internationale*... (Bruxelles: UIA, 1920), pp. 22–23.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
3. UIA, *Congrès Mondial des Associations Internationales: Compte-rendu sommaire de la deuxième session*... (Publication No. 56; Bruxelles, UIA, 1913), p. 27.
4. Paul Otlet, *Les Problèmes internationaux et la guerre* (Genève: Librairie Kundig; Paris, Rousseau et Cie, 1916), pp. 296–297.
5. Paul Otlet, *Sur la création d'une Université Internationale: rapport présenté à l'Union des Associations Internationales* (Publication No. 90; Bruxelles: UIA, 1920), p. 11. The quotations in this and the following two paragraphs are from this document and no further reference will be made to it.
6. Otlet to Drummond, 13 January 1920, Dossier No. 39, «Société des Nations», Mundaneum. All letters to officials of the League are in this dossier and no further reference will be made to it beyond the identification of particular letters.
7. *Congrès Mondial des Associations Internationales: compte-rendu*..., p. 15.
8. Otlet to Jules Destrée, 8 May 1920.
9. Otlet to Destrée, 8 May 1920. The Red Cross enjoyed a special status at the League. Though it was not an official union or organisation and not provided for under Article 24 as a result, Article 25 of the Covenant specifically pledged the members of the League to its support.
10. Drummond to Otlet, 21 June 1920.
11. Drummond to Otlet and La Fontaine, 14 August 1920.

12. Drummond to Otlet and La Fontaine, 13 August 1920.
13. La Fontaine to Nitobe, 25 August 1920.
14. Otlet to Léon Bourgeois, 18 August 1920.
15. UIA, *Les Titres du Palais Mondial*... (Publication No. 11; Bruxelles: UIA, 1923), p. 11, «Haut patronage royal».
16. UIA, *Centre International*... (Publication No. 98; Bruxelles: UIA, 1921), p. 72.
17. Nitobe to Otlet and La Fontaine, 21 August, 1920. Nitobe's address was privately printed: Inazo Nitobe, *What the League of Nations Has Done and Is Doing*, lecture at the International University, Brussels, 13 and 14 September, 1920 (London: Harrison and Sons (for the author), 1920), 32 pp.
18. Université Internationale, *L'Université Internationale: documents relatif à sa constitution* (Publication No. 1; Bruxelles: L'Université, 1920), p. 91.
19. The accounts of the Conference are two. The first is to be found in «L'Organisation de la documentation technique et industrielle en France», *Documentation Technique et Industrielle*, November–December 1920, 925–945. (This article has been given the IIB Publication No. 128a in the *FID 75 Years of FID Publications* but is there shown without place, publisher or date). There also exists in the Mundaneum a typescript headed «Conférence Internationale de Bibliographie et de Documentation, September 1920». The two accounts are practically verbatim.
20. A. I. Michailov, «Donker Duyvis' Contribution to the Progress of Scientific Information and Documentation», *F. Donker Duyvis: His Life and Work* (Publication series, No. 45; The Hague; Nider, 1964) p. 32.
21. *Programme générale de la Quinzaine Internationale*..., pp. 16–17.
22. *Sur L'Organisation internationale du travail intellectuel à créer au sien de la Société des Nations: rapport et vœux présentés par l'Union des Associations Internationales*. This publication bears the date, November 1920 and the figure P. No. 95 but lacks formal imprint details. The resolution appears on pages 3 and 4, the rest of the document comprising an explanatory report and «annexes» supporting it.
23. Otlet to Nitobe, 16 October 1920.
24. Otlet to Nitobe, 13 November 1920.
25. Otlet and La Fontaine to the Council of the League of Nations, 23 October 1920.
26. Otlet to Hymans, 26 October 1920.
27. Otlet to Hymans, 26 October 1920. A pencilled note on the margin of this letter reads: «Hymans said to me, I have received your letters. I did not do anything about them at the Council. They are mentioned in the 'procès-verbal'».
28. Nitobe to Otlet, 15 November 1920.
29. Otlet to President of the Assembly, 14 December 1920 (telegram).
30. Quoted in E. C. Richardson, *Some Aspects of International Library Co-operation* (Yardley, Pa.: F. S. Cook, 1928), pp. 53–54.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 56–57. Ernest Cushing Richardson, 1860–1939, was Librarian then Director of Libraries at Princeton University from 1880 until 1925. He was appointed Honorary Director from 1925 until his death and

- during this period he also acted as Consultant in Bibliography to the Library of Congress. He was active within the American Library Association — its President, 1904—05.
33. Oliver Brett, *The First Assembly...* (London: Macmillan, 1921), p. 145.
  34. Nitobe to Otlet, 22 December 1920.
  35. Otlet and La Fontaine to Drummond, 7 February 1921.
  36. Otlet to Nitobe, 15 February 1921.
  37. *Organisation of Intellectual Labour*: report by M. Quinones de Leon, Representative of Spain, adopted by the Council on March 1, 1921. This is a typescript (in English, 5 foolscap pages in length) in the Mundaneum. Quotations on the next two paragraphs are from the report and no further reference is made to it.
  38. Nitobe to Otlet and La Fontaine, 2 March 1921.
  39. Otlet to Nitobe, 4 March 1921.
  40. Secretary-General to Otlet and La Fontaine, 10 March 1921.
  41. Otlet and La Fontaine to Sir Eric Drummond, 16 March 1921.
  42. Secretary-General to Otlet and La Fontaine, 16 April 1921.
  43. UIA, *Organisation internationale du travail intellectuel* (Publication No. 97; Bruxelles: UIA, June 1921).
  44. UIA, *Centre International*: conceptions et programme de l'internationalisme, organismes internationaux et Union des Associations Internationales. Etablissements scientifiques installés au Palais Mondial (Publication No. 98; Bruxelles: UIA, August, 1921).
  45. Otlet and La Fontaine to Sir Eric Drummond, 20 August 1921.
  46. IIB, *La Classification Décimale: exposé du système et tables abrégées* (Publication No. 132; Bruxelles: IIB, 1921).
  47. A. Louis Vermandel and F. R. de Grauwe, *Tables des divisions 621.39, techniques des communications à distance* (Publication No. 63, Fasc. 39; Bruxelles: IIB, 1921).
  48. The reports of the second Quinzaine Internationale and of the various conferences are given in *La Vie Internationale*, November 1921 (No. 1 post bellum), 136—195.
  49. Alfred de Tarde, *L'Organisation des intellectuels en France. Rapport au Congrès International du Travail Intellectuel* (Publication No. 100, Bruxelles: UIA, 1921).
  50. *La Vie Internationale*, 163—164.
  51. League of Nations, Secretary-General, *Educational Activities and the Co-ordination of Intellectual Work Accomplished by the Union of International Associations* (in English), League Document: A42(B), 1921.
  52. Jan Kolasa, *International Intellectual Co-operation* (Wrocław: Wrocław Scientific Society, 1962), p. 21.
  53. *The League of Nations and Intellectual Co-operation* (revised ed.; Geneva: Information Section, League of Nations Secretariat, 1927), p. 6.
  54. Paul Otlet, *Le Société des Nations et l'Union des Associations Internationales...* (Publication No. 107; Bruxelles: UIA, 1921), p. 5.
  55. Nitobe to Otlet and La Fontaine, 5 October 1921; Nitobe to La Fontaine (telegram), 2 December 1921; La Fontaine to Nitobe, 4 December 1921.
  56. «Communiqué: le Palais Mondial 21 April 1921» typescript, Mundaneum, and W. C. Berwick Sayers, «The Institut International de Bibliographie: its Work and Possibilities for Co-operation» *Library Association Record*, XXIII (1921), 346.
  57. *Ibid.*, 347—348.
  58. *Ibid.*, «Discussion», 350—351.
  59. William Warner Bishop, «International Relations: Fragments of Autobiography», *Library Quarterly*, (1949), 273.
  60. Ernest Cushing Richardson, «International Library Co-operation in Intellectual Work», *Library Journal*, XXXVII (1922), 917.
  61. Otlet to Lecoq, 28 January 1921, Dossier No. 368e, «Ministère des Sciences et des Arts», Mundaneum.
  62. «Au Palais Mondial», *La Politique*, 26 June 1921 and Edouard Huysmans, «Le Mondialisme», *L'Horizon*, 17 September 1921.
  63. «Paul Otlet», *L'Horizon*, 3 September 1921.
  64. «Bruxelles, Centre Mondial, nos 'mondiaux' à l'oeuvre: Le Hall du Cinquantenaire transformé en une vaste caisse à fiches», *Midi*, 12 November, 1921.
  65. «Au cercle artistique et littéraire: une revue», *Le Soir*, 25 January, 1922.
  66. Various copies of letters exist in the Otletaneum in Brussels. Just what the nature of the difficulties was it is hard to say, but Otlet certainly found them trying and expensive. Much of what he has written is indecipherable. The quotations are from a letter by Paul to Raoul Otlet dated 16 May 1921.
  67. Paul to Adrien Otlet, 13 November 1921, Otletaneum.

## Chapter XI

### L'AFFAIRE DU PALAIS MONDIAL

#### A FIRST DISPLACEMENT

From the beginning of 1922 troubles crowded thick and fast upon the Palais Mondial. First came a proposal from the Belgian government temporarily to resume occupancy of some of the quarters being used by the Palais Mondial in order to set up a commercial fair there. Otlet at once dispatched an urgent letter to Nitobe seeking the intervention of the League against the Belgian government. Nitobe, inevitably, had to refuse to implicate either himself or the League:

You will understand the reasons why I hesitate. Of course, the Council has expressed sympathy for some of your undertaking, but the so-called moral patronage that was guaranteed did not commit the League at all deeply in the affairs of the Union... Even if the Union were officially placed, according to Article 24 of the Covenant, under the direction of the League, I very much doubt that the League could do much in a case such as yours. You have a legal existence according to Belgian law, and though your work is entirely international, not only is the juridical status Belgian, but the Belgian government has subsidised and given the Union a location... Don't you think there is a fear of your government regarding an action on the part of the League as interference in its own internal affairs?<sup>1</sup>

Nitobe tried discreetly to get at the reasons for the government's actions. «You speak», he wrote to Otlet,

of the Commercial Fair and the Colonial Exhibition and then you speak of adversaries of the Union. What I most want to know is whether you have given the government any handle for this sudden step. If I may speak frankly, I have wondered if there was anything on the part of the Union that could have given the government an opportunity for withdrawal from their engagement.<sup>2</sup>

Otlet seems not to have attempted to reply to Nitobe's question and at this distance in time it is hard to know what actually happened. An explanation is probably to be found in the politics of the day and in Otlet's position in Brussels. The coalition government of Léon Delacroix, formed after the election in November 1919, was short-lived. Delacroix, who

had indicated sympathy for Otlet's projects and provided government support for them, resigned in the autumn of 1920. He was replaced by an acquaintance and colleague-at-law of Otlet's, the Comte Henri Carton de Wiart whose equally brief government has been described succinctly as «incompetent in a dignified manner».<sup>3</sup> New general elections were held late in 1921 and resulted in the King inviting the Catholic Party leader, Georges Theunis, to form another coalition government. The socialists, protesting the term of compulsory national military service, refused to be part of it and the pattern of subsequent governments in Belgium was set: «a series of coalition governments with only occasionally one political party in sufficient strength to govern for a short spell on its own».<sup>4</sup> Seven governments then followed one another in the space of twelve years. Though the various governments during this time enacted a number of progressive social welfare and industrial measures, the inflationary economy continued to deteriorate until 1926 when national bankruptcy seemed imminent. Stringent financial measures were then introduced which provided a few years of stability before the maelstrom of the Depression. Any fillip to the economy possible from a commercial fair must have appeared most welcome to the government and the Parc and Palais du Cinquantenaire, site of the 1910 Universal Exposition of Brussels, were an ideal place to hold one. Located in the buildings of the Palais du Cinquantenaire were some of the Musées Royaux and the Palais Mondial. The latter, occupying a hall where seasonal exhibitions of paintings had been regularly held in the past, had excited ridicule in some quarters. In yet others there were anger and resentment that the rooms of the Palais Mondial had been made available for the Pan-African Congress of 1921. Otlet, himself, no longer had the ear of prominent government officials. There was a new generation in power and, from his own admission, they had been content to pass him by. His «mondial» ideas were widely misunderstood and many, no doubt, regarded him as an eccentric, amiable and harmless or infuriating and possibly dangerous according to the kind and frequency of the demands he made on them. The dispossession, therefore, by the government of the area occupied by the Palais Mondial in the Palais du Cinquantenaire seemed logical enough. It was far less likely to arouse popular opinion than the removal of the older, more respectable Musées Royaux. As Theunis, the Prime Minister, observed decisively «the organisation of the Palais Mondial, occupying its location *without any legal right*, can certainly be asked to make way for a Commercial Fair».<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, Otlet and La Fontaine, Premier Vice-President of the Senate and Nobel Laureate, were able to bring



sufficient pressure to bear to force the Government to decide to appoint a Commission to examine the educational and scientific value of various parts of the Palais Mondial in order to determine the nature of its rights to the locations which it had been given. The Commission consisted of academics from the Universities of Ghent and Liège — «bitter disillusion», wrote Otlet somewhat cryptically. «It is concluded», he said, reporting someone's comment, «go to the moon! Basically you are courageous people but you would feel more at home on another planet».<sup>6</sup> The Commission was not actually appointed until the end of April 1922 by which time thirty two rooms of the Palais Mondial had been cleared and occupied for nearly two weeks by representatives of the Fair.

The Commission's conclusions were to some degree as Otlet had feared. It decided that the UIA had no permanent rights at all to the locations occupied by the Palais Mondial in the Palais du Cinquantenaire. It singled out the International Institute of Bibliography and the International Library for special commendation. It urged that these institutions should be left where they were, provided they did not interfere with the growth of the Musées Royaux, until such time as the UIA could afford to erect its own building. As for the rest of the institutes of the Palais Mondial, it was completely a matter for the discretion of the Government as to when they should be required to put their quarters at its disposal.<sup>7</sup> It was clear by this time, the government, unstable and hostile, and the economy in a grave condition, that no more would be heard of a special Palais Mondial to be erected from public funds in the Parc de Woluwe, and it was firmly borne in upon Otlet that something drastic needed to be done to secure the future of the Palais Mondial as it then existed. He decided, therefore, to call an international conference to consider the question of wider international support. This was to be held on the occasion of a third Quinzaine Internationale which was planned for August 1922.

In the middle of the occupation of part of the Palais Mondial by the Commercial Fair, Nitobe wrote to Otlet suggesting that the League's Secretariat for International Associations should publish a journal of information useful to international associations. He wondered if there was any prospect of the UIA bringing out *La Vie internationale* again at some time in the near future. The League was reluctant to duplicate of encroach on the Union's work. He thought, however, that such a «news» journal as he was proposing, far from threatening any aspect of the activities of the Union, would further its objectives, even if, in fact, *La Vie internationale* were to be revived. In any case, he said, «without your

co-operation it will be difficult to succeed in such a venture. If you do [agree to collaborate] we can at once put ourselves in communication with the International Bureaux».<sup>8</sup>

The suggested wounded Otlet deeply:

We must in all sincerity tell you that in the middle of the worries caused by the dismantling and re-installation of our collections, this letter has saddened us profoundly. We don't need to tell you that if we have been prevented from publishing our review, *La Vie internationale* in the way in which it appeared before the War, it is not because we haven't as determined a will. We made an effort in publishing fascicule 26, and we would like nothing better than to publish fascicule 27. But... the Belgian Government refuses to augment the laughable subsidy that it gives us... It would be with deep regret that we would see the League, thanks to the resources at its disposal, substitute itself for the Union.<sup>9</sup>

Curiously, Otlet made no reference to the Carnegie Peace Foundation which had subsidised *La Vie internationale* before the War. No steps seem to have been taken after the war to secure the resumption of the Foundation's subsidy of the UIA and its International Center. Nitobe, undeterred by Otlet's comments, went ahead with his plans, assuring the Belgians that the journal the League would publish would be of great help to them in the long run and in 1923 a *Bulletin trimestriel ou chronique internationale* appeared.

Nitobe also began to press for the completion of the *Code des Voeux*. Early in 1922 Otlet and La Fontaine had still not been able to find a suitable collaborator for this work. Their difficulty should not appear surprising. From various comments made, it appears that they hoped to find someone to assist them who would not only be fluent in French and English, but would be willing to work for more than eight hours a day at a low salary in a job having no prospect of permanence with a devotion to its outcome similar to their own. In attempting to solve the worst of their difficulties and to placate critics at the League's Headquarters, they proposed to issue the *Code* in fascicules. If this was agreed to, publication could begin at once with the material already prepared which would make a substantial first fascicule of over three hundred pages.<sup>10</sup> Apparently satisfied, Nitobe agreed to persuade the League's financial department to keep open the credit still remaining to them from the original subvention. There was also involved, now, a particular donor. «The man willing to advance you the money» (some 12,000 francs for the last stages of preparation of the *Code*), wrote Nitobe, «is not a wealthy man and I think it will be convenient to him to pay in instalments». Nitobe was concerned, too, to know how much more would be needed beyond this sum for preparation to bring the fully completed work from the presses. It was urgently necessary, he believed, to get it

finished, «both for the reputation of the League and of your own Union».<sup>11</sup> In September Nitobe was sent the pages of what was intended as the first fascicule and was informed that «measures have been taken for soon finishing the *Code*».<sup>12</sup> It was, however, not issued in fascicules. The first volume, over 900 pages in length, was eventually published in 1923<sup>13</sup> and no subsequent volumes appeared.

In late August 1922, the Third Quinzaine Internationale was held. It was a rather small affair compared with its predecessors. A third session of the International University took place and 72 professors gave 96 lectures on 80 subjects.<sup>14</sup> The main business, however, was the Conference for the Development of the Institutes of the Palais Mondial. The Minister for Foreign Affairs had agreed to transmit through his department invitations to the Conference from the UIA to nominated governments, and Diplomatic representatives (mostly minor embassy officials) from sixteen countries and the League of Nations met in Brussels from the 20th to the 22nd August with Otlet, La Fontaine and a representative of the Belgian Government. Ernest Cushing Richardson, the American librarian, was also present. There were no representatives from any of the major European powers. Before the delegates was the text of a draft convention which would place the Palais Mondial as an official international organisation under the protection of the nations who would sign it. Briefly, the draft provided that the management of the new organisation be left to the UIA under the overall supervision of an International Commission. The members of the Commission were to be drawn either from national commissions created by individual governments for the purpose, or from specially designated organisations already existing. The budget was to derive from contributions from participating states determined in a manner similar to that used for determining and allocating the budget of the Universal Postal Convention. Contributions from governments would be augmented by subscriptions, donations or other funds as available. The League of Nations was to be asked to offer its patronage to the newly constituted Palais Mondial in terms of Article 24 of its Covenant, and would be invited to be represented on its International Commission. Furthermore, participants in the Conference were asked

to take into serious consideration the project presented to them of an International City to be erected on the occasion of an approaching Universal Exposition. The City would be formed from pavilions erected by each country involved in the Exposition and from buildings established for the international institutions grouped around the Palais Mondial.

The Exposition referred to had recently been announced by the Belgian Government for 1930, the year of Belgium's Centennial

Anniversary. Each nation would also sign, as well as the general treaty, special individual agreements in which its particular commitments to each part of the Palais Mondial — IIB, UIA, International Library, Museum and University — would be spelled out. Resolutions conveying the term of the text of the convention as adopted by the Conference were addressed to King Albert and the Belgian government, the League of Nations, and through Richardson, to America.<sup>15</sup> No action was taken on the resolutions of the Conference. The Belgian government in 1923 refused to consider that it had been officially represented, and also refused to distribute the Protocols of the convention to participating governments. This was an extraordinary *volte face* but explicable, Otlet alleged, because of misrepresentation of the UIA's attitude to Franco-Belgian policy in the Ruhr.<sup>16</sup>

#### THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE ON INTELLECTUAL CO-OPERATION

In May 1922, the Council of the League of Nations finally appointed the members of an International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation. The Belgian representative was not Otlet or La Fontaine, as one might have expected, but Jules Destrée, former Belgian Minister for Arts and Sciences. Destrée's appointment placed him in one of the most select gatherings in the world, for among his fellow committee-members were Henri Bergson, the great French philosopher, Madame Curie-Skłodowska, one of the discoverers of radium, Albert Einstein, the physicist, and Gilbert Murray, a renowned classical scholar at Oxford University. For Nitobe, reporting to La Fontaine, Destrée's appointment came as something of a shock: «It has been a great surprise, and I must confess a personal disappointment to me that your name was not among the members».<sup>17</sup> Gilbert Murray expressed a similar view to Otlet but ventured an explanation. «May I take this opportunity», he wrote,

of expressing my regret that neither you nor Senator La Fontaine are serving on the Permanent Committee. I understand, however, that this is because the Council thought you could do more as expert witnesses than as actual members, to guide the Committee in its deliberations.<sup>18</sup>

La Fontaine did not regret being passed over by the Council, and believed that his friendship with Destrée would be an adequate vehicle for UIA influence in the Committee. Otlet's reaction was typical. He sat down and wrote an *Introduction to the Work of the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation of the League of Nations*<sup>19</sup> which he dispatched as soon as it was finished in anticipation of the Committee's

first meeting in August 1922. In it he described the origins of the Committee in the various proposals of the UIA during the War. He repeated what the UIA had suggested should be both the general and the specific duties of the League in the realm of intellectual work. He recommended as particular problems requiring immediate solutions the development and improvement of the international organisation of scientific research, the relations governing the exchange of professors and students between universities, and the international organisation of bibliography, matters with which the Committee, in fact, immediately involved itself. Otlet's note to the Committee, however, emphasised his belief that a grand and far-reaching design, along the lines already set down by him in many places, should guide the work of the Committee. He made a point of stressing the need for a centralised system of organisation for regulating the relations between the Committee and the nations, arguing that this was the most economic and effective way of securing good communication and co-operation. He described as the sort of permanent international centre the Committee would need to develop, the Palais Mondial in Brussels, powerful testimony to the importance of which, he reminded his readers, Gilbert Murray had given in the General Assembly the year before.

The Committee's first meeting touched on a great many of the issues of interest to Otlet. Destrée had placed on the agenda the matter of a permanent international center. He also suggested that an International University should be created under the auspices of the League. Another member of the Committee raised the matter of an International Library growing from material flowing into it through the adoption of international deposit regulations. The most important issue before the Committee, in its view, however, was the international organisation of bibliography. The work of the International Institute of Bibliography was described and praised by Destrée. Others suggested the need for a uniform classification, though G. de Reynold, Professor of French Literature at Berne University and *rapporteur* for the Committee, believed the «decimal system» was imperfect because of *lacunae*. The idea that bibliography should be placed under the aegis of the International Research Council was discussed and so was the need to consult librarians, bibliographers and technical experts before any decisions about bibliography should be taken. A distinction was made between retrospective bibliography and current bibliography, the needs of the latter being strongly related, it was thought, to the development of adequate abstracting services. On the whole it was agreed that «questions of documentation and bibliography were extremely complicated because of their technical nature». The diverse

views expressed at its meetings and the complexity of the subject eventually led the Committee to decide to appoint a sub-committee to consider the matters involved. The Sub-Committee as constituted was to meet under the chairmanship of Bergson, and was to consist of Destrée, Madame Curie-Skłodowska, and from three to five co-opted experts. Later in the year four experts were appointed to the Sub-Committee, all but one of them librarians.

When Bergson closed the first series of meetings of the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation, he observed that their initial achievement was essentially that of having isolated questions to be settled, of having defined a program for further study. As the Committee reported to the League Council:

The international organisation for scientific documentation, particularly bibliography, is essential for all intellectual co-operation; scientific relations are very intimately connected with this question. For this reason, the world of science unanimously desires that such an organisation may be established as soon as possible. The Committee therefore gave this priority over scientific research and interuniversity relations.<sup>20</sup>

Otlet reviewed the Committee's deliberations with no satisfaction at all but with great suspicion and then with a kindling anger. Reporting to the International Associations at the beginning of 1923 on the UIA's relations with the League, especially with its new Committee, Otlet observed that Nitobe had referred to the UIA in an address which opened the work of the Committee, but it had received no other mention. No one, not even Destrée, had been prepared to recognise that the UIA had already created the basis for an international university and an international library. The idea of this library receiving its material from the operation of an international deposit regulation had been part of the UIA's plans for the development of its library, and had been discussed in its World Congresses of 1910 and 1920. Moreover, the foundations of an international center existed at Brussels and the possibility of the Committee's building upon them, which should have been fully explored, was completely neglected. In fact, even the general idea of the value of such a center to the Committee had hardly been discussed at all. It was true, he acknowledged, that the work of the IIB had been drawn to the attention of the Committee, but the Committee had also apparently rejected the IIB as the basis for the organisation of bibliography and documentation, of the necessity for which it appeared to be convinced, and, after a number of proposals, only the most general resolutions about bibliography in no way clearly involving the IIB, had been adopted. Otlet's bitter conclusion was that a second phase had now begun in the relations of the UIA with the League in which



the Union sees itself as discarded by the Committee [on Intellectual Co-operation]; it is not even called to work with its Sub-Committee. The seminal idea which had led to the formation of the Committee is not even discussed, and the parts of the idea, which the Union has itself been successful in expressing in some first institutions, are taken over by others who give them out as their own and receive support.<sup>21</sup>

These views were reinforced by de Reynold, the *rapporteur* of the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation, who published an article about its early work in the *Revue de Genève* towards the end of 1922, disparaging grandiose, impractical and visionary schemes for the organisation of intellectual work. Otlet was incensed by his attitude, and carefully and rather savagely dissected the article.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, so concerned was he by the implications of the views put forward by de Reynold that he unburdened himself about them to the League of Nations Union in England which had proposed at this time to send a delegate to Brussels to look over the Palais Mondial and especially examine the geographical museum there. The visitor was gladly received, Otlet reported to the Union upon his departure, but he had arrived in Brussels

just when we were strongly upset by the recent attitude of the Committee on Intellectual Work of the League of Nations. Although the formation of this Committee is due to our unceasing action... the members comprising it have counted our work as not existing in their work... This injustice and wastage of effort augurs very badly for the rest of the work... We throw up a cry of alarm and invite you [the Union of Associations for the League of Nations] to examine the Committee's work very attentively. As all who understand the League agree, co-operation should be its foundation. But destruction is about to take place if the principles revealed ... by M. de Reynold ... are followed.<sup>23</sup>

On the 19th December, Otlet and La Fontaine sent a telegram to Drummond expressing their concern about the Committee and their dismay at not having been asked to give evidence before it, or in any way participate in its meetings. Drummond replied that the Committee's first session had been essentially preparatory but that the Committee had decided to invite a representative from the IIB to participate in the next series of deliberations of the Sub-Committee on Bibliography, an invitation duly sent.<sup>24</sup>

It seems clear that Otlet had over-reacted, and that neither he nor La Fontaine had appreciated the deliberateness with which the Committee had proceeded to define its areas of interest, examine possible forms of organisation, and debate what immediately useful and practical kinds of action it might take. Nor had they appreciated the financial constraints within which the Committee had to function and which quickly became so restrictive that the Committee was forced to turn

to outside help to implement any program at all. Otlet and La Fontaine were in no position to offer the kind of financial assistance needed, and became less so as the situation of the Palais Mondial gradually deteriorated. Nor was the UIA without at least an indirect voice in the Committee's affairs. La Fontaine became a member of the Belgian National Committee on Intellectual Co-operation set up in 1922, one of the first of such local bodies which the Committee had decided were «the best means of organising co-operation and promoting exchange».<sup>25</sup>

#### GEDDES, THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON BIBLIOGRAPHY

At the very beginning of 1923, Patrick Geddes wrote to Otlet regretting that they had not corresponded much since the War. He had been wondering how the two of them might collaborate. Since he had seen him last, Geddes informed Otlet, he had been occupied with various matters of interest to them both. One of them was sociological theory:

Since Comte, Spencer, since Le Play, Demobius, since Ward and the Americans, since the Institut Solvay, the School of de Greef and de Tarde, of Durkheim ... the synthetic view is missing, and even the attraction of speculative thought seems to me in rotation rather than progress. Am I wrong? I wish I were. Can you show me with the help of your bibliographic knowledge, and above all, with your general view, where I can draw on new and fecund ideas?<sup>26</sup>

Geddes was in India at this time, and he described his life there to Otlet. He was occupied at the University of Bombay, and elsewhere through consultative engagements, with the dual strands of his work: sociology and town-planning. Delhi he described as «a new town of imperial megalomania, a sad town of bureaucrats gathered together to build their tombs, truly like the Sultans of the past». Soon he was to come to Europe to look at universities and then to go to the United States which he had not seen since his tour in 1900. He asked Otlet to examine the bibliographic store of the RBU for material which contained «something in the way of critiques of universities as they are, and yet more, propositions for the future...» Above all came the plea, «Why not co-ordinate our ideas a little and your presentation on the grand scale with mine on the small ...?»<sup>27</sup>

Otlet seems not to have responded very strongly to this overture, which, because of the long friendship and the common philosophical interests and orientation of the two men, must have been very appealing. But his attention was riveted on the field of his immediate actions, a battlefield in which victory was yet to be won or lost. In March 1923 the Sub-Committee on Bibliography of the League's Committee on Intellectual Co-operation met to deal with various problems.

One of them was the future role of the IIB, and La Fontaine represented the IIB at the Sub-Committee's deliberations which were held in the Palais Mondial itself. The Sub-Committee resolved

...that the important pioneer work accomplished by the International Institute of Bibliography in the domain of international bibliography, should be used as much as possible... the Sub-Committee, considering the services which a universal repertory... would provide; considering that it would be premature at the moment to propose a single system of classification, also premature to attempt to establish a Universal Bibliography by subject; considering that it is possible, however, to establish by international agreement an alphabetic repertory by author's names; considering that it is important that such an enterprise be based on the results already obtained in this matter by a great international institution... (resolves)... 1) that the International Institute of Bibliography should be chosen as the unique international depot for the bibliography of works arranged alphabetically by author's names; 2) that the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation should decide to study the means by which this organisation can be achieved under the auspices of the League of Nations with the agreement of appropriate national and international associations and institutions.<sup>28</sup>

These resolutions were adopted by the Committee when it met at Geneva at the end of July, together with a further resolution that central or national libraries should be encouraged to send two free copies of their catalogs to the IIB, together with two copies of any supplements.

Otlet now conceived another vast undertaking which reflected his dissatisfaction with the League of Nations which had not «achieved a desirable universality», he declared.

Its functions have remained confined to a limited area; representation at it is purely diplomatic without relation to parliaments, political parties, and the great associations. The nations remain independent and act as if there were no League of Nations. War continues to menace. The uncertainties and troubles of the time show that the work of reconstruction is merely an outline.

What was needed in Otlet's view was the assembly of a great international convention to draw up «a world constitution which could provide a real basis upon which Humanity can move towards its future». «Every interest, every nuance of modern thought» would need to be represented at this convention. By way of preparation for it, the UIA would mount a vast «enquiry-referendum» under the name *Les Cahiers de la Paix*. These would be analogous to the material prepared by the Deputies of the Estates-General in France at the time of the French Revolution. In this material the French had expressed their grievances and their wishes. «This», said Otlet, «is the only way a new regime can succeed an old regime». The idea, he stressed, had already received some support, and when the material was collected it would be indexed and organised at the UIA headquarters in the Palais Mondial in Brussels by a

special commission of experts. A draft World Constitution would then be drawn up and an unofficial conference called at the Palais Mondial to examine it and to decide how to proceed to the ultimate goal of an official world constitutional convention. A circular about *Les Cahiers de la Paix* was issued in April and Otlet hoped to be able to call an introductory conference later in the year.<sup>29</sup> In this way, one may suppose, Otlet hoped to implement the World Charter he had devised during the War, but nothing whatsoever seems to have come of *Les Cahiers de la Paix*.

Otlet was also at this time vigorously pursuing the work of the Committee for an International City which had its seat at the Palais Mondial.<sup>30</sup> The desirability of an international city had been recognised by the Conference to Develop the Institutes of the Palais Mondial. The idea, however, was a much older one reaching back to the period before the War to the work of Hendrik Andersen and the deliberations of the UIA World Congress in 1913. The Belgian Government had decided to hold a Universal Exposition at Brussels in 1930, the year of Belgium's Centennial Anniversary. Otlet had immediately fallen upon this as providing at a blow the basis for the International City. He made a report to this effect to the UIA and the Union Internationale des Villes both of which had actively pursued the idea. In his opinion such a city should ideally be placed under the protection of the League of Nations whose secretariat should be set up in it. The exposition of 1930, as it seemed to him, should be something different from other expositions.

It should mark a new development in the already very varied series of Universal Expositions. There is now an opportunity to let it express a complete and living synthesis of universal progress. A similar synthesis should be incorporated in a city yet to be built, a city which should be a model in all matters, a commemorative monument worthy of the added efforts of all people, a permanent location for all international activities, the symbol of the new Humanity.<sup>31</sup>

In 1923, plans, propaganda, meetings, correspondence about the city were given impetus by the government's brief occupancy of part of the Palais Mondial in 1922, its refusal to transmit to other governments the recommendations of and convention drawn up at the Conference to Develop the Institutes of the Palais Mondial, and by the threat of further disruption in 1924.

#### THE RUBBER FAIR

During the early part of 1923, publicity was given in Belgium to a British Rubber Fair which was to come to Brussels in February 1924. There was speculation about where it would be held. The Palais du Cinquenaire was once again sug-

gested as a good venue for such an event and on the 27th July 1923, Otlet was officially informed that the UIA would be required to vacate by the 1st February 1924 the parts of the Palais du Cinquantenaire which were occupied by it. The Rubber Fair was to last a fortnight and all of the space used by the UIA, except for several small offices, would be required. It was abundantly clear, therefore, that this would be a major dislocation and could even prove fatal if it took place.

Otlet threw himself into the task of saving the work of nearly thirty years with all the energy he had, and the rest of the year was a period of desperate activity the mark of which he never lost. On the one hand he strove to reverse the government's decision, and on the other he had to continue his negotiations with the League of Nations and its International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation. He could not even afford to prosecute these less vigorously because any success at the League would strengthen his position in relation to the government, and so they became ever more anxious, intense and frustrating. That the IIB had not fared badly at the League and seemed on the verge of faring better was to him almost irrelevant. It was the whole of his institutions that concerned him, and undue attention to any one of them threatened the integrity of the whole.

In June of 1923 he published a short document summarising the relations of the UIA with the Belgian government.<sup>32</sup> This was followed in July, when the Government had made its position clear, by a *Bulletin* cancelling a fourth Quinzaine Internationale which had been planned for August 1923. He alerted Sir Eric Drummond at the League to the conflict that was beginning between the UIA and the government,<sup>33</sup> and submitted a note to him outlining ways in which the League might help.<sup>34</sup> Drummond's staff in the legal section of the Secretariat deliberated over the note for a month and then concluded, as they had concluded in 1922, that the conflict was essentially an internal one and could not involve the League. But now they went further and analysed the UIA's rights. The UIA could not surrender its collections to any official international organisation unless an international convention establishing such an organisation were signed. Nor could the UIA claim the protection of the League under Article 24 of its Covenant because this Article was applicable only to official international organisations existing by treaty between governments. Moreover, the UIA could not have access to the International Court of Justice for its jurisdiction was limited to disputes between States.<sup>35</sup> This decision showed how far-reaching were the consequences of the Belgian government's decision to refuse to transmit to other governments

the convention protocols arising from the Conference to Develop the Institutes of the Palais Mondial, a convention which, if signed, would have set up the Palais Mondial as an official international organisation under the protection of signatory states. To Otlet, the League's decision suggested only the inadequacies of current international law and administration which cried out for rectification and he strongly protested against them.<sup>36</sup>

He was encouraged in his desire to reject the League and the government, both of whom he felt were conspiring against him, for some more neutral, uncomplicated form of support, by the visit of Godfrey Dewey, Melvil Dewey's son, to Brussels to see him at the beginning of September 1923. The two men discussed a wide range of topics. Among a number of bibliographical subjects discussed was the possibility of the joint publication of a single, polyglot edition of the Decimal Classification in French, English and possibly German and Russian. Above all, however, the two men discussed the Palais Mondial.

In speaking with Godfrey Dewey, Otlet emphasised the strict interdependence of the parts of the Palais Mondial (Bibliography, Library, Encyclopedia, Museum, University and Union of International Associations). He admitted, however, that the institution which formed the whole from these parts, could only be considered a first and imperfect attempt at a greater, more useful institution, a «New Palais Mondial», which would eventually rise in some hospitable location. Here, on some auspicious day in the future, occupying a great many buildings, it would represent the nucleus of an International City.

He described the events that had led to his disillusion with the League of Nations, and hinted at political manoeuvring both in Brussels and Geneva against the Palais Mondial and the UIA. Because of the various incidents between the UIA and League, it had become necessary, he now believed, to associate the work of the Palais Mondial as clearly as possible with a movement to reform the League. When the League had been set up, Otlet's hopes had been high that through it the world might be constituted anew and apart from politics, or at least in a way not entirely limited by political considerations. This had not been done. The League, which should have been an intellectual, economic and political society of nations, was not. «In its structure», Otlet said, «there should be a place for official action, and one for that of associations and individuals». There was none, particularly since the League's Council had decided in July of 1923 no longer to accept direct communications from individuals or non-governmental international associations.



The major problem facing the Palais Mondial, as Otlet now saw it, was how to extricate it from politics in Belgium and in the League, and so assure it freedom for unhampered development. Should the Palais Mondial be kept in Brussels, and American intervention sought to ensure its financial support and to influence the government into shouldering its responsibilities for it? Should it be set up in some other European city? Should it, or a duplicate of it, be moved to America, perhaps established in conjunction with the Lake Placid Club run by the Deweys?<sup>37</sup> These were some of the alternatives examined by Otlet and Godfrey Dewey. No decisions were made, but Dewey's visit and his interest were reassuring to Otlet who certainly took from their meetings a vision of some of America's abundant wealth flowing into and strengthening his now foundering institutions.

At its meeting in July-August 1923, the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation having adopted unanimously the Sub-Committee on Bibliography's resolutions about the IIB, debated the problem of creating international libraries and of compiling an *Index Bibliographicus* which would provide listings of bibliographical institutions and periodicals in all countries in the world and in all areas of knowledge. This latter project was approved almost at once by the League's General Assembly, which, when it met in September, urged that use should be made of the work of the IIB wherever possible.<sup>38</sup> Bergson spoke to the Assembly about the crippling problems faced by the Committee because of its meagre budget which had been reduced in 1923 to nearly half its former already inadequate amount, and its lack of a permanent executive body without which continuous international action was impossible.<sup>39</sup> The League's Council, supported by the Assembly, eventually authorised the Committee to accept outside funds and «a somewhat desperate appeal directed to the 'generosity of the various states and even of the private associations' was issued».<sup>40</sup>

During October 1923, Geddes, who had arrived in Europe and was in almost daily contact with Otlet, visited Paris and held long conversations with Bergson. «He is quite honest and open», Geddes reported to the suspicious, persecution-prone Otlet. «It is a pity that you don't try personal contact with him and his Committee in place of doing everything by correspondence.» Léon Bourgeois, it turned out, Geddes informed Otlet, had been the stumbling block which had prevented Bergson and the Committee acknowledging and fully understanding Otlet's ideas and the work of his institutions in Brussels. It seemed to Geddes that

he is (they are) ignorant not only of your work, but too much of all things of this order... However, it is necessary to say that

they begin to understand this, and that they proposed to come to Brussels, without my having to prompt (as you can imagine, I have done and will do all I can to see that he does not forget this good resolution). He understood that all the ideas that you believe valuable behind your works, were from Léon Bourgeois to whom they attributed the paternity. But don't write anything: he is intelligent enough to understand... They have had much difficulty with the philistinism of the politicians... Now for your part, dear friend, let me make my little protest to you. The question is not as simple as it appears to you in your isolation as specialist for generalisation, and in the face of a Committee of amateurs. Believe me that they are still educable. Remember also that you are not the only prophet... Go on tour, from Aberystwyth to Tagore, from New York to San Francisco... It is necessary to come out of your absorption, even in your work. I have loyally recognised them as being the most important I know—but not the only ones.

Geddes saw Otlet and himself as struggling to achieve a wider recognition of the «synthetic» philosophy or motivation underlying their work. He was concerned with an idea, not like Otlet who jealously identified himself with the institutions he had created to embody it. Geddes promised to do all he could with Bergson to encourage him to support the Palais Mondial, to emphasise its value to the Committee.

But, thanking you again for all you have given me, and congratulating you again on your work, I am a little disappointed, even in terms of your own interests, that your tension of mind does not permit you to give me an hour for criticism and for strengthening my line of attack which is not only that of presenting my own personal efforts for a common synthesis, which I believe would be useful to you, but also the general movement—I dare say *mondial*—however fragmented and dispersed.

You are like a general too separated from his army which, for the most part, doesn't know him any more. Think of synthesis as a movement in progress, more vast even than the field of your associations, of your bibliography, etc., despite their importance, even as their center. Think of the Universities in the same way—that you wish to repeat the dominating influence of the University of France earlier, even of Oxford, and now of London for Great Britain and Salamanca for Spain. Down with the super-universities! Long live free civic and regional universities. But create a *clearing-house* for them, congresses, summer, Christmas, Easter meetings. But take notice of realities too... Will the International University be international always? It is beyond the capabilities of any man; all you will do is to create a revolt against the new Vatican. You will say that it isn't your intention to pontificate at all. I know it—but unfortunately this is the impression you continue to give. And I seriously believe that if you substitute the idea of International University meetings for your «International University» you would in fact have something more than that indeed. I depend upon our long friendship for you not to be hurt by this frankness, and to recognise the loyalty of co-operation which inspires it.<sup>41</sup>

For Otlet, in the middle of his feverish struggle to keep the Palais Mondial alive, this letter must have been something of a shock, but he took no offence from the penetrating criticisms it contained. In replying to it, he expressed regret that he had

not been able to express clearly enough his real preferences in ideas. But Geddes must understand, he said, that he was «... an indignant man, pressed by necessity in the form of the League of Nations and the Belgian government». He could not do more than take to his pen. At the Palais Mondial «the daily administration absorbs me; the uncertainty of the morrow of the work deflects me from all other preoccupations now. And I become hard and angry, unjust perhaps. But you are wrong about my fundamental wish. To call me by the qualificative, 'Pope', when I have always been for the Ecumenical Council...!» It seemed to him that, in the end, he had done himself just what he had reproached others for doing to him — not listening. «It is bad; it is irritating; it is ridiculous. I should have given over my incessant preoccupation with the care of the ground floor and mounted with you to the higher stories, to the habitation of purer ideas.» He was startled by Geddes' revelation that there was a *plan Bourgeois*, and was glad to learn that the Committee was educable. (Some scepticism, however, could be forgiven him when one recalls that the Sub-Committee on Bibliography had visited Brussels, and that Otlet had had some early correspondence with Bourgeois and later with the Committee itself.) He concluded that «the deception will have been great! It [the committee] should constitute a real federative force; it is that which will become the Vatican, or at least a 'Congrégation Pontificale'». <sup>42</sup>

It is interesting to see reflected in a satire appearing in a literary review at about this time, aspects of Otlet's personality and attitudes that Geddes had criticised. There is no doubt that Geddes was accurate in his assessment of the unfortunate impression that Otlet was creating. The satire was a report of a visit to Otlet and the Palais Mondial. Otlet's interlocutor, who at no time mentioned Otlet's name during the course of his visit, referring to him simply as «my host», adverted to the use in earlier times of the rooms in the Palais Mondial for what was called the Spring Exhibition of Painting. He elicited the comment from his host:

Before-the War, Before-the-War—that was a preparatory period. Led by a supreme and mysterious will, man erected the temple for ends which he could not understand. Deceiving himself, he had sacrificed them, turn and turn about, to trade, entertainment and art, as you call what are to me these crude impressions of the mind. He was groping for the true destination of his work. I came. I drove out the merchants. And henceforth misfortune be on any of those of them who return. When they suggested at the beginning of the year that they should return in force to install their ungodly fair here, I hurled anathemas at the whole tribe, and have vowed to deliver them over to the execrations of the people. My Papal edict: the creations of the mind are being threatened, the righteous indignation of the people has been roused».

His visitor reported himself as sticking to his guns in favour of painting, and received the following outburst in reply:

What could be more disgraceful, more disorderly than an exhibition of painting? Nothing of that peaceful regularity which sustains the health of the mind. Not even a common measure. Nothing but disparate dimensions, separate frames, medleys of colour without relation, a scattering of originality in thousands of hues, thousands of forms, thousands of objects without connection, without a pleasant gradation from one to another.

It is necessary to restrain this anarchy. It is necessary to order, regulate, discipline, classify. When, Sir, these works of our painters and sculptors are described by my methods, their descriptions condensed in my files, my files numbered, arranged in rows, put away in alphabetic, chronologic, numeric, nominal, decimal, «mondial» order — when art rejects dancing to a frenetic jazz band... and returns to the wisdom of my pigeon-holes — When art finally, O sublime perfection, will be a card and a number — then your friends will find, not a Spring exhibition, but a perennial exhibition from which the merchant has been forever banished.

Thereupon, his host whispered mysteriously to his visitor that the figures on the Brussels town-hall showing the slaying of a dragon by an angel represented in effect «the spirit of Lucre and ME». Then he became absorbed in a moment of internal contemplation. Emerging from it, he touched the cabinet before him with «his sovereign finger, that finger made to support a forehead round and heavy with omniscience», and summed up his work:

Here is the miracle of method, MY miracle, and the wonder of uniformity, MY wonder. In this cabinet you have the world — Why do I say world? ... The Universe, the universe completely contained in ten cubic metres of cards ... Man has erected cathedrals to house the Host. This is true, but beyond the Host there is an idea, there is God, while here ... here, Sir, there is ME<sup>43</sup>.

## EXPULSION

Despite Otlet's anathemas and appeals to the «righteous indignation» of the public, the Government was in no way swayed from its decision to resume the Palais Mondial for the English Rubber Fair. Otlet had published a pamphlet at the end of September 1923 designed to refute the charges of the Government that the UIA had no rights to the areas occupied by it in the Palais du Cinquantenaire. Its rights, according to Otlet, were in fact threefold: legal rights (embodied in *arrêtés royaux* and other documents), rights in fact, and moral rights. <sup>44</sup> «The decision of the Government is final. The Union of International Associations must submit to it.» Baron Ruzetti, the Minister for Public Works, informed Otlet and La Fontaine. <sup>45</sup>

In early November, however, the Government requested the Royal Academy of Belgium to examine the collections of the Palais Mondial and attempt to evaluate their scholarly worth independently of other judgments. The Academy reported in January 1924 unfavourably. Representatives from the Academy from both the Class of Literature and that of Science had agreed the collections of the IIB had no value. The collections of the Museum, they agreed had some value, but the representatives from the two Classes differed as to how much. Outright condemnation would, no doubt, have been unwise because Otlet claimed that the Museum had been visited by over 50,000 people during 1923, a figure greater than any to which even the oldest museums of the City could point.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, their judgment was completely opposite to that of the 1922 commission of academics whom the government had set about the same task. On this occasion the Museum was thought to be without value and the collections of the IIB important. Otlet refused to accept the opinions of the Academy, formed, he observed dryly, after an inspection of no more than half an hour in the IIB's rooms and an hour and a half in those of the Museum.

Late in November, Baron Ruzetti suggested that other locations could be found for the Palais Mondial, and proposed to make available some old abandoned railway engine sheds. This offer was indignantly refused. As the year drew on, various questions were asked in Parliament about what was to happen to the Palais Mondial. A number of ministers, including the Prime Minister himself, tried unsuccessfully within parliament itself to influence La Fontaine, one of the Senate's most respected figures, to agree to the UIA's eviction from the Palais du Cinquantenaire without further fuss. Meetings between Otlet and La Fontaine and Ruzetti and others were arranged without agreement or compromise being reached. Otlet, in desperation, wrote to Cardinal Mercier the eminent cleric and Neo-Thomist who had been called, during the German occupation, the «conscience of Belgium», to all the Heads of Diplomatic Missions in Brussels, to the Belgium representatives at the League, and he petitioned the King. Towards the end of January 1924, Baron Ruzetti made a new offer of alternate locations which would be appropriate for the Secretariat of the UIA — a small, pleasant building tucked away on a boulevard, Rue Joseph II, and undertook to ensure that any of the UIA's collections not transferred to this location would be carefully stored in an unused part of the Palais du Cinquantenaire.

Otlet regarded himself as having been a prey to political victimisation. Why had the Government been so implacable?

No doubt there were many reasons, as mentioned in connection with the events of 1922. But there was now one more. «In foreign politics», the year 1923 in Belgium, «was marked by the aggressive policy of the Franco-Belgian Allies towards Germany, of which the invasion of the Ruhr was the principal manifestation».<sup>47</sup> The Paris section of the Union of Associations for the League of Nations had included on its agenda for 1923 a resolution requesting that the Belgian and French Governments refrain from invading the Ruhr. This had appeared in its *Bulletin*. In May, 1923 Otlet had been invited to the Ministry of Sciences and Arts, to explain this public opposition to the Government's policy, for the Union of Associations for the League of Nations had its headquarters in the Palais Mondial. The Department of Foreign Affairs had drawn the attention of the Department of Sciences and Arts to this fact, and in consequence, Otlet alleged, had refused to carry out the resolutions of the Conference of the Development of the Institutes of the Palais Mondial. Otlet pointed out that the Union of International Associations was completely different from the Union of Associations for a League of Nations. This distinction was ignored and he was informed, he said, that «it is not permissible that such publications should emanate from an organisation which has enjoyed the hospitality of the Government in State buildings». As late as November Otlet was still having questions asked in Parliament about this and the Minister for Foreign Affairs denied that he and his colleague, the Minister for Sciences and Arts, had said that they «would not tolerate» such a publication as the *Bulletin* in question.

The culmination occurred on the morning of the 12th February 1924. A body of professional movers joined some gardeners outside the Palais Mondial. At nine o'clock, the Principal Architect of Public Buildings entered the building and went straight to Otlet's office. He asked Otlet to co-operate in moving the UIA's furniture and collections. Otlet refused. The official retired to seek advice from his department and was ordered to continue. Otlet again refused to co-operate and insisted that he leave the building immediately. Upon his departure, Otlet and his staff at once locked all the doors behind him, barricading themselves inside their «gloomy offices», as an unsympathetic observer wrote, «protected by innumerable green files and their ramparts of cards». About a quarter of an hour later, a force of thirty men broke into the building and proceeded to block off the access of the offices Otlet was allowed to retain to the rest of the building in which the UIA's collections were housed. Then, under Otlet's eyes, they began to disassemble the collections. He was forced to watch the removal, as he said to a reporter who came along later in the



day, «by gardeners in clogs of delicate relief maps of the Alps donated by the Italian Government».

When he was asked what he would do next, Otlet replied that he was considering two courses of action: the first to seek legal redress, the second to move to another country. «Many countries have made us offers», he said. «We could go to Paris, the Hague, Rome, New York.» This was an empty boast and he was mocked for having made it. For the next few weeks the labourers in their clogs came and went among the collections. Some of the material was stored, the rest of it was piled into carts which were drawn up outside the building, and taken to the Rue Joseph II where Otlet had been forced to accept quarters. On one occasion as the carts started to trundle away, it was reported that one melancholy onlooker, «his umbrella under his arm, followed them as though he had fallen into step with a funeral procession».

A few days after the removal began, a visiting reporter found a number of rooms already completely empty, and ice-cold in their barrenness. He learned that «some foreign personalities» were there having discussions with Otlet. They were, he thought when he saw them, «more stupefied than indignant, not being able to grasp the brutal facts of what the Government had done. One can imagine Otlet's despair. He and La Fontaine were described as being like Marius weeping before the ruins of Carthage. Indicating Léon Wouters who was with him, Otlet said to a reporter: «I have laboured for 27 years with M. Wouters here, in this idealistic work... the library alone, 130,000 volumes of it, took three months to install in 1920 when it was only a quarter of its present size...» With him too, was Alfred Carlier, whom he described as «the learned artist» who had produced the Museum's thirty historical dioramas. «Do you know how much he earns?» asked Otlet, «four hundred francs a month. Everyone here works from a purely artistic and philanthropic spirit.»

For many these events spelled the end of the Palais Mondial. Some regarded this as just further evidence of the folly and weakness of evermore insecure Belgian Governments, increasingly powerless to control for any length of time the Belgian franc whose accelerating decline seemed on the verge of precipitating the country into financial ruin. Some regretted the passing of the Palais Mondial, accepting to a greater or lesser extent Otlet's own evaluation of its significance and achievements. Others did not, resenting the proprietary terms Otlet used in asserting his claims to the parts of the Palais du Cinquantenaire occupied by it. They were contemptuous of its collections, the documentary work which had cumulated

from the labours «of patient spiders», and thought that the battle to retain the Palais Mondial ludicrous in its conduct, fully satisfactory in its outcome.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Nitobe to Otlet, 13 February 1922, Dossier No. 39, «Société des Nations», Mundaneum.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Paul Colin, «Belgium», *Annual Register, 1921* (London: Longmans Green, 1922), p. 233.
4. Vernon Mallinson, *Belgium* (London: Ernest Bean, 1970), p. 97.
5. *Les Titres du Palais Mondial*: deuxième mémorandum sur les rapports avec le gouvernement belge (Publication No. 110; Bruxelles: UIA, 1923), p. 14 (my emphasis).
6. Otlet to Nitobe, undated, Dossier No. 39, «Société des Nations», Mundaneum.
7. *Les Titres du Palais Mondial*..., p. 14.
8. Nitobe to Otlet, 19 April 1922, Dossier No. 39, «Société des Nations», Mundaneum.
9. Otlet to Nitobe, 11 May 1922, *ibid.*
10. Secretaries General to Nitobe, 17 March 1922, *ibid.*
11. Nitobe to La Fontaine, 22 May 1922, *ibid.*
12. Secretary, UIA to Nitobe, 16 September 1922, *ibid.*
13. UIA, *Code des Voeux Internationaux*: codification générale des vœux et résolutions des organismes internationaux... élaboré et publié par l'UIA sous l'égide de la Société des Nations (tome 1; Publication No. 104; Bruxelles: UIA, 1923).
14. «Etat statistique des institutions du Palais Mondial», *Les Titres du Palais Mondial*, p. 19.
15. Conférence pour le développement des institutions du Palais Mondial, Bruxelles, 20 au 22 août 1922, *procès-verbaux* (Publication No. 106; Bruxelles: UIA, 1922).
16. *L'Affaire du Palais Mondial: documents* (Publication No. 112; Bruxelles: UIA, 1924), pp. 4, 44-45.
17. Nitobe to La Fontaine, 16 May, 1922, Dossier No. 39, «Société des Nations», Mundaneum.
18. Paul Otlet, *La Société des Nations et l'Union des Associations Internationales*: rapport aux associations sur les premiers actes de la Commission de Coopération Intellectuelle (Publication No. 107; Bruxelles: UIA, 1923), p. 7.
19. Paul Otlet, *Introduction aux travaux de la Commission de Coopération Intellectuelle de la Société des Nations* (Publication No. 105; Bruxelles: UIA, 1922).
20. Most of the text of the Committee's deliberations and the various motions placed before it are given in E. C. Richardson, *Some Aspects of International Library Co-operation* (Yardley, Pa: F. S. Cook, 1928), pp. 68-79. Quotations are from this source. An outline of the full

- range of topics covered and decisions made is given in C. H. Livermore, *The Third Yearbook of the League of Nations for the Year 1922* (Brooklyn: The Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 1923), pp. 216—218.
21. In his report to the Associations, Otlet excerpts the *Procès-verbaux* and other documents, appending his own comments. Much of the document is heavily ironical. See Paul Otlet, *La Société des Nations et l'Union des Associations Internationales*, *passim*.
  22. *Ibid.*, pp. 20—25.
  23. Education Committee of the League of Nations Union, London to Otlet, 3 January 1923; and Otlet to the League of Nations Union, London, 12 January 1923, Dossier No. 39 «Société des Nations», Mundaneum.
  24. Paul Otlet, *La Société des Nations et l'Union des Associations Internationales*, pp. 25—26.
  25. Quoted from the Committee's minutes by Jan Kolasa, *International Intellectual Co-operation* (Wrocław), Poland: Wrocław Scientific Society, 1962). Kolasa lists the national committees formed in 1922 in a footnote, p. 26).
  26. Geddes to Otlet, 19 January 1923, Dossier 92(G), Otletaneum.
  27. *Ibid.*
  28. IIB, *Bulletin de septembre 1923*. (Publication No. 134; Bruxelles: IIB, 1923), p. 11.
  29. UIA, *Bulletin du 15 juillet 1923* (Publication No. 109; Bruxelles: UIA, 1923), pp. 3—4.
  30. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
  31. Paul Otlet, *L'Exposition Universelle de 1930 en Belgique et l'établissement d'une Cité Internationale* (Publication No. 103; Bruxelles: UIA, 1921).
  32. Paul Otlet, *Mémoire sur les rapports du gouvernement belge avec l'UIA et le Palais Mondial* (Publication No. 108; Bruxelles: UIA, 1923).
  33. Paul Otlet to Secretary General, 15 August 1923, Dossier No. 39, «Société des Nations», Mundaneum.
  34. «Union des Associations Internationales et Société des Nations», note No. 5121, 4 August 1923, *ibid.*
  35. Van Hemel, Director of the Legal Section, for the Secretary General to Otlet, 26 September 1923, *ibid.*
  36. Otlet to Secretary General, 3 October 1923, *ibid.*
  37. «Note sur les entretiens entre M. Godfrey Dewey et M. Paul Otlet à Bruxelles le 3 septembre 1923», Dossier No. 259, «Dewey», Mundaneum.
  38. *The League of Nations and Intellectual Co-operation* (Geneva: Information Section, League of Nations Secretariat, 1927), pp. 26—27.
  39. Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle, *Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle, 1925—1946* (Paris: the Institute, [1946?]), p. 21.
  40. Kolasa, p. 31.
  41. Geddes to Otlet, undated letter October 1923, Dossier 92(G), Otletaneum.
  42. Otlet to Geddes, 9 October 1923, *ibid.*
  43. A. Léinard, «Le Cinquantenaire est rendu aux Salons de Printemps», *Le Thyse*, 1 July 1923, pp. 250—255.
  44. *Les Titres du Palais Mondial*, p. 2.
  45. Many of the letters, documents and accounts in the press (for and against) involved in the events at the time of and immediately before the eviction of the UIA from the Palais du Cinquantenaire are reprinted in *L'Affaire du Palais Mondial: documents* (Publication No. 112; Bruxelles: UIA, March 1924) and the account given in the next pages is taken from it except when otherwise indicated.
  46. *Le Conflit du Palais Mondial* (Publication No. 111; Bruxelles: UIA, 1924), p. 11.
  47. Paul Colin, «Belgium», *Annual Register, 1923* (London: Longmans Green, 1924), p. 233.

## Chapter XII

### GRADUAL DISINTEGRATION

#### THE IIB

The Belgian government's resumption of the Palais Mondial had extremely far-reaching consequences for Otlet's work. It marked the beginning of an end. Afterwards there was never any real hope that his vision of institutionalised synthesis could ever become manifest, could ever become a powerful tool for standardisation, co-ordination, and co-operation in intellectual work. The actions of the Government, real in that they arrested the work of the Palais Mondial, disarranged its collections, and discouraged its personnel, had yet an even more important symbolic meaning of abandonment, rejection, denial. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that the government at the very last moment before the eviction from the Palais du Cinquantenaire, promised that it would permit the UIA to resume its locations there after the Fair, and made good that promise, though still not admitting that the UIA had any permanent rights to them' (a new eviction was threatened for 1925).<sup>2</sup> Moreover, in 1926 the government finally admitted that its actions in 1924 had been a mistake. As Otlet said when he reported the «vindication» of the Palais Mondial to Godfrey Dewey, it had all been «a sort of Dreyfus affair».<sup>3</sup> But what little comfort Otlet might take from this must have been diminished considerably by the government's almost permanent state of crisis which led to constantly changing Cabinets. Indeed, shortly after the letter admitting error had been written, a new government was formed under the former Minister for Foreign Affairs, who had, in effect, quashed all official proceedings on the resolutions of the 1922 Conference to Develop the Institutes of the Palais Mondial.<sup>4</sup>

At the end of the Rubber Fair, Otlet now nearing sixty, and a few voluntary supporters began the work of returning the UIA's collections to the Palais du Cinquantenaire. This time, however, there was no government help, and the work proceed-

ed very slowly. The repertories of the IIB were probably the first to be set up again. By 1926 about half of the rooms of the Museum had been reconstituted.<sup>5</sup> In 1927 a valiant effort was made to re-install the Library before the opening of a Conference of the IIB, called that year at the Palais Mondial. The effort required exhausted Otlet.<sup>6</sup>

The year 1924 marked a turning point, then, in Otlet's career and in the fortunes of the institutions he had created and called the Palais Mondial. He was forced to recognise their precariousness in Belgium and had to look abroad for help. The supporters of the IIB were also forced to consider their own attitudes towards these institutions. The IIB was the oldest and intellectually, at least in terms of Otlet's rationalisation, at their centre and their collapse as a whole would certainly bring it down. The supporters of the IIB were, therefore, faced with the alternatives of attempting to resuscitate it separately from the other institutions, or of reviving them all. For Otlet his institutions were one, parts of a whole, inextricably linked by intention and in effect. In his view there could be no real separation of one from the others without violent harm being done to them all. Yet this view required a commitment to his philosophy of synthesis rather than to a demonstrable fact and some saw no necessity for the commitment. At the end of 1923, for example, when eviction from the Palais du Cinquantenaire seemed certain, Masure, the IIB Secretary, and Losseau, that old and tried supporter of the Institute, were convinced of the necessity of extricating the IIB from the ruins of the Palais Mondial. A newspaper article had made a comment to this effect, «conforming». Masure wrote to Losseau, «exactly to what we desired». He added wryly, «needless to say, the article made Otlet hop who wants at no price to separate the two organisations».<sup>7</sup>

In June 1924, after the *bouleversements* of the Rubber Fair in Brussels, a group of members of the IIB met formally in The Hague under the chairmanship of La Fontaine to consider the future of the IIB. Nine of the seventeen participants were from Nider (Nederlandisch Instituut voor Documentatie en Registratuur). Two matters were before the meeting: a draft of revised statutes for the IIB, and a constitution for an International Committee for the Decimal Classification. The aims of the IIB as stated in the revised statutes were:

1. To improve and unify bibliographical methods, especially classification;
2. to organise co-operation to elaborate or form works and collections, especially the Répertoire Bibliographique Universelle;
3. to establish, for this, an international center for co-ordination;
4. to permit intellectual workers to use the collections, especially by providing copies and extracts;
5. to multiply bibliographical and documentary services in all countries.



The Institute pursues its work according to an overall plan, standardised methods, and a convention having the purpose of forming a Universal Network of Documentation, Publication and Information. It co-operates in the International Center formed by the Union des Associations Internationales.<sup>8</sup>

The statutes recognised three categories of members: effective, associate and honorary. Effective members were the only ones with the right to vote. In Article 9, «Representation», effective members were described as regional or national organisations having documentation or bibliography as their object. Where such organisations did not exist, the Council of the IIB could designate national representatives. Any international organisation, governmental or non-governmental with goals involving human knowledge could also become effective members of the Institute.<sup>9</sup> These statutes as a whole did not express radically new ideas. They expressed, however, a new emphasis on national or regional sections as underlying the Institute's organisation. Otlet had always recognised the importance of national organisation for achieving the international goals of the IIB, but had never viewed it as having the exclusive importance it was given in these statutes.

The statutes changed the Institute's emphasis in yet another way. The RBU was now only one of the works and collections for which the IIB would maintain an international center, a «center for co-ordination». The Universal Decimal Classification on the other hand, the means in Otlet's eyes to the end of the RBU, was implicitly recognised as having achieved an enhanced importance in the affairs of the Institute. This importance was made quite clear by the creation of an International Committee for the Decimal Classification.

The continued absence after the War of published revisions of the Classification particularly disturbed Donker Duyvis who, in 1921, had become secretary of a committee to consider suggestions for revision of parts of the Classification. In January 1922 he had himself prepared revisions for organic chemistry consisting of nineteen typed pages, and for the chemistry of colloids. He also attempted to interest the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry in the Classification, and in July 1924 it applied for representation as a special international organisation on the IIB Council.<sup>10</sup> Donker Duyvis had, in fact, quickly become the hub of activity on the Classification, and he helped Otlet draw up the constitution of the Classification Committee, which formalised the work of his 1921 committee and laid down appropriate procedures and controls for dealing with the Classification.

The Classification Committee now became the official body through which the IIB exercised its rights over the Classification. Representation in the Committee was «confederative» in

the same manner as in the IIB itself, members being drawn from regional or national sections and from the international associations. The Committee was to have its own Secretariat appointed by the IIB Council. The purposes of the Secretariat were: to form «a liaison center for all who co-operate in the tables of the Decimal Classification», to keep «the list of collaborators and the list of the Committee's documentation up to date»; and to distribute and publish «news and important facts on the work of the Committee».<sup>11</sup> A formal procedure was set down for recommending, deliberating upon and then adopting proposals for the revision and development of the Classification. Preliminary drafts and plans were to be sent to regional secretaries who had the responsibility of seeing that they were reproduced in as many copies as needed and distributed wherever appropriate. Copies were also to be sent to the General Secretariat of the IIB and to the appropriate officials in relevant international organisations. After three months, if a delay was not requested for further consideration, a draft was considered to have been adopted officially by the Classification Committee. An annual General Assembly of the Committee was to be held at the time of the IIB's annual meeting, and would decide between opposing claims when they arose. The Secretariat was designated as having been provisionally assumed by Nider, and Donker Duyvis was appointed Secretary. The temporary nature of the location of the Secretariat apart from IIB's General Secretariat was emphasised and explained by the difficulties encountered by the IIB in Brussels at this time. These, then, were the major steps taken by the group meeting in The Hague to ensure that the Institute regained its strength and influence on the widest possible base.

The Hague meeting also decided to call a conference of the IIB in its newly constituted form in Geneva on September 8, 1924. At this meeting the new statutes could be ratified, and the IIB formally apprised of what had been happening in Brussels. It could also discuss the draft agreement between the IIB and the League's International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation which had at last been drawn up, and could now be presented to the IIB for ratification. A *Bulletin* was published in July containing the draft statutes and the League agreement by way of preparation for the conference.<sup>12</sup>

Ironically, during this year of adversity for the IIB in Belgium, its negotiations with the League appeared at last to be about to bear some fruit, though the wider questions of the UIA and the League were no nearer to being settled than ever. In December 1923 La Fontaine had participated in a meeting of the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation in Paris. There the Committee's Sub-Committee on Bibliography had recommended that an agreement between the League and

the IIB be drawn up which would set out a program of work for the IIB, the subsidy to be granted it by the League and proposals concerning procedures for controlling it.<sup>13</sup> A Committee was appointed to consider these proposals. Marcel Godet, Associate Member of the Sub-Committee on Bibliography and Swiss National Librarian was appointed *rapporteur*. A number of trenchant but just criticisms of the IIB were made in his report. He pointed out that the IIB presented to the observer difficulties which arose both from the spirit and the manner of its work. «The reproach has been made», he said, «that it lacked clearness, a critical sense, and that it endeavoured to embrace every country, every language, every period, and every subject, a task which it is difficult to achieve. The Institute undertook one gigantic task after another...» He pointed out, too, that the materials of the collections of the IIB were often incomplete and to some extent were haphazardly assembled, and that opinions differed on the value of the Decimal Classification adopted by the Institute. «Finally, the Institute had been reproached because of its propensity to overrate the value of index cards, and because it was said to mistake the means for the end.»<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, he recognised that the Institute had responded to a real need and had achieved a great deal in its history. «For a quarter of a century it had acquired a reputation which could not be ignored. The disinterested labor of its creators must call for respect.» Godet's Committee concluded that «it was necessary to give strong help to the Institute», but that «help could not be granted without discrimination or unconditionally to all its activities. The solution was to give it a mandate for certain definite tasks». What these tasks might be was explored in some detail, but it was observed that at this stage, while control «must be exercised by representatives of the authorities or organs which might subsidise the Institute», little more specific than this could be set down. If the program of work set out in his report was accepted by the Committee, Godet indicated that he and his colleagues could then proceed to the next steps in formalising a relationship between the League and the IIB. An agreement would be drawn up. If this were accepted by both parties, the Committee would then obtain the League's approval and the necessary credits, whereupon the Sub-Committee on Bibliography could immediately «draw up a detailed and specific program of work for a first period of several years, indicating precisely the nature and order of the work to be undertaken».

After La Fontaine replied at some length to the criticisms made in Godet's report, a draft agreement was drawn up and approved by the Committee. Article One of the draft was an undertaking by the League of Nations to grant its patronage to the work of the IIB as set out in Article 2, and to «grant its

assistance as far as possible with a view to facilitating the work of the Institute within these limits», Article Two, setting out the work of the IIB, contained the undertaking of the IIB «to concentrate its efforts and resources, in the first instance», on the following tasks:

- (1) The development of an alphabetical catalog of author's names on the lines of a collective catalog of the great libraries of the world, indicating where a copy of any particular work can be found;
- (2) The development of the following sections of a systematic catalog:
  - a) Bibliography and sections connected with bibliography...
  - b) organisation of scientific work and intellectual co-operation.

The Institute also undertook to perform the other tasks set out in Godet's program of work. Article Three was an undertaking to fix the exact order of specific tasks later. Article Five was an agreement to include a member of the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation in the governing body of the Institute.<sup>15</sup> It was Richardson's opinion that the draft prepared by Godet was «thoroughly practical». «The fact», he observed to Otlet «that the League Committee has no budget to devote to it is a detail».<sup>16</sup>

#### THE MONDANEUM

During these difficult months of 1924, Otlet attempted to gain support not only for the IIB, which, in point of fact, was proving to have able advocates in Holland and America, but also for the whole, beleaguered Palais Mondial. Godfrey Dewey offered to do his best in America through the Lake Placid Club for the «World Palace», as he called it:

I realise fully that right now is a critical time for the World Palace, and feel that we should do everything in our power to assist right now when help is most needed, and to enlist the interest and help of the Club clientele, among whom there are many who could be of effective assistance either by influence or money if their interest could be reached and roused.<sup>17</sup>

But he found it difficult to understand what had actually happened in Brussels and why, and his lack of facts he believed interfered with his attempts to counter the unfavourable impressions about the Palais Mondial that were spreading in America, some of them engendered he suspected by American members of the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation.<sup>18</sup>

Otlet decided to call a conference of the UIA in 1924 at the same time as that of the IIB. He made no attempt to set up a Quinzaine Internationale in Geneva, but it was clear that a conference of the UIA on the doorstep of the League, as it were, would be opportune and might be thought to carry on the great World Congresses of 1910, 1913 and 1920, though in diminished form. He prepared two documents

for this conference. The first, a *Table of International Organisations*,<sup>19</sup> was simply a list of international associations arranged systematically under a dozen main headings and a number of sub-headings. It was intended to show their multiplicity and all-encompassing variety. The second, however, containing the program for the conference and a lengthy report to the associations was of considerable importance. Once again, but now in extremely general terms, Otlet set out his views about what international life should be like, now it should be organised, how international organisations should be formed and work «for the co-ordination of international forces 'for progress, in peace, by co-operation and putting into effect the capacity of the intellect'». <sup>20</sup> While it reiterated much of what Otlet had said before, the present report provided a clear statement of his philosophy of internationalism as now developed, what he described as «the directing principles and the bases upon which it is desirable to rest the organisation, as a whole, of world life». <sup>21</sup>

International organisation, he said, should be conceived as linking «in a constantly improving unification particular pieces of acquired knowledge», and as stimulating subsequent programs «set down by common agreement, of investigation of common interests». For a century, he claimed, analytical work had prevailed, but now the needs of synthesis are affirmed more and more. <sup>22</sup> He noted that society had evolved through a number of stages in the course of history, but had at last reached a point where

Society craved a scientific direction, what August Comte, giving it an entirely positive sense, called the restoration of the spiritual power — of now being able to formulate rational directives, having the necessary science, disengaged from the immediate suppositions of action, and placed in a central position, in some way panoramic and synthetic, which is necessary for the consideration of matters from a point of view high enough to discover the general causes of the social evils from which all nations suffer equally... <sup>23</sup>

For Otlet, the only way of finally achieving the «scientific direction» positivists like himself so much desired and believed in so passionately that they spoke paradoxically and without hesitation of its providing a «restoration of the spiritual power of men», was by means of a synthesis of knowledge. What was original in Otlet's statement of this positivistic conventionalism was that the necessary synthesis, the necessary panoramic view, could only be had, in his opinion, through international intellectual organisation which could be accomplished only by means of the organisation of international associations, for these alone were general enough, sufficiently all-embracing in their spheres of activity, and disinterested enough, to achieve the desired goal.

An American official recently visiting Paris had raised the problem in another form by asking «if democracy and liberty have been preserved... what are we managing to do with them?» <sup>24</sup> Attempting to answer this question himself, Otlet was emphatic:

In the public sphere one word characterises the use to be made of peace: **progress**, conceived of as an expansion and perfecting of life in all its aspects. This idea can be a powerful motivator and a powerful regulator. Combined with co-operative and federalist notions, it can give the world a principle of direction it now lacks. <sup>25</sup>

Without the mobilisation of the forces of the intellect the progress of Humanity would, he believed, be slow and erratic. Mobilisation could occur only through the organisation of the international associations in which for him were vested, in the widest sense, the production and dissemination of man's knowledge.

The notion of an international center was at the heart of Otlet's theories, for upon it he focused and limited the otherwise unconfined abstraction of his thought. It held his ideas together, and gave some semblance of order to their shifting levels of generality. It could be studied, he said, from three points of view, as an **idea**, an **institution** and a **material body**. As an idea, the following explanation accounted for it:

All that exists, despite its infinite diversity, is one in relation to the knowledge we can have of it, in relation to the repercussions of the activities of all that exists. But this unity which is real, concrete, can be unorganised, amorphous, massive, if there is no effort to co-ordinate it. It is necessary, therefore, that by intelligence we achieve a Science, an encyclopedic synthesis, a science of the universal, embracing everything we know, uniting one thing with another in explanations ever more general, displaying them by methods ever more simple. It is necessary, therefore, through our endlessly developing possibilities, that we achieve an organisation for relations between men, and for their relations with things, an organisation which should be oriented towards synegetic action, which takes into account at one and the same time and as a whole, all men, all countries, all relations: the Earth, Life, Humanity. <sup>26</sup>

The institution which would embody the idea, Otlet believed, would be realised through a great «confederation», what he described as «an organised effort of co-operation and co-ordination...», which would «group in a triple, federalised hierarchy, international associations, national associations and groups and individuals», the international associations retaining overall control. «At the World Center all of the organisations and institutions which have been born in the course of successive civilisations, will be... amplified in an extraordinary way in their power on the mind, because all aspects of their agency will have been combined to function each with the other.» <sup>27</sup>



The ultimate material expression of the institution would be the actual physical buildings constituting the world centre. «The Center», Otlet observed, «is... the whole of its installations, collections, services, all the architectural forms 'objectifying and visualising' the idea of the institution».<sup>28</sup> In its initial stages, the center would have one building, but later it would grow into

a great colony, a *universitas*, with its many institutes swarming around the central structure. And yet later one may entertain the vision of a 'city' where each nation will be represented by its pavilion each great special organisation of world life, by its building...<sup>29</sup>

In its «ideal form», this is what the Center would be like — a *Mondaneum* (the spelling was later changed to *Mundaneum*). No longer did Otlet use the name «Palais Mondial». What he called the «Palais Mondial and its Institutes» were merely a first and imperfect version of the *Mondaneum*, and had suffered grievous assault in Brussels. The Conference that Otlet now proposed to call at Geneva, and to which this report was directed, was intended «to unite all effort to reconstruct immediately the institutions grouped at the Palais Mondial, to strengthen and to complete them».<sup>30</sup> The tasks to be faced by the Conference, then, were to prepare and have adopted an appropriate statute, and to choose a suitable location which would be accepted by the world as «extra-territorialised», a location where the *Mondaneum* could grow absolutely freely, unhampered by any restriction of nationalist interest. Otlet described what he meant by «extra-territorial» at some length, pointing out that in the Vatican, the Holy City of Jerusalem, the principalities of Liechtenstein and Monaco and elsewhere, freedom from national control, an internationally respected local independence, worked very well. This is what was needed for the new Center-City he wished to see arise from the old Palais Mondial.

In presenting this plan for a *Mondaneum*, the new Palais Mondial, Otlet critically examined the work of the League of Nations and other international organisations in order to suggest possible «modalities» of their collaboration with the Center. Two particular grievances came out strongly in his account of the League: its decision to restrict representation to governments, and the activities of the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation. The League's Council had decided in 1923 not to transmit within its secretariat documents originating from individuals and non-governmental associations and quite specifically limited its representation to governments. In Otlet's view, grave consequences for the international associations had resulted for

There exists no firm organic disposition regulating the relations of international associations with the League of Nations. The international

associations have no regular means at all of corresponding with the League of Nations. The simple right of petition, provided for in every national constitution, has always been refused them. The collaboration requested from them by the agencies of the League is determined in a quite arbitrary manner. They have no right to be consulted... The international associations are therefore the only persons having no protection in modern law; for, if they can have neither recourse to the League of Nations nor the Court of Justice, they are in an inferior position in respect of every physical human being and every national association who find a protector in their governments.<sup>31</sup>

The invidious position of international associations with respect to the League on the one hand, and national governments on the other was dramatically exemplified, Otlet believed, in the recent conflict of the UIA with the Belgian Government and in the powerlessness and indifference of the League in this conflict.

The Committee on Intellectual Co-operation, which Otlet pointed out yet once again had originated in the activities and the published proposals of the UIA, had proved no less disappointing than the League. Once formed, it «had discarded without discussion the Union's plan». Moreover, it had refused, Otlet alleged, to envisage the problem of organisation from a global point of view, according to a *vue d'ensemble*, quite apart from not attempting to assure «the international associations representation at the League of Nations». As a result, only one conclusion was possible, the conclusion upon which, in a sense, the whole of Otlet's report was based: «the proposition of the Union to create an International Organisation for Intellectual Work, general in its object, and federative in its constitution, remains completely as it was».<sup>32</sup>

This report of Otlet's is confusing in its apparently disorderly movement between description, analysis, prescription, and theorising of an almost vertiginous generality. Most striking is its abstractness, the patent impracticability of its proposals, qualities arising from the very first premise of Otlet's theory of international organisation, the point upon which his absolute disagreement with the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation rested: that it must be done as a whole, from «la vue d'ensemble». The problem was that the more general, the less «local» Otlet's thought, the more centered on the ideal, on «ought» and «should», the more difficult it was for him to express and anchor it in action through real institutions. Recognising the simplification, one might say that the UIA (1910), the Palais Mondial (1920) and then the *Mondaneum* (1924), increasing in abstractness, represented an increased potentiality of failure, an increased defiance of reality as Otlet became more and more detached through excessive cerebration and perhaps through disappointment, from the difficulties and limitations of actual, competitive, international organisation.

## THE CONFERENCES OF 1924 AND AFTERWARDS

Godfrey Dewey presided at the Geneva meeting on the 8th September 1924 of the IIB, effective membership in which was held by Nider, the Bureau Bibliographique de Paris, the Concilium Bibliographicum, the Union Internationale des Villes, the Fédération Dentaire Internationale, the Institut International d'Agriculture and the Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, and one or two other bodies.<sup>33</sup> Two new sections were now admitted to effective membership of the Institute: the Association Suisse pour l'Organisation de Travail et de Documentation (Asted) and a Section for Bibliological Psychology. Both sections originated in Otlet's sojourn in Geneva during the War. In 1912 Emile Chavannes from Switzerland had visited the IIB and had made Otlet's acquaintance. During the War years the two men had set up Asted and had even discussed the possibility of Asted publishing an edition of the Decimal Classification for the IIB.<sup>34</sup> The moving force behind the Section for Bibliological Psychology was an expatriate Russian, Nicholas Roubakine, who had written since 1889 some two hundred works of scientific popularisation. He had also written on Bibliological Psychology, the theory and practice of «the scientific study of all the mental phenomena associated with the creation, circulation, influence and use of the book and of the written and spoken word in general». Roubakine, Otlet and the Director of the Jean-Jacques Rousseau Institute had set up a special Section of the IIB for «Bibliological Psychology» in 1916. These two sections were now admitted to membership of the IIB in terms of Article 9 of the new Statutes. At the same time the IIB Council, acting within the terms of this Article, issued invitations for the formation of Austrian and Hungarian sections, requesting that the Nationalbibliothek and a Professor Harvath respectively temporarily assume charge of each section's secretariat. Only Chavannes voted against the new statutes because he thought that they «did not give sufficient support to the Secretaries-General». The Institute also adopted without question the draft agreement with the League. It was signed by Sir Eric Drummond and came into force in November 1924.

Among the delegates to the Classification Committee's meeting were Godfrey Dewey and Dorcas Fellows who had succeeded May Seymour as editor of the American classification. One of the most important conclusions of this meeting was that «the editions of the Decimal Classification Codes of Dewey and of the IIB should be unified». Towards this end it was resolved that the two codes should be modified in such a way that «the best of both will be adopted, each party consenting to the necessary sacrifices». It was concluded that there should

be three versions of the Classification: an abridged version, a library version, and a bibliographic version, the last being the European version. Dorcas Fellows, as editor of the American version, was appointed «to check up entries (1st for an abridged ed.) report differences and recommend for to be retained».<sup>35</sup> The Belgians in their turn agreed to extend their numbers before the decimal point to three figures, even if this required the addition of one or two zeros. A committee of three members of the IIB and three experts appointed by Dewey would review all developments.

Representatives from about seventy international associations, none of them except the Red Cross, the great humanitarian or learned associations, took part in the UIA Conference.<sup>36</sup> The Conference resolutions simply recapitulated the desiderata of international organisation set out in Otlet's report. A number of annexes attached to the *Compte-rendu* of the Conference are interesting in indicating that an unsuccessful attempt was made to give the UIA a sounder foundation than it had. There was a list of the principal tasks to be undertaken by the UIA (modelled, no doubt, on the procedure adopted by the League in dealing with the IIB), a list of regulations which were to govern UIA World Congresses, and a statement of the functions of the various organs of the UIA (members, commission, secretariat, special committees). The constitution of a governing Council of twenty members which was provided for at this time in the regulations, was postponed. It was decided to conduct a postal ballot for this at a later date. The ballot appears never to have been held.

Nitobe represented the League of Nations at the Conference, and «Immediately the Conference began, moves were made to attempt to get the League of Nations to make some recognition of the collaboration in its work of the international associations and their work.» The day after the Conference closed, twelve representatives of the UIA waited formally on the League Secretariat to present the League with the UIA's demands. These were for the representation of the UIA on the Committee for Intellectual Co-operation, for an international statute, and for the right to petition the League.

Now, however, a new threat to Otlet's hopes for League support for his international center had appeared. In July 1924, the French government responded to the call for external help made by Bergson in late 1923 on behalf of the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation. It offered to provide the Committee with an institutional headquarters, an «executive instrument», located in Paris, supported by a budget from the government and called the Institute for Intellectual Co-operation. A week before the Conference of the UIA opened, Otlet and La Fontaine addressed a letter to the League designed to

keep before the President and the Council of the League «the things realised and the plans» of the UIA.<sup>37</sup> It reminded them of the Secretary-General's 1921 report on the educational influence of the UIA, and alerted them to the approaching Conference. They were asked to delay making any decision on the French proposal to set up an Institute for Intellectual Co-operation until after the UIA Conference had finished.

The League's Council accepted the French Government's offer «in principle» on the 9th September, the day the UIA Conference concluded. It referred the matter for consideration to the Assembly asking for its opinion on several points, one of which was

the relations between the projected Institute and existing international institutions, such as the Union of International Associations, the International Office of Bibliography, the International Union of Academies, and the International Research Council, whose headquarters are at Brussels and whose autonomy it is important to maintain.

The Assembly concluded that the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation should

in each case determine, having consulted the interested parties and in agreement with them, the relations of the institutions mentioned in the Council's resolution...The Committee on Intellectual Co-operation will attempt to collaborate with these institutions to resolve particular questions without, however, in any way restricting their autonomy.<sup>38</sup>

This was disguised repudiation of the UIA and its World Center. Otlet and La Fontaine wanted a stay of action by the League on the French Government's offer because the UIA's World Center could become, was already, though ineffective for want of support, they believed, everything which the French Government proposed to create. Simple recognition of this fact would be enough, for inevitably patronage and a healthy subsidy would follow and the day would be saved for the Palais Mondial. A recognition of «autonomy» was in effect a form of rejection.

After the 1924 Conferences in Geneva, Godfrey Dewey went back to America where he continued his work for the Palais Mondial in general and for the IIB in particular. In November he began to make appeals for specific information. The Lake Placid Club was ready to publish a booklet about the Palais Mondial, he said, «but I can do nothing definit on that til I have the date, fotografs, diagrams and translations of the legends on them, that yu promist».<sup>39</sup> He began to travel and speak about the World Palace, and kept repeating his appeals for accurate information. «Yu make a great mistake», he warned, «if yu send me only the favorable items». Above all he wanted to know, having heard talk of moving the Palais Mondial and all its institutes to Geneva,

(1) How much could the IIB spend efficiently per year beginning at once under present conditions, i. e., with the uncertainty as to Brussels Palais Mondial, etc?

(2) How much could the IIB spend efficiently per year (on operating expenses, not including equipment, moving, etc.) as soon as establish in Geneva?

(3) With how small an appropriation would you be prepared to move to Geneva at once? We figured out the need for \$ 5,000,000 and I said it would require at least \$ 1,000,000 to move with temporary housing etc. but I think I can see where even with \$ 500,000 it would be possible to start firmly establish on our own territory in fire proof housing...<sup>40</sup>

He talked with representatives from various foundations in America (such as the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation) and found, as he reported to Richardson, «despite the general undercurrent of distrust of Otlet and La Fontaine growing out of a lack of comprehension of their larger plans and underlying world center conceptions... an unexpectedly definit spirit of rediness to co-operate...»<sup>41</sup>

In February Otlet furnished Dewey with the financial information he had requested. A total of \$92,000 could be spent efficiently at once. In Geneva, a budget of \$300,000 a year would permit the completion of the RBU in ten years, though a sum of \$62,000 would be needed to make the move thither.<sup>42</sup>

At this time, as the first anniversary of the eviction from the Palais Mondial approached, a debate was held in the Belgian Parliament on the Palais Mondial and the relations of Belgium with the Committee for Intellectual Co-operation. Jules Destrée who had been appointed the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation's representative on the IIB Council, spoke against the Palais Mondial. This was a betrayal in Otlet's view. In an act «whose boldness I don't deny», Otlet reported that he interrupted Parliament upon the resumption one week later of the debate in which Destrée had spoken. He reminded Parliament very strongly «of our existence and our history. The ministers — and this was one of my aims — were moved and we have received a letter from them...»<sup>43</sup>

The anniversary of the eviction was formally celebrated. What Dewey thought of all this emotion of betrayal, recrimination and defiance, it is hard to say. It is also hard to say how effective Otlet was being in promoting the cause of the Palais Mondial especially after the League quite definitely agreed to the establishment of the Paris Institute for Intellectual Co-operation. Otlet's mind was fixed now on abandoning Belgium and moving lock, stock and barrel to Geneva. There had been a suggestion that the new Paris Institute might take over the Institution of the Palais Mondial, though the amount of space needed for the Museum especially, was regarded as a serious drawback.<sup>44</sup> Otlet was unenthusiastic and possibly even suspicious of this overture made through Julien Luchaire,



French historian and one time Inspector-General for Public Instruction in France, who was the Paris Institute's Director between 1925 and 1931. He was going to leave «the door open» to Paris «without rushing it», he confided to Dewey. «The best solution is Geneva, but Geneva is impossible without the Americans.»<sup>45</sup> Albert Thomas, the director of the International Labour Office, himself a Frenchman and nationalist, wrote Otlet to Dewey, had assured him that Geneva was absolutely best.<sup>46</sup>

Early in 1925 he issued a brochure about what was now called the Mundaneum. The change from «Mondaneum» to «Mundaneum» had been made late in 1924. The Secretary-General of the Union of Associations for the League of Nations, whose *Bulletin* in 1923 had contained the troublesome remarks against Franco-Belgian policy in the Ruhr, approved the change. «The 'O'», he said,

displeased humanists. I am not sure even that the ending 'eum' is good Latin. It seems to be more Greek, being the transposition of the Greek ending 'caion'. As to the sense of the expression, I wonder if it conforms to etymology. 'Mundus' in Latin, like 'Kosmos' in Greek, designated in general not the human world but the totality of the physical universe which comprises the sky and the stars. Now we aren't about to establish intellectual co-operation with the Neptunians or even the Martians...<sup>47</sup>

Whatever the philological niceties (Ruyssen's was a somewhat ponderous «jeu»), the brochure was translated into English,<sup>48</sup> and the name stood (with only occasional variations) as Mundaneum thenceforth.

At the end of July 1925, representatives of the Sub-Committee on Bibliography met at Brussels to establish the order in which should be performed the tasks recommended as appropriate for the IIB by the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation. First, it was decided, should come a supplement to the *Index Bibliographicus* a world-wide directory of bibliographical services the first edition of which, edited by Marcel Godet, had been issued by The Hague in 1925, and a subvention of 1,000 Swiss francs was allocated for this. Next came the «Main Catalogue» by author's names, followed by the information service, then the library and «other operations», and finally, the *Bulletin*.<sup>49</sup>

A small meeting of the IIB Council was held in 1925 at which it was decided, the sum allocated by the League permitting nothing more, merely to publish a simple supplement to the *Index Bibliographicus* in 1925. A proposal that Asted should assume responsibility for publishing the *IIB Bulletin*, which had appeared from time to time in 1924—1925 through the efforts of Donker Duyvis, was rejected on the grounds that the *Bulletin* was so closely linked with the General Secretariat that it would be unwise to separate them.

Otlet addressed the meeting on a favourite subject of his «the microphotographic book». He had been very much interested in the notion as early as 1906 and had collaborated on a paper about it then with the inventor, Robert Goldschmidt.<sup>50</sup> In 1925 they collaborated on another paper on the subject. Otlet recognised the enormous potential of microphotography for bibliography and cataloging. He believed that it would hasten progress towards the realisation of the world network of documentation centers he had begun to speculate about because it permitted «an economy of effort in the conservation and distribution of documents in a way impossible at the moment with present means».<sup>51</sup>

During 1925 work progressed on the European version of the Decimal Classification (CD). Donker Duyvis reported to the Classification Committee meeting that year that 141 notes about changes and extensions had been exchanged. He observed that little tangible progress had been made on the unification of the American and the European versions of the Classification (DC—CD), giving as the major reason the serious illness of Dorcas Fellows.<sup>52</sup> During the period 1924—1925, Miss Fellows had worked hard but unwillingly on the problems of unification. Her time was limited, however, not only because of illness, but because of the work of preparation of the twelfth edition of the American version of the Classification (published in 1927).<sup>53</sup> It was just at this time, and only momentarily, that unification of the two codes had become distinctly possible with the prospect of new editions of both and an expressed desire for reconciliation of differences. Donker Duyvis sent Miss Fellows proposals for expansion and modification of the CD, but because of pressure of preparing the 1927 edition of the DC, and a gradually mounting distrust that became almost pathological detestation of the Europeans,<sup>54</sup> she had agreed to them without much if any study. In Europe, where second-hand copies of the twenty year old first edition of the CD were fetching as much as \$200,<sup>55</sup> Donker Duyvis and Otlet were being pressed urgently for a new edition and they hastened with developments and revisions as fast as they could, accepting Miss Fellows' uncritical approval of their drafts. Indeed, Donker Duyvis decided to issue «provisional tables» in a few hundred copies of the sections most in demand as they were completed to reduce some of the pressure of demand on him.<sup>56</sup> The result was, of course, more divergence slowly solidifying though the 1927 American edition did incorporate some of the IIB expansions.

Two major parts of the European Classification were formally published in 1925, both by the Concilium Bibliographicum.<sup>57</sup> Herbert Haviland Field had died in 1921, and the Concilium Bibliographicum had fallen into a decline. It

was briefly rescued by support from the American National Research Council, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Swiss Society for the Natural Sciences, but the Rockefeller Foundation withdrew its support in 1926. Though the Concilium Bibliographicum lingered on until the beginning of the Second World War, its eventual demise was assured and, with the publication of these parts of the Classification, it ceased to play any real part in the affairs of the IIB.<sup>58</sup>

Ernest Cushing Richardson was chairman of the ALA's Committee on Bibliography at this time and travelled to Europe practically each year after 1921 for a number of years. He was optimistic about the IIB's future. He had already frequently expressed his conviction of the value of the IIB and of the usefulness of the RBU as an international finding list. He saw no reason why the IIB could not be supported «by the familiar co-operative method» if Godfrey Dewey's efforts to secure large scale funds failed.<sup>59</sup> As he saw it, the most serious problem was the real intentions towards the IIB of the League Committee on Intellectual Co-operation whose energies were absorbed during 1924, 1925 and 1926 by the setting up of the Paris Institute as its executive organ. Should the League take hold of the IIB «practically», Richardson believed that it would then be feasible for the ALA also to come to its support.<sup>60</sup> But even after the order of tasks had been agreed on in Brussels by the IIB and the League Committee, a specific program had to be decided upon and funds allocated to support it. Eventually, Richardson was able to get the ALA Committee on Bibliography to agree that it would support the IIB whenever it and the League «came to an agreement as to operations so that the League Committee is prepared to recommend through the American Committee of the League, definite solicitation of funds for definite activities...»<sup>61</sup>

Late in 1925 in a memorandum to Professor Alfred Zimmern, Director of the Section for General Affairs, Richardson made a number of general proposals concerning bibliographical work in the Institute for Intellectual Co-operation in Paris. He criticised both the League Committee, whose secretariat was in Geneva, and the new Institute for Intellectual Co-operation for not having sufficiently definite ideas for encouraging international co-operation in bibliography, and «in the matter of the Brussels Institute», he was careful to insist, they in America «were looking with interest to your actions now that you have a secretariat».<sup>62</sup> His memorandum was submitted for comment both to Marcel Godet, who had acted as *rapporteur* for the Sub-Committee for Bibliography in 1924 when the agreement between the League and the IIB had been drawn up, and Barrau Dihigo, Librarian of the

University of Paris. Both tended to disagree with Richardson's proposals. Godet continued to think that above all else the IIB should be developed as soon as possible into an international bibliographical center supported by the League. He realised that «a competent man» was needed to carry out what would be delicate negotiations between the League, the Directors of the IIB and potential benefactors such as the Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations from whom the sums necessary to support the changes and developments envisaged for the IIB might be had. He reaffirmed, rather more directly, his awareness of the difficulties that would be encountered in putting into effect the program he had proposed,

difficulties resulting from the character — very considerable indeed — of the present directors, their inability to limit themselves, their intransigence; and I know that their utopian tendencies do little to inspire confidence in those who hold the purse strings. I have proposed as a solution to give them limited support, for certain determined tasks and to provide them with a subsidy dependent on strict control.

He appealed earnestly for a serious attempt to be made for proper and successful use of the IIB and its resources, for something that went beyond mere piety and tokenism.<sup>63</sup>

Barrau Dihigo, on the other hand, declared that any work undertaken by the Directors of the IIB would be held in suspicion by the Directors of the world's great libraries «who consider them incompetent». The classified catalog, one part of Otlet's great Universal Bibliographical Repertory, he believed to be «useless», and the other major part, the author catalog to require «minute revision».<sup>64</sup> In a supplementary note he went so far as to say that in his opinion the Directors of the Institute for Intellectual Co-operation «would be compromised in any continuation of relations with M. Otlet».<sup>65</sup>

This last remark was stimulated by a *contretemps* between Otlet and the Institute for Intellectual Co-operation concerning the proposed supplement to the *Index Bibliographicus*. The official most concerned with this, the Assistant Head of the Institute's Scientific Section, M. De Vos Van Steenwijk, thought that the supplement and then a new edition were urgent, the first edition having been much criticised. He saw the tensions between the IIB and the Institute as likely to interfere with a swift conclusion to the work and he proposed to travel up to Brussels to talk with Otlet and La Fontaine and report his general impressions to Luchaire, the Institute's Director. He was able, however, only to meet with Otlet with whom he held talks during the 5th and 6th of March, 1926. He came away from Brussels profoundly disturbed. He was convinced that the enormous program of work undertaken by Otlet and La Fontaine at the IIB was

far beyond their resources. He had the impression that so strong was their feeling of having been treated «unjustly and ungratefully on various occasions and by various parties» that they were no longer capable of being objective about the Paris Institute and had lost all sight of their own faults. He was convinced, too, that personal relations between them and either the Committee or the Institute for Intellectual Co-operation had deteriorated to such an extent that co-operation between them had become impossible. The 1924 agreement, in which League support to the IIB depended upon restriction of its work, he discovered to have been deeply antipathetic to the Directors of the IIB. It

had been accepted by them with bad grace and, it seems, on the other hand the CICI [Commission Internationale de Coopération Intellectuelle] had done little to lessen this bad grace...

He pointed out, as an instance of neglect on its part, that the League had allowed over a year to elapse before informing the Directors of the IIB as to the manner in which the 1924 agreement might be carried out.

The *Supplement* to the *Index Bibliographicus* had been undertaken under such poor financial conditions, he decided, that there was no way in which it could be well done, a point Marcel Godet had made some months earlier when appealing for adequate support for the IIB when it was charged by the League with specific tasks. The situation, however, was more complicated and unpleasant than this. The League had refused the Belgians any more time to prepare the work than originally agreed on, though there had been a considerable delay in getting it started. As to just what the real state of affairs was, de Vos Van Steenwijk was unclear because of lack of sufficient communication between the Secretariat for International Intellectual Co-operation in Geneva and the Institute in Paris. What was clear, however, was that Otlet, highly incensed yet again with the League, proposed to issue the *Supplement* at the IIB's own expense with a preface in which he intended to explain fully the difficulties that had occurred between the IIB and the League over the matter. This disturbed de Vos Van Steenwijk because «perhaps wrong is on both sides».<sup>66</sup>

There was rather a flurry in Geneva upon receipt of de Vos Van Steenwijk's report, for La Fontaine had informed the Secretary of the International Committee for Intellectual Co-operation in Geneva that the supplement was finished and ready for printing. It seemed difficult, as a result, for the League now to repudiate payment for it as de Vos Van Steenwijk seemed to think it had been decided to do.<sup>67</sup> De Vos Van Steenwijk, however, thought La Fontaine was, in fact, not *au courant* with the real state of affairs. Otlet

had actually read from a letter from the Secretary of the Committee refusing to grant the delay requested and proposing to pay cost incurred only until the 1st January, 1926—250 Swiss francs. It was this letter that had determined Otlet to conclude the work at the expense of the IIB and «expose» the League in a preface of which de Vos Van Steenwijk had seen the proofs. When the work was issued, hurriedly and imperfectly, Marcel Godet, editor of the first Edition, refused to have his name associated with it.<sup>68</sup>

The preface indicated that information had been incorporated into the *Supplement* as received without verification, amplification, or consistent transliteration of titles in non-roman alphabets.

These insurmountable difficulties have resulted from the fact that the Accounting Services of the League of Nations considered that the sum voted by the Assembly of 1925 for bibliographical work, was intended to cover only the costs of printing the *Index Bibliographicus* and its Supplement, without any provision whatever for an indemnity for the work of preparation, selection or verification which is imposed on and exacted by any serious bibliographical work.<sup>69</sup>

The version in English of de Vos Van Steenwijk's report of his visit to Brussels, which went to Richardson and which incorporated suggestions from Godet and the opinions of Barrau Dihigo, was rather different from the confidential document submitted to the Director of the Paris Institute. In the English report, de Vos Van Steenwijk took pains to stress the completely unbiased nature of his study of the Brussels situation, his conclusions being based on consultations with a great many people as well as with Otlet, and drawn, indeed, partly from Richardson's own reports. The first point to be made, in his view, was that it was urgently necessary «to restore confidence in the IIB because it has been badly shattered». The mere raising of funds would not have this effect because of the lack of co-operation between the IIB and the Directors of the world's great libraries. Nor would adding members to the IIB's Executive Committee, a move Richardson was himself understood to have recommended, be enough. The necessary confidence

can only be regained by putting the entire responsibility for the IIB, or at least for such parts as are to be patronised by the League of Nations, on the shoulders of a new man of recognised authority among librarians...

At present direct co-operation between the IIB and the CICI is impossible, if only for personal motives. Too much ill feeling has been stored up.<sup>70</sup>

Richardson did not at once rise to the bait, never did to the idea that he might become what he called the «Dictator of the Dictators». He repeated that they in America were waiting for the League to act before they would attempt to do so.



He was disappointed that the Institute had not understood that he had suggested, in fact, a complete re-organisation of the IIB's Executive Committee «so as to have a majority of effective men representing the League, the American Library Association and other potentially aggressive factors who might kindly but firmly control and direct the energies of the minority.» Indeed, de Vos Van Steenwijk's report suggested to him that it might be best to have the IIB declared bankrupt and placed in the hands of a Receiver. In this way its tangible assets might be seized and effective re-organisation achieved. As this was not likely, the only solutions were those already proposed: «contingent grants, direct co-operation and moral support».71 Not long after this, he stressed that he saw the constructive working out of the «Brussels problem» as one of the Institute's major problems, if not its central one, because all international intellectual co-operation ultimately rested, he believed, on the cornerstone of bibliographic co-operation. «To many of us over here», he wrote, «it seems a sort of acid test of your committee and the new Institute. The task is in your hands by virtue of your commitments and especially the recorded agreement».72

However, stalemate, despite what appeared to be good intentions within the Paris Institute, was inevitable at this time because of the personalities involved, especially that of Otlet, hostile, persecution prone, convinced of having been let down once again, of having been betrayed. In July 1926, Destrée asked to be relieved of his position as the League representative on the IIB Executive Committee. His resignation was accepted and the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation decided not to appoint a replacement but to review its agreement with the IIB with the hope of finding some alternative modality for co-operation.73

#### THE SYNTHETICAL MOVEMENT

The work of reconstituting the Palais Mondial, now the Mundaneum, proceeded slowly. Otlet seems to have spent a good deal of his time on study and writing and in participating in a number of conferences such as the first Psychosociological Congress in Paris,74 and an International Congress of Accounting.75 Above all, however, Otlet worked for what he called the «synthetical movement» in which lay his long-standing, steady bond with Patrick Geddes. He began to explore its implications for education. In 1926, he proposed to set up an International Museum-Center for Education within the Mundaneum, and prepared a rationalisation of it and what he thought modern education should be like in terms of his notions of «universalist synthesis».76 His underlying

premise was expressed in a slogan: «for universal civilisation, universalist education».77 For the kind of synthesis-oriented education he proposed, great emphasis needed to be placed on teaching media. There should be, he believed, «didactic charts and tables» which displayed diagrammatically, schematically and therefore in a simplified form, all that had to be taught. Moreover he showed himself to be firmly convinced of the value of film in teaching. «Visualisation on the screen will become a fundamental teaching method»,78 he declared. At the Museum-Center would be established a finding list of important educational materials, and the problems of preparing and distributing abstracts of this material were carefully examined in his study. A collection of syllabi, anthologies, annotated bibliographies, and, one imagines, text-books, would be begun also. Summing up one major point, Otlet expressed his appreciation of the potential value in education of recent technological developments. He wrote:

**Mechanical instruments:** these instruments will have a great future in teaching. They are automatic auxiliaries to the teacher, the extension of the word and the book. Without a doubt, they are a long way from being perfect, but what marvellous progress has already been made. The gramophone has assisted the teaching of language greatly... It can do the same for music. The Pianola will permit the acquisition of an extensive knowledge of music, of works which one should hear. Machines for projecting fixed dispositive plates or microfilms (photoscope), the cinema in black and white and in colour, with texts interspersed in the film with the possibility of interrupting it, will allow knowledge of things and actions which should be seen.

The radio (broadcasting...) with its personal apparatus and its great speakers, its musical programs, its lectures, its courses, will permit one to be in direct contact with the outside world, to receive messages, to observe the usefulness of foreign languages, to attempt to understand them...

**New Teaching Equipment:** education based on the considerations developed here will necessitate the development of teaching materials. The poor material which educational establishments use to-day, will no longer be satisfactory.79

Otlet envisaged the production of new kinds of text books by international co-operation and in the next few years he himself worked on the production of such material. With all the new materials, new methods, the enlarged aims, teaching establishments would become, he believed, «a little world».

a microcosm, schools for infants at the primary level, colleges, *lycées*, *athénées* for young people at the secondary level. Static objects, functioning objects, materials to be observed, experimented with, used for construction, simple charts for the class room cupboard, a laboratory, a workshop, the school museum. In the form of manuals and publications this material should be the result of collective work, of a continuous collaboration involving teachers of all countries, of all levels, and of every educational speciality.80

Charts, diagrams, schemas had a particular importance for Otlet. They permitted the representation of complex wholes

simply and completely so that they were valuable both for educational and propagandist purposes. His interest in this method crystallised after the War, though its beginnings can be seen in illustrative material prepared on the International Center before the War.<sup>81</sup> The method was developed in setting up the Museum, and owes a great deal conceptually to Geddes and practically, one imagines to the employment of an artist on the Museum staff, Alfred Carlier. For Geddes, «Graphics», as he called it, was a subject of the greatest interest and working on it used to give him amusement on his long voyages. In 1923 he gave Bergson a «solid lesson» in it, and Bergson, he commented to Otlet, appeared to be «much taken with it».<sup>82</sup> In 1926, Otlet himself presented a report prepared by the «graphics» method on the contemporary state of bibliography to the sixth Congress of Industrial Chemistry in Paris. Tables with a minimum of somewhat disconnected text showed the relationship of the universe, the mind, science and the book; how the book represented the world and how communication of various kinds took place; the principles and desiderata of the universal bibliographic organisation of intellectual work; aspects and parts of documentation; the Decimal Classification; and the universal organisation of documentation.<sup>83</sup>

During this period the collaboration of Otlet and Geddes was very strong. They corresponded frequently and visits were exchanged between Brussels, Edinburgh and Montpellier where Geddes had founded the Collège des Écossais, an «international university residence» in 1924.<sup>84</sup> In 1925 Geddes hoped to get a number of scholars and intellectuals to prepare a series of papers for the *Sociological Review* to appear during 1926 through 1929. These papers would have, he hoped, the general unifying aim of «resumée into one generalised view of contemporary civilisation, the specialised approaches of the sociological subsciences». It was proposed that Otlet should write on «the Present World Situation viewed as Transition — the Transition in Europe», and on «the Civil Role of the Palais Mondial».<sup>85</sup> Otlet appears, however, to have stressed the need for something even more general, what he called «*Studia Synthetica: an Atlas Encyclopedia Synthetica, and an Anthologie Synthétique des Sciences*»<sup>86</sup> and the projected collaboration did not eventuate.

Otlet, however, studied ways of moving forward, independently of Geddes, towards achieving the synthesis, the encyclopedia, he so much desired to see created. During the winters of 1923, 1924 and 1925 he lectured on «universalism» at the School of Higher Studies of the New University of Brussels in the creation of which he had been tempted to participate in 1894. During these three winters he repeated

a series of fifteen lectures on the subject, and, as he wrote to Geddes in 1925, having delivered the series three times he would like to deliver it yet a fourth. It is necessary, he explained «to go over the same ideas, to deepen them, to classify them better, to correlate them, to find a more lively expression for them, to simplify their presentation, and above all to make them less 'local'».<sup>87</sup> He published an outline of the arrangement of subjects in and visual material available on «the Encyclopedia and Synthesis of Knowledge» for which he was working.<sup>88</sup> He embarked on a program of using microfilm to make available the results of synthetic activity in the Mundaneum. «For the diffusion of the works and collection of the Center, two collections», he announced, «have been begun simultaneously. The first is in microscopic format (14×18 mms.), *Encyclopedia Microphotica Mundaneum*. The second is in chart format (64×67 cms.), *Encyclopedia Universalis Atlas Mundaneum*...».<sup>89</sup> Ten years later hundreds of microfilms and a great many charts were available for purchase on all kinds of subjects related to the collections of the Mundaneum.<sup>90</sup>

#### THE LAST QUINZAINE INTERNATIONALE

One particular preoccupation of Otlet's in 1926 was the idea of holding another Quinzaine Internationale in 1927 at the Mundaneum. Perhaps he hoped to reawaken the interest that had greeted this venture on its first appearance in 1921, and to catch up on the support lost between 1924 and 1927. Conferences of the IIB, the UIA and the International University were scheduled for the period between the 17th and the 30th July 1927.<sup>91</sup> The scale of activity of the Conferences and the session of the University was much reduced, however, and the Quinzaine produced nothing new for any of the three organisations. Discussions and resolutions were similar to those of previous Conferences, except that the repetition and the evidence surrounding the participants of ineffectuality, must have made them seem rather hollow. Indeed, there was something emptily repetitive about the whole venture and it marked the last session of Otlet's International University and the end of the UIA, which held no further international conferences. Otlet continued to publish occasionally in the name of the UIA; meetings of representatives of the Associations with offices at the Mundaneum continued to be held; and Otlet persisted in attempting to maintain the Mundaneum, which had originated as the UIA's international center, until his death. But effectively, the UIA had become moribund in 1927. It was revived after the Second World War and,

with a limited and realistic program, now enjoys considerable success.

The IIB, however, continued to show signs of a vigorous new life. Late in 1926, the new edition of the European Classification started to come off the press and about 500 pages of it, up to the end of Class 5, Natural Sciences, was presented to the IIB's Conference. Another important piece of business dealt with at this Conference was the decision to accept the British Society for International Bibliography (BSIB) as the British national section of the Institute. The Society was formally constituted in London later in December 1927 by Samuel Bradford, then Deputy-keeper of the Science Museum's Library, Alan Pollard, Professor of Optical Engineering at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, and others. Pollard was elected its President. The IIB decided to reserve its Presidency to an Englishman for the 1927-1928 term and it was accepted by Pollard.

The year 1927, despite the insignificance of the Fourth Quinzaine Internationale, is of importance in the history of the IIB because it marked a stage in the development of its new life, and the end (though this did not become fully clear until 1932) of its domination by Otlet and La Fontaine, as compared with the UIA and the International University which had at last succumbed, as it were, under Otlet's hands in the vast halls of the Mundaneum.

The few *Bulletins* issued in 1924 and 1925 had been prepared by Donker Duyvis at some financial loss.<sup>92</sup> They introduced a new tone in IIB publishing. They were necessarily brief, but they presented at the same time comprehensive and apparently objective accounts of IIB activities. These reports carefully reflected the IIB's new statutes. Council Meetings, Assembly Meetings, Classification Committee and other Committee meetings were all carefully identified. As Donker Duyvis wrote to Godfrey Dewey, he had done his best to use the new machinery set up in 1924 for the smooth functioning of the Institute. He corresponded, for example, with regional secretaries and relied upon them to pass necessary information on to their members. Otlet, however, tended to ignore all these arrangements and go his own way. «For some time», said Donker Duyvis, «I tried to educate M. Otlet to more accuracy, but at that moment I myself had forgotten a bag of documents... so I have no more the courage to moralise on my fellow man's promptness».<sup>93</sup>

In these years, the reports prepared by Otlet lacked the clarity, precision and objectivity of tone of those of Donker Duyvis. Not only did he ignore the new organisation of the IIB, his thought remained firmly anchored to the concept of the IIB as embedded in the institutional setting of the Palais

Mondial. He would not or could not grasp the fact that in the late 1920s the IIB had to find new directions and was gradually but quite definitely becoming independent of him as it did so, both in terms of its new regional organisation and its emphasis on the Decimal Classification. Otlet's universalist and centralist approach soon became irrelevant to the new faces appearing within the IIB.

One of these was Alan Pollard's, IIB President for 1927-1928. Pollard had been interested in the IIB and the Decimal Classification since 1908 when he had made Otlet's acquaintance and looked over the IIB in Brussels.<sup>94</sup> After the War he began to translate and develop those parts of the CD dealing with optics and light for application to the index of the *Transactions* of the Optical Society. His account of the classification and his translation of the tables was published in 1926.<sup>95</sup> He was, therefore, no newcomer to the IIB or to the Universal Decimal Classification. His leadership during his several terms as President was vigorous, intelligent and courteous, and it brought the IIB firmly out of the shadow of its past.

A sad, symbolical ending of the old order in the IIB was the death reported by Otlet to its 1928 meeting, of Louis Masure who had been its Secretary in Brussels for over thirty years. «Owing to the circumstances», Otlet observed, «it has not been possible to replace him».<sup>96</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

1. *L'Affaire du Palais Mondial* (Publication No. 112; Bruxelles: UIA, 1924), pp. 30-31.
2. Otlet to Godfrey Dewey, 27 January, 1925, Dossier No. 259, «Dewey», Mundaneum.
3. Otlet to Godfrey Dewey, 8 May 1926, *ibid.*
4. Adolphe Van Glabbeke, «Belgium», *Annual Register, 1926* (London Longmans Green, 1927).
5. Ernest Cushing Richardson, *Some Aspects of International Library Co-operation* (Yardley, Pa.: F. S. Cook, 1928), p. 154.
6. Otlet to Godfrey Dewey, 19 August 1927, Dossier No. 259, «Dewey», Mundaneum.
7. Masure to Losseau, 10 December 1923, Dossier No. 256, «Losseau», Mundaneum.
8. *Bulletin de novembre 1925* (Publication No. 145; Bruxelles: IIB, 1925), p. 1.
9. *ibid.*, p. 2.
10. Georges Lorphèvre, «Donker Duyvis et la Classification Décimale Universelle», *F. Donker Duyvis: His Life and Work* (Nider Publication



- Series 2, No. 45; The Hague, Netherlands Institute for Documentation and Filing, 1964), p. 18. Also *Bulletin d'août 1924* (Publication No. 140; Bruxelles: IIB, 1924), p. 9.
11. *Bulletin d'août 1924*, p. 4.
  12. *Bulletin juillet 1924*: session annuelle, Genève, 8 septembre 1924 (Publication No. 139; Bruxelles: IIB, 1924).
  13. Richardson, p. 84.
  14. The Minutes of the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation are given in Richardson, pp. 88—93, and separate reference is not made to them.
  15. The draft agreement is given in Richardson, pp. 111—112.
  16. Richardson to Otlet, 10 June 1924, Dossier No. 259, «Dewey», Mundaneum.
  17. Godfrey Dewey to Otlet, 4 March 1924, *ibid.* The occasional curious spelling is Dewey's. He was a strong believer in simplified spelling like his father.
  18. Godfrey Dewey to Otlet, 9 August 1924, *ibid.*
  19. *Tableau de l'organisation internationale: organismes internationaux et activités internationales* (Publication No. 114; Bruxelles: UIA, 1924).
  20. Paul Otlet, *Conférence des Associations Internationales—programme, rapport général...* (Publication No. 113; Bruxelles: UIA, 1924), pp. 10—11.
  21. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
  22. *Ibid.*
  23. *Ibid.*, pp. 38—39.
  24. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
  25. *Ibid.*
  26. *Ibid.*, pp. 40—41.
  27. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
  28. *Ibid.*
  29. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
  30. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
  31. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
  32. *Ibid.*, p. 29 and p. 31.
  33. The following account except where indicated is taken from *Bulletin de septembre—octobre 1924* (Publication No. 141; Bruxelles: IIB, 1924), pp. 17—18, 22—24, and 26.
  34. See Dossier No. 275, «Service de Documentation», Mundaneum.
  35. John Phillip Comaromi, *A History of the Dewey Decimal Classification: Editions One through Fifteen, 1876—1951* (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Department of Library Science, University of Michigan, 1969), p. 318.
  36. The following account of the conference is taken from UIA, *Conférence des Associations Internationales: compte-rendu sommaire* (Publication No. 115; Bruxelles: UIA, 1924).
  37. UIA, *Conférence des Associations Internationales: compte-rendu sommaire*, pp. 16—18.
  38. *Ibid.*, pp. 20—22.
  39. Godfrey Dewey to Otlet, 14 November 1924, Dossier No. 259, «Dewey», Mundaneum.
  40. Godfrey Dewey to Otlet, 9 January 1925, *ibid.*
  41. Copy sent to Otlet of a letter from Godfrey Dewey to Richardson, 17 January, 1925, *ibid.*
  42. «La crise et le transfert du Palais Mondial: réponses de M. Otlet aux questions de M. G. Dewey...», Note No. 525, 1 February 1925, *ibid.*
  43. Otlet to Godfrey Dewey, 27 January 1925 and 18 February 1925, *ibid.*
  44. Luchaire to La Fontaine, 23 February 1925, *ibid.*
  45. Otlet to Godfrey Dewey, 11 February 1925, *ibid.*
  46. Otlet to Godfrey Dewey, 25 March 1925, *ibid.*
  47. Ruysen to Otlet, 5 December 1924, Dossier No. 39, «Société des Nations», Mundaneum.
  48. UIA, *Mundaneum: a World University, Museum, Bibliography and Library—Headquarters for International Associations in a World Centre* (Publication No. 117; Bruxelles: UIA, 1925).
  49. *Bulletin de novembre 1925*, pp. 5—6.
  50. Robert Goldschmidt and Paul Otlet, *Sur une forme nouvelle du livre: le livre microphotographique...* (Publication No. 81; Bruxelles: IIB, 1906).
  51. Robert Goldschmidt and Paul Otlet, *La Conservation et le diffusion internationale de la pensée: le livre microphotique* (Publication No. 144; Bruxelles: IIB, 1925), p. 7.
  52. *Bulletin de novembre 1925*, pp. 17—19.
  53. Comaromi, p. 319.
  54. *Ibid.*, pp. 321—325.
  55. *Ibid.*, p. 319.
  56. *Bulletin de novembre 1925*, p. 19.
  57. Concilium Bibliographicum. *Conspectus methodicus et alphabeticus numerorum «systemis decimalis» qui in Bibliographia Zoologica... in usum veniunt* (3rd ed., IIB Publication No. 146; Zurich, Concilium Bibliographicum, 1925); and Concilium Bibliographicum, *Conspectus methodicus et alphabeticus numerorum «systemis decimalis» ad usum Bibliographiae Physiologicae* (3rd ed., Office (sic) International de Bibliographie Publication No. 143; Zurich: Concilium Bibliographicum, 1925).
  58. Katherine O. Murra, «Some Attempts to Organise Bibliography Internationally», *Bibliographic Organisation*, ed. by Jesse H. Shera and Margaret E. Egan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), pp. 41—41.
  59. Richardson, p. 125.
  60. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
  61. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
  62. E. C. Richardson to Prof. A. Zimmern, December 29 1925, Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle: Institut International de Documentation: DVII. 13, Unesco, Paris.
  63. Marcel Godet to Alfred Zimmern, 2 February 1926, *ibid.*
  64. Barrau Dihigo to de Vos Van Steenwijk, undated, *ibid.*

65. Note signed de Vos to M. le Directeur 11 March, 1926 with supplement dated 19 April 1926, *ibid.*
66. De Vos Van Steenwijk, «Rapport sur ma visite à l'Institut International de Bibliographie à Bruxelles les 5 et 6 Mars 1926 — Confidentiels», 13 March 1926, *ibid.*
67. G. Opreescu to M. Luchaire, 16 March 1926, *ibid.*
68. Undated note signed de Vos to M. le Directeur and de Vos Van Steenwijk to M. Opreescu, 19 March 1926, *ibid.*
69. *Ibid.*
70. «Report of M. de Vos Van Steenwijk on the Brussels Institute of Bibliography» with pencilled note «this declaration has been communicated to Mr. Richardson by Mr. Zimmern», *ibid.*
71. E. C. Richardson to Prof. A. Zimmern, 15 May 1926, *ibid.*
72. E. C. Richardson to Prof. A. Zimmern, 28 June 1926, *ibid.*
73. The Director to Otlet and La Fontaine 19 October 1926 — a note transmitting the decisions of the Sub-Committee for Bibliography taken at its meeting of 24 July 1926, *ibid.*
74. Paul Otlet, «Ya Politique et le plan d'évolution», typescript of a paper for first Congrès Psychosociologique, Paris, 30 May to 6 June 1926, Otletaneum.
75. Paul Otlet, «L'Avenir de la comptabilité et ses rapports avec les besoins de l'organisation mondiale», Congrès International de la Comptabilité, Bruxelles (No copy of this paper has been found by the author. He learned of it from a typescript sent him of a lecture given at the Mundaneum on 12 June 1969 by M. M. H. E. R. Mommen entitled, «La Comptabilité économique universelle et Paul Otlet, l'éminent mondialiste».)
76. Paul Otlet, *L'Education et les Instituts du Palais Mondial* (Mundaneum) (Publication No. 121; Bruxelles: UIA, 1926).
77. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
81. For example, UIA, *The Union of International Associations: A World Centre* (Publications No. 60; Bruxelles: UIA, 1914), «Tables and diagrams», pp. 33 ff. Some of the same diagrams used in this work were reproduced again in *Centre International...* (Publication No. 98; Bruxelles: UIA, 1921) and in subsequent publications.
82. Geddes to Otlet, 2 October 1923, Dossier No. 92(G), Otletaneum.
83. Paul Otlet, *L'Etat actuel de l'organisation mondiale de la documentation: extrait des comptes-rendus du sixième Congrès de Chimie Industrielle* (Paris: *Chimie et Industrie*, 1926).
84. A contemporary account of the College is provided in *Petit Méridional* (Montpellier), 29 October 1935.
85. Geddes to Otlet, 11 August 1925, Dossier No. 92(G), Otletaneum.
86. Otlet to Geddes, 7 December 1925, *ibid.*
87. Otlet to Geddes, 1 September 1925, *ibid.*
88. Université Internationale, Cycle d'exposés fondamentaux sur l'encyclopédie et la synthèse des connaissances (no place or date, F. No. 9195), Mundaneum.

89. *Mundaneum: Les Instituts internationaux du Palais Mondial* (Publication No. 124; Bruxelles: UIA, 1972), pp. 4—5.
90. *Le Mundaneum: Les Instituts du Palais Mondial* (extraits de ses publications) (Publication No. 203; Bruxelles: Mundaneum, 1939). This pamphlet is unpagged, but a «Catalogue des Microfilms — Mundaneum» appears at the end of it.
91. UIA, *Actes de la IV<sup>e</sup> Quinzaine Internationale...* (Publication No. 125; Bruxelles: UIA, 1927). This contained the reports of the UIA and IIB Conferences and the meeting of the International University.
92. F. Donker Duyvis, «The International Federation for Documentation», *Journal of Documentary Reproduction*, III (1940), 183. See also Donker Duyvis to Godfrey Dewey, 14 February 1925, Dossier No. 259, «Dewey», Mundaneum.
93. Donker Duyvis to Godfrey Dewey, 14 February 1925, Dossier No. 259, «Dewey», Mundaneum.
94. E. M. R. Ditmas, «A. Chapter Closes: Bradford, Pollard and Lancaster-Jones», *College and Research Libraries*, X (1949), 333 ff.
95. A. F. C. Pollard, *The Decimal Bibliographic Classification of the Institut International de Bibliographie, Partly Translated for the Formation and Use of a Universal Bibliographic Repertory Concerning Optics, Light and Cognate Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926).
96. *VII<sup>e</sup> Conférence de Bibliographie Internationale, Cologne (Pressa), 17 et 18 septembre 1928* (Publication No. 156; Bruxelles: IIB, 1928), p. 3.

## Chapter XIII

### CHANGE, NEW DIRECTIONS

#### POLLARD AND A STRENGTHENED INSTITUTE

The IIB's Annual Meeting in 1928 took place in Cologne under the presidency of Alan Pollard. The business before it arose partly from Otlet's activities during the year, and partly from some suggestions for change in the Institute propounded by Pollard himself.

During the year Otlet had continued to publicise his plans for moving the Mundaneum to Geneva. He published a new study of these to accompany architectural drawings by Le Corbusier of the proposed Center-City there.<sup>1</sup> He examined, also, the possibility of creating almost immediately at Geneva an International Library which could become a center for universal documentation through the co-operation of the IIB, the UIA and other organisations.<sup>2</sup> He also continued to negotiate the future of the RBU. He appeared to have accepted a proposition from Richardson in America that the RBU could be developed apart from the other UIA—IIB collections, a separation anticipated as early as the 1920 Conference of the IIB. There was now no suggestion of discontinuing it, only of moving it. It had been said that the League of Nations did not implement the 1924 agreement with the IIB because of lack of confidence in the IIB's administration. What was needed, Richardson maintained, being, of course, fully apprised of the attitude towards the IIB in the Paris Institute was «some method of operation which would give weight to the administration of the repertory as now defined,<sup>3</sup> in order that this might command the confidence of the particular agencies from whom it was hoped money might be obtained». Otlet's response to this, perhaps prompted by Richardson himself, was to suggest that the American Library Association take over the administration of the Repertory. Richardson reported that the ALA Committee on Bibliography was prepared to support this suggestion if the League would undertake to provide \$25,000

a year for a five year period. With his Committee on Bibliography's support and that of the League, Richardson was convinced that the RBU could be saved and that a useful information service based on it would become feasible. He also supported the idea of moving it to (or, as he put it, «unloading it on») Geneva as a useful way of achieving its physical separation from the rest of the IIB «plant». In Geneva it would still be recognised «as part of the Belgian contribution to world co-operation through the League» and would «enhance prestige both for Belgium and for the League».<sup>5</sup>

He was, however, very precise as to the nature and limits of his Committee's interests in the IIB and the RBU. As he wrote to Otlet:

This Committee does not undertake, cannot undertake, to act except... on precise undertakings for co-operation. It does not attempt to act as your agent or representative in any sense, and it cannot undertake to organise any body which will so act. The Institute must do such things on its own initiative and responsibility.

This being clearly understood, I may restate with equal clearness the fact that the American Library Association is on record officially as wishing to find practical ways of concrete co-operation in some of your projects which it recognises as of real value for international learning through bibliographical means...<sup>6</sup>

Edith Scott has noted the circularity in the positions eventually reached in the late 20s by both the ALA and the League. It seemed clear that the ALA would not act to support the IIB unless the IIB received from the League such a firm commitment that ALA intervention would in fact become unnecessary. On the other hand, the League was waiting for some kind of confidence-inspiring intervention by the ALA in IIB affairs. «The result was that the IIB received no support from either the Committee (on Intellectual Co-operation) or the ALA».<sup>7</sup>

The League Committee eventually completely repudiated the notion of a universal finding list and, as Richardson wrote to Otlet in 1932, «The notification by the League Committee that it could not or would not carry out the lines of co-operation agreed on between the League and the Institut ended the formal undertaking by the ALA to operate. Our plate is now clean as to undertaking its operation.» Nevertheless, even in 1932 Richardson was still convinced

that a project for Universal Repertory (sic.) finding list operated at Geneva under the direct, but not necessarily residential operating supervision of your Institut, and the triple expert supervision of the Institut, the League, and the American Library Association, would be the thing which would best serve the purposes of international scholarship. The League Committee has definitely turned down, contrary I think to its undertaking towards you, the idea of a general international repertory, in favour of urging national repertories. This is, in my judge-



ment, contrary to the interests of international scholarship as well as well as to its public obligation to your Institut.<sup>8</sup>

Pollard agreed that the RBU could be administered separately from the IIB in Brussels. Moreover, he declared that the British Society for International Bibliography welcomed «the prospect that the League of Nations may support or even temporarily adopt the repertory and hopes that there may result from this not only a useful differentiation of functions, but also improved relations between the sister institutions of Brussels and Paris». But he warned against any move to Geneva unless the League would not support the RBU otherwise. The RBU, said Pollard, needed to be administered in connection with a great national library in some important centre of population and research. The most appropriate places for it, if it were to be moved, were Paris, London, Oxford, Berlin or Rome.<sup>9</sup> Later, at the IIB Conference in Cologne, Pollard formally proposed to transfer the RBU to London. The IIB Assembly, however, supported Otlet's conclusion that «Geneva is the best solution», whereupon Pollard withdrew his proposition remarking that, «at any time, if it should be necessary, the Repertory would receive a refuge in England.»<sup>10</sup>

The Dutch section of the Institute (Nider) came up with an entirely new solution for the problems posed by the Repertory and an information service based on it. At the time J. Alingh Prins was President of Nider, and the Dutch report was signed by him and Nider's Secretary G. A. A. de Voogd. It was provoked by Otlet's General Report to the IIB.<sup>11</sup>

Prins and de Voogd attacked Otlet's general principle of centralist organisation, an attack which, when repeated more intensely a few years later was to bring the Institut to a crisis of organisational philosophies and the prospect of a schism. They expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of material in the classified sections of the RBU and estimated that the number of scientific and technical periodicals in existence was about three times the figure estimated by Otlet. The information service in the Palais Mondial was poor, they asserted, partly because of the lack of material on which it was based, but also partly «because of the incompetence of the personnel». They proposed, therefore, that the bibliographical services of the IIB should be decentralised and organised on a federative basis. The English section, in their view, would be the best to develop the sections for the pure and applied sciences because of the existence already in Kensington of the Science Library with its great catalog. The central section at the IIB Headquarters, on the other hand, would be the best section to maintain the Author Repertory, and if

American support could be obtained, the sections dealing with «the sciences of the mind».<sup>12</sup> The IIB Council discussed the Dutch proposal to decentralise the RBU and finally adopted it. The Bibliographical service provided by the IIB was thereupon entrusted to the English Section for all matters dealing with science and technology. The Palais Mondial was left with the rest.

This was, in fact, a sensible recognition of what had already taken place in London. In 1926 the Science Museum Library in South Kensington had received a large corpus of bibliographical material from the Bureau Bibliographique de Paris. Bradford, who had then succeeded to the Deputy Keepership, decided to cut up and intercalate with this material all bibliographies in the Library bearing decimal notations, thus forming, in Otlet's terms, a comprehensive national bibliographical repertory in the pure sciences and technology. A well organised information service with adequate staff and institutional backing was set up in the Library in relation to this repertory.<sup>13</sup> Bradford had been an enthusiast for the UDC since his earliest years in the Library. Indeed in 1900 he had the «impudence» to suggest that the UDC be used for the Library's Catalogue. He was then a junior «of some eighteen months' experience», and, not surprisingly, was turned down.<sup>14</sup> He bided his time for a quarter of a century until he was in a position to order his suggestion carried out. He saw one of the major aims of the British Society for International Bibliography, which he and Pollard had founded in 1927, as publicity for the UDC and its widespread adoption by indexing and abstracting journals so that material published by them would have classification indices accompanying entries and could be easily cut up and inter-filed in catalogs like that of the Library of the Science Museum.<sup>15</sup> In all of this Bradford closely followed Otlet, whose influence he acknowledged, though he repudiated Otlet's wider pre-occupations.<sup>16</sup>

There was about all of this discussion of the Repertory at the 1928 Cologne Conference something contrived. Pollard was merely reporting to the Conference a modified form of views communicated in more detail and with more frankness by Bradford in several letters to Gilbert Murray, now Chairman of the League's Committee on Intellectual Co-operation, in an attempt to stimulate further League support for the IIB. Having been made aware of League distrust of the IIB, Bradford had exclaimed of the situation: «I did not know that it was still so bad». He agreed that Otlet and La Fontaine were «delightful personally but lacking in tact». He continued, however, to believe and to stress the point to Murray, that they were the authors of the only practical scheme of inter-

national bibliography. He made it clear that he had no confidence in the American proposals for rescuing and supporting the IIB. The American Library Association, in his view, had had no experience of running a bibliographic venture on the scale of the Brussels Repertory. He also disagreed with the proposal that it be moved to Geneva for there it would be too distant from most centers of science and industry. The solution to all of these difficulties, he concluded, was for the Repertory to be taken over by the Science Museum where there was a staff both scientifically and bibliographically experienced and where the Repertory could be maintained at a cost of no more than 2,000 per annum. As the same systems were used in the Museum and in Brussels all that was needed was

a comparatively small increase of the organisation we have already established ...

If it should be possible to secure this enormous bibliography, containing, as it does, a wealth of references on all branches of economics as well as science and technology, merely for the cost of upkeep, it should be a coup.<sup>17</sup>

Bradford then revealed that Donker Duyvis acquiesced in these views. Indeed, Donker Duyvis had himself written to the Institute in Paris informing de Vos Van Steenwijk that most useful to it in place of the entire Repertory which the English, Dutch and German sections. «The personality of M. Otlet had not much importance in the practical work». He suggested that if the current agreement between the League and the IIB was unsatisfactory, it should be abandoned forthwith and a new one worked out in conjunction with Pollard, La Fontaine and himself.<sup>18</sup>

The Dutch proposal at the Cologne Conference to «decentralise» the Repertory was, in fact, a political ploy to secure for the Science Museum in London that part of the Repertory most useful to it in place of the entire Repertory which the Conference, following Otlet's proposal, wished to see transferred to Geneva. The practical effects of the manoeuvre were probably minimal. Certainly no cards appear to have been transferred from Brussels though, no doubt, collaborators sent both new material and requests for information henceforth to London.

There was no immediate action at the League either as a result of Bradford's intervention. Murray communicated his letters to the Secretariat in Geneva and they went thence to the Institute in Paris. It was decided quite emphatically to continue to wait for the views of the Sub-Committee on Bibliography on a new approach to the IIB. Indeed, it was clear that in the Secretariat it was a case of «once bitten twice shy», and Murray was informed of this in no uncertain

terms. «My experience», the Secretary of the Committee for Intellectual Co-operation wrote,

in dealing with this affair during the last few years is rather more pessimistic [than Bradford's]. I am not sure that MM. Otlet and La Fontaine will consent to stop their other activities and deal only in the future with bibliographical work. I was told that their actual position is rather difficult and perhaps for the moment they will agree to keep only the International Institute of Bibliography; but I am not sure that in the near future they will not begin again with Mundaneum.

He pointed out that, despite allegations to the contrary being circulated by the IIB, the first part of the agreement between the League and the IIB had been implemented and a subsidy paid. This was for the *Supplement to the Index Bibliographicus*. «The manner in which the Brussels Institute undertook the work, however, was such that we were obliged to stop the execution of the programme».<sup>19</sup>

More immediately dramatic than the Dutch suggestions to decentralise the RBU were Pollard's suggestions at the IIB's 1928 meeting for improving the organisation and the governance of the IIB.<sup>20</sup> They were far-reaching. He strongly recommended that the IIB should establish «daughter societies» in each of the various countries of the world on the model of the BSIB in England. These societies would mainly attempt to secure the membership of national and local scientific, commercial and other organisations in the country, and induce them to employ the Decimal Classification. They would act as national or special bureaux responsible for indexing the literature of their countries and for sending this indexing to the IIB in Brussels. Above all, they would receive from their members suggestions for improvements in the UDC, would edit them and would communicate them to the IIB, receiving from the IIB official alterations and additions to the classification for communication in turn to their members. The IIB on its part would receive and incorporate into its repertories the bibliographical information prepared by the «daughter societies», and would eventually issue regular bibliographies, perhaps based, Pollard suggested, on the ten main classes of the UDC. It would receive suggestions for improvements in the UDC, transmit these through the Classification Committee from one daughter society to another for criticism, and immediately distribute alterations and additions as they were adopted by the CC. This closely co-operative and co-ordinated work on the UDC, Pollard said,

would be vital to the very existence of the Institut International de Bibliographie and I venture to think that it would be of greater importance than the Répertoire itself and the periodical publications of bibliographies, for the reason that, in England, at least, many institutions prefer to make their own repertories and if they are to use

the Decimal Classification they must have a live classification which grows with the advance of the particular branch of knowledge which concerns them.

His recommendations for change in the governance of the IIB, however, struck immediately at the positions occupied by Otlet and La Fontaine. They were expressed in a way that would minimise offence or alarm. Otlet and La Fontaine, Pollard said,

have laboured in the interests of the Institut ever since they founded it in 1895. They have produced a monumental work—a great bibliographical institute and they continue to bear the burden of its increasing activities upon their shoulders. It is now time members of the Council stepped forward and helped to shoulder these labours.

I venture to suggest that your General Secretaries should consist of not less than eight active officials who can meet together several times during the year to carry on the business of the Institut. The General Secretariat, I suggest, would in reality be an Executive Council, consisting of a single General Secretary who should be a permanent salaried official of the Institut, a Treasurer, an Editor of publications, and five Ordinary Members of Council.

In addition to the President of the Institut there should be four Vice-Presidents who are distinguished members of Council and who would serve say four years... Your Commissions or Sections are very important and you have at present four of these dealing with and controlling matters of a bibliographical nature,<sup>21</sup> but you have no Financial Commission or Publications and Propaganda Commission. You certainly should have a Financial Commission consisting of the Treasurer and two or three members of Council to look after the financial side of the Institut.

Again, your Publications and Propaganda Commission would be most important, for this Commission would make recommendations to the General Secretariat or Executive Council on all matters concerning the publications of the Institut and methods of advertising the Institut's activities and the Treasurer would be an important member of this Commission or Section.

All of these suggestions were adopted except the one relating to the General Secretariat. Donker Duyvis was unexpectedly elected as a third Secretary-General, Otlet and La Fontaine being confirmed in their mandates. The existence of three Secretaries-General complicated the formation of the Commissions or Committees suggested by Pollard. An Executive Council was set up consisting of the President, the three Secretaries-General and three other members of Council, one of whom was Bradford of the Science Museum Library in London. A financial Committee of three members and the President and Secretaries-General was also constituted. The formation of a Publications Committee was left to Donker Duyvis who was to draw its members from the other IIB Commissions.

These reforms were extended at the 1929 meeting of the IIB which took place, again under the Presidency of Pollard, in September in London at Pollard's own institution, the

Imperial College of Science and Technology.<sup>22</sup> Otlet did not attend this meeting. There were also no representatives from Poland or Russia or the International Associations. It was now decided that all official letters from the IIB to the League of Nations or to Governments should bear the signature of one of the Secretaries-General and that of the President. As a political manoeuvre within the Institute this pre-empted any further exercise of the Otlet-La Fontaine hegemony. They could not act without the signature of the President but the President and Donker Duyvis as third Secretary-General had complete authority if they wished to act independently of Otlet and La Fontaine. Moreover, as both third Secretary-General and Secretary of the Institute's most important Commission or Committee, the International Committee for the Decimal Classification, Donker Duyvis became more prominent and powerful in the affairs of the Institute than ever.

Among other matters of a formal or structural nature examined by the 1929 meeting of the Council were the problems of membership and the official seat of the Institute. It was decided that national sections would have eight votes each in the affairs of the Institute, special sections (the International Associations) would have four votes, corporate members two and individual members one. The composition of the Council was formally determined as consisting of the President, Secretaries-General, the Treasurer, a representative of the League of Nations (provided the 1924 convention was implemented), two members elected by the International Associations and two members elected by corporate and individual members, making a total of ten (given the fact that La Fontaine acted as both Treasurer and Secretary-General).

La Fontaine explained to the meeting, when Pollard raised the question of the location of the headquarters of the Institute, that in Belgium the IIB had a legal status that could be maintained only if the official seat of the Institute were in Belgium and if three members of its Council were Belgian. The Council, therefore, decided to modify the Statutes to show Brussels as its official headquarters. La Fontaine observed that the decision about the official seat of the IIB «had only a formal character and served to fulfil the conditions imposed by Belgian law. The IIB still had to take into account the possibility of moving to Geneva».

La Fontaine urged the meeting to pursue the 1924 agreement of the League of Nations with the IIB. It was time, he observed, that «both parties should definitely decide their attitude». Pollard was instructed by the Council to write to the League «requesting it either to put into force the present Convention or to alter the Convention in such a way that it was acceptable to both parties». This matter had earlier



in the year been taken up independently by a Committee of Library Experts appointed by the League Committee on Intellectual Co-operation. The Committee of Library Experts had originally been appointed to advise the Sub-Committee on Bibliography on the setting up of a co-ordination service for national information offices. It now recommended that «informal negotiations with the International Institute of Bibliography at Brussels» be entered into «with a view to laying the foundations of practical co-operation regarding in particular the problems of bibliographical classification, the study of which it is most important to co-ordinate in existing circumstances». <sup>23</sup> A meeting was arranged for the middle of 1930. As de Vos Van Steenwijk remarked in a confidential note to Pollard:

The expert librarians seemed to be inclined to think that collaboration along the lines previously considered in the agreement as drawn up between the League and the Institut International de Bibliographie should be postponed in favour of the above. <sup>24</sup>

In June 1929, a World Conference of Libraries and Bibliography had met in Rome. Otlet had addressed a report on the IIB to it, and Donker Duyvis a very brief one on the UDC. <sup>25</sup> Bradford, who had attended, discussed it at the IIB Council meeting later in the year. He remarked that there had been many discussions about the UDC which was strongly supported in every quarter. Moreover, he said, he had had a long talk with Ernest Cushing Richardson who had informed him that

The American Library Association did not wish to interfere in the control of the Repertory but was willing to help, so far as they were able, if desired. It was clear, however, that the American Library Association looked at the matter from the point of view of books rather than of the original information in papers, and their idea is to develop the Author Catalogue rather than the Subject-Matter Index.

The Americans, whom Otlet had actively courted, were regarded with some suspicion within the Institute generally. Nevertheless, their emphasis on the alphabetical part of the Repertory, the less important part in the eyes of men like Bradford, was a reflection of the League Committee on Intellectual Co-operation's desire to see it developed into an international «finding list».

Inevitably one of the most important matters examined at the 1929 IIB meeting was the Universal Decimal Classification. So wide had interest become in this that a serious problem of dealing with translations and translation rights had arisen. Translations were underway or published in some form by this time in German, Czechoslovakian, Russian, Polish and English. It was decided that the conditions under which translation rights for the CD would be granted were:

1. Thorough control of the manuscripts [be retained by the Institute];
2. Five copies of each translation to be supplied to the secretariat;
3. The correctly translated parts of the CD to have a publication number and to be incorporated into the series of official publications;
4. If financial profits were obtained by the issue of a CD translation, the IIB to get a certain percentage of them.

In the case of the German translation a problem arose because it was to be published formally by the Normenausschuss or Standards Office. Donker Duyvis informed the meeting that «the British publication might be treated similarly». It was, in fact, later issued by the British Standards Institution. This had a bearing on the regulation that translations should be incorporated into the official series of IIB publications. Donker Duyvis observed, however, that

It did no harm if a good translation of the Decimal Classification appeared without bearing the IIB series number. It was far more important that the IIB should take care that no editions appeared with the official «imprimatur» unless they had been thoroughly checked.

He suggested that a note in the preface or elsewhere would be a sufficient indication of origin. Official permission to publish rested in the hands of the new Publications Commission the duties of which were assumed by the Executive Council in 1930.

By 1929, three years after it had been begun, the printing of the new edition had reached the stage of completed main tables. All that remained were the tables of the common subdivisions and the Index. La Fontaine told the meeting that more than 1100 copies had been sold in advance, fifty copies going to America — all this without serious publicity. Printing expenses would be met, he remarked, when 1400 copies were sold, and it was «forseen that the manual would be out of print in a short time». Donker Duyvis anticipated that the Index to the new edition, which was being prepared by La Fontaine, would be issued within six months, and the Council appointed Carl Walther, <sup>26</sup> Samuel Bradford and the three Secretaries-General to be a committee to work on the tables of the common subdivisions. It was generally agreed that these should be altered as little as possible, although Donker Duyvis criticised the subdivisions and juxtapositions in the geographic table and the separation of the time divisions into two groups.

Because of the advanced stage of printing of the new edition Donker Duyvis gave a detailed report on it at the CC meeting, stressing an observation that he had already made a number of times: «the present edition must be considered as a provisional one». Because of this view, he pushed ahead for the completion of the edition regardless of obstacles, and particularly regardless of problems of concordance with the American edition. <sup>27</sup> For him the edition was to represent

the beginning of something new and perfectible not the definitive statement of something old and perfected.

The parts of the Classification that Otlet and La Fontaine were responsible for had been on the whole simply reprinted from the 1905 edition. Great dissatisfaction with them was expressed and finally in 1935 various collaborators under the guidance of Donker Duyvis then set to work «to bring those first chapters on the same level as the following ones».<sup>28</sup> These, the parts for science and technology, had been almost completely rewritten by Donker Duyvis with the help of various collaborators.

Lorphèvre gives a vivid and personal picture of what went into the preparation and final printing of this new edition of the full UDC.

The responsibility of the editors was established: pure and applied sciences under the authority of Donker Duyvis, the humane sciences under the direction of Otlet and La Fontaine.

It was understood that Donker Duyvis would be entirely responsible for editing the chapters devolving on him. He did so with the aid of a hundred specialists whom he had interested in the work.

In November 1926, printing properly speaking began...

The gathering together of the material in different languages presented the greatest difficulties. There were English, German and Dutch texts, all having to be turned into French. A good part of the translation was done at Brussels, but the files are scattered everywhere with linguistic discussions. Unexpected incidents led to the loss of time, such as that of a badly translated German abbreviation which completely distorted the text without anyone immediately identifying the cause of discussions which resulted in... [a] faulty interpretation. [Donker Duyvis had the sheets of this withdrawn and paid for the printing of a corrected version from his own pocket.]<sup>29</sup> A letter from Deventer [Donker Duyvis' home town] of 31 July 1927 said about this that «the linguistic control is the heaviest part of the work». After translation, the text was returned to Deventer for decimalisation. Donker Duyvis preferred to work on a text showing the subordination of ideas but devoid of decimal numbers. The number of main terms was revised according to the new everywhere compulsory criterion: that of the statistical frequency of publications on a subject. When the division arose from the classification of one of the Patent Offices (Germany or Holland), the number of patents necessary for the introduction of a special classification number was fixed at 1,000. In the following stage, the proofs were corrected in Deventer and even in London as well as in Brussels where the printing was carried out...

The work of correction was one of the most difficult after that of translation. An enormous problem was that of our friend's eyes. His sight was bad and La Fontaine went to help him, but, of course, the Belgian Senator was a multiple person. He was busy with national and international politics. He was the Belgian delegate to the League of Nations. He travelled frequently and each departure created a drama for Donker Duyvis who saw the work slowed by it. On the 1st November he wrote: «the ophthalmologist has condemned me to a two week treatment for my eyes». In fact he had to undergo an operation. Happily, La Fontaine was in Brussels, and the damage was lessened.

But this was not all. One is confounded in the face of the sum of the difficulties which the three brave men encountered. Donker Duyvis absolutely did not wish to lose any time. He wrote even in the train. On the 24 March 1928 he sent off five pages in pencil, the result of a train trip.<sup>30</sup>

Two extremely important matters bearing on the future of the UDC and the IIB were discussed by Donker Duyvis in his 1929 report to the Classification Committee: the problem of preparing from this imperfect and provisional edition of the classification «a really accurate, standard» one, and the problem of the reconciliation of the European CD with the American DC. In considering the first of these problems, Donker Duyvis informed the Council that part zero of the classification had been translated into German and published by the German Standards Institution. Not only did this not contain a single printing error

it contains a number of small extensions, corrections in the definitions, and other small improvements which we call «retouches»...

I think this is the way by which to arrive at a really accurate, standard edition. We should promote the reprinting of very carefully studied parts of the Manual either in English, German or the French language, and give them the «imprimatur» of the Institute only after rigorous checking.

These small «retouched» editions will together build up the standard manual, for which the present new manual serves as the raw material. It is obvious that the process will require a decennium, but as long as we have no strong financial support at our disposal, I do not see any other possibility.<sup>31</sup>

This proposal, accepted by the 1931 Hague meeting as IIB policy for the Abridged Editions at least, was again a break from Otlet's centralist views, and was later to cause him some anger. For him control of the classification had to be much more than the co-ordination and «accreditation» of parts in various languages, a process carried out independently of a complete basic text which should, in his view, constitute a final authority, and he was to resist «decentralisation» of the classification along with decentralisation of the Repertory.

The problem of reconciliation of the CD and the DC had been under active consideration in America during this period. A crisis was precipitated by the IIB proposal in 1928 to alter the tables for botany, 580.<sup>32</sup> Donker Duyvis had proposed to Dorcas Fellows that the order of the tables be converted from the complex to the simple, and that the Engler-Gilg botanical classification «which was said to be more modern» should be used as a basis for developing the CD tables for botany. Miss Fellows objected to any change from the older Bentham-Hooker order used in the DC and she now stated her firm conviction that

the CD was filled with problems and inconsistencies, which, she pointed out, were ones that were «not coud fr a single class... samples

v had work w wh I know CD t be permeated, my general ground for distrusting it all.

Donker Duyvis, dismayed by her attitude and the difficulties of reconciliation of the two editions after the appearance of the 1927 American edition, proposed that CD should go its own way independently of DC. Miss Fellows' comment to Godfrey Dewey was brutally frank:

I wish f bottom v my hart th hd gon th own way 30 years ago, t extent v laying out a skeme v th own. Probabl I h wisht 100 times during last 7 yrs it IIB nvr had herd v us, wh z vr uncharitabl, be th nvr wd h got aniwere without us.

Godfrey Dewey, however, tenaciously opposed her with his belief in co-operation:

The most important new thought is to work toward a single bibliographic edition bilingual with French and English on facing pages, publisht preferably by IIB leaving our library editions as the fullest publisht by us independently.

So strong did Dorcas Fellows' opposition to the IIB grow that her animosity began to be directed towards Godfrey himself, its champion. Melvil Dewey, nearing the end of his long life,<sup>33</sup> was forced to intervene and held two conferences with them to clear away the differences. Negotiations were under-way with the Library of Congress at this time to have decimal numbers placed on printed Library of Congress cards. The Library of Congress required great speed in the provision of numbers and that once they were printed they could not be changed, so that the IIB had to accept changes of expansions made at the DDC Office or face «consolidated» divergence.

At the 1929 IIB Conference, Donker Duyvis gave his version of attempts at concordance and the troublesome problem of the tables for 580. He observed that

In the new manual we have made important alterations in order to approach unification with the American edition of the DDC. In their last edition our American friends have made only very few alterations in our direction, but they have introduced various extensions based on the international CD, sometimes with the same numbers and sometimes not.

Now, in one respect we have caused new discordance. In botany we have introduced the system of Prof. Engler which is at present the most widely used standard system for botanical classification. Our main object was to fix a definite place for every plant, so that in cases of doubt about the classification of some specimen, the Engler manual might give the decision... Our American friends keep strongly to the out-of-date Bentham and Hooker system, which, in the form in which it was published in the last American edition, is certainly not utilisable for scientific classification. Recently our American colleagues have expanded the Bentham and Hooker system in order to make it fit for practical use. Personally, I think the result of this very careful work does not meet the requirements of assigning a definite place to every specimen.<sup>34</sup>

The 1929 IIB Conference decided that its 1930 meeting would be held in Zurich, Switzerland in the last week in August. Bradford had proposed at the 1929 meeting that the annual meetings of the now firmly reconstituted Institute should henceforth become something more than business meetings. They should take on something of the character they enjoyed in earlier days and should last from four to five days with general papers being presented at them. The 1930 meeting was to be the first of these new kinds of meeting. Godfrey Dewey wrote to Otlet early in 1930 to ask him to get the conference date set back to June when he would be able to get to Europe. At the same time he expressed his increasing sense of dissatisfaction with the IIB. He reported that the DC office had at last reached agreement with the Library of Congress for placing decimal numbers on Library of Congress printed cards, on the understanding that publication of cards could not be delayed by the necessity of getting decimal numbers, and that numbers once assigned and printed on the cards, must not be altered. He continued:

This brings to a head the issues regarding the basis of co-operation between CD and DC, arranged in 1924 but entirely disregarded by CD ever since commencing preparation of their new edition. To facilitate final study of the situation, a special worker on Miss Fellows' staff is devoting three months to an analytic comparison of CD and DC which I hope I will bring with me in May.

I am greatly distressed to have no reply to my 14 November 1929 letter to you, either as regards 580 or the Mundaneum. I cannot over-emphasise the essential importance of your adhering to the promises given with respect to 580. If these are disregarded, it will be beyond my power to assist further in handicapping DC in this country by apparently futile efforts to establish and maintain concordance with CD.<sup>35</sup>

But Otlet was helpless. He could not take any action to change the date of the 1930 meeting which had been set by the IIB Council. Furthermore, he was himself becoming quite pessimistic about the administration of the CD:

The CD is greatly extended in Europe and those who have brought about this extension very much desire a part in its direction. This is to tell you we have been outflanked at the Secretariat of the CD, and it is going to result in a great disaster in the world which uses decimal numbers, and it will find itself in full anarchy as to their application and from this evil will come good (always in universal history). But the good will perhaps be for others and not for us (as often in Universal history). We ask you, therefore, to go to London to see Bradford and Pollard... and to meet us with Donker Duyvis in Brussels... For my part I want complete agreement very much, and I hope that the fact of having lived through the whole history of the movement will permit me to exercise an influence on the decision taken proportional to that fact.<sup>36</sup>

When Dewey set off to Europe in 1930, Miss Fellows' study of concordance had been completed and her recommenda-



tions made. They were sent to Brussels in 1931,<sup>37</sup> but it is possible that Dewey took a copy of them with him as he had hoped to do. In any case, whether he had Miss Fellows' report or not, he and Otlet arrived at an arrangement for pursuing concordance, and Dewey returned to America hopeful of improved relations between the two classifications.<sup>38</sup>

At the end of the 1930 conference of the IIB which was held as scheduled in Zurich, Otlet was in despair. The Institute with its new shape, with its younger men slowly but surely taking over from him and La Fontaine, had not heeded him or his plans for concordance. «You know», he wrote to Dewey afterwards,

how I am forced to find solutions for conciliation; you know in what general and future terms I have envisaged here in Brussels the problem posed by conciliation and the future. But I am not followed. In London, it seems to me that the question of concordance has not been considered in the same spirit. In truth, I am overwhelmed, for, materially, I don't have time to battle with our friends for the cause of concordance, and to intervene in particular cases as necessary. You know what resources we lack to make a serious attempt at organisation of the Tables of the Decimal Classification at Brussels... Deprived of ... resources and wanting to save the work, cost what it might, it was necessary to have recourse to a great voluntary work of three parties. From there a radical transformation which has operated in the structure of the IIB and the organisation of the [Classification] Committee acting more and more without having before it the whole of the problem past, present and future. What to do? What to do?

Here are the resolutions adopted at Zurich. The question of CD—DC has been examined by the Committee. I intervened to explain and defend the project elaborated with you to show the consequences of the facts of the movement... The English and the Dutch have declared it to be impossible to link themselves with what this project would mean. I have preached in the desert, and not having the means, I repeat the material means, of realising it myself, the whole position has been weakened. Mr. Donker Duyvis should have written to you about what the situation is now. The English had proposed to call him «Dictator» of the classification. This was a little sharp, whatever his collaboration on the tables had been.<sup>39</sup>

It seems clear that in Europe there had grown up as strong a feeling against shackling the CD to the DC as Dorcas Fellows had expressed against shackling the DC to the CD. This mutual reluctance was expressed in attitudes towards translation. «Great z DC!», Dorcas Fellows exclaimed to Godfrey Dewey. «Man in Germany wants to translate it (DC mind you, not CD) into German—we to pay for translating and publishing.»<sup>40</sup> But opposed to this was the English desire expressed in 1931 to translate the CD into English.<sup>41</sup>

Otlet with his universalist philosophy, his belief in a great centralised bibliographic repertory, still looked for concordance, for the reconciliation of differences to achieve his goal of

world unity for documentation. Donker Duyvis and Pollard, on the other hand, were more pragmatic. They wished to have a classification issued in a reasonably up-to-date form, in use, and under study for further extension and revision. For them use was mainly local, though at this time they were orthodox and paid lip-service to the RBU. It did not, however, exercise great power on their imagination. «In England at least», Pollard had said, «many institutions prefer to make their own repertories».<sup>42</sup> This local use and the method Donker Duyvis believed best for improving the new edition by «retouched» translations, emphasised the need for translations. The more decentralised «retouching» became the more discordance would appear not only between the European edition and the American edition, but also between various European translations as well. Donker Duyvis had struck at the foundation of unity with the American classification and at the wider concept of a single international standard, though his power as «dictator» of the classification and controller of translations was a little confined by the Zurich conference's decision that the Executive Council of the IIB and not the CC would have ultimate authority for approving all publications made in the name of the IIB.

Although the main tables were finished in 1929 and work began at once upon their revision, extension and translation, the index to the new edition did not appear in the six months Donker Duyvis had estimated as necessary for its preparation. Nor did the sub-committee for the tables of the common subdivisions quickly produce a revised version of these. As a result the edition languished uncompleted until 1932. A letter from Léon Wouters to La Fontaine in March 1930 describes some of the difficulties resulting from the delay in completing the new edition.

This evening as on numerous other evenings I am devoting myself to the correspondence of the subscribers to the Decimal Classification. Imagine a thousand correspondents scattered in 45 different countries... Their letters are generally very polite and express a patience which does honour to the brotherhood of the decimalists.

However, there are some letters which ask if we are swindlers; others saying that they are going to address themselves to important people in Brussels to find out what this International Institute of Bibliography is to which they have sent money without receiving its value in return. Another, a German bookseller, has informed us that he has at last received the volume subscribed to three years ago, but that he has been obliged to return it to us because his client had died in the meantime.

Lastly, a great number tell us that they do not have the alphabetical index, that they have the most urgent need of it, and beg us to let them know unequivocally when we intend to send it to them... The printer receives letters and the IIB also. They send them to me; I read them; I reply to them best I can, calming impatience and

making promises that are not kept and of which I am afterwards reminded ...

I am making it my duty to acquaint you to-day with these bitter criticisms of which I am to be understood as only the echo and which I have described to Mr. Otlet on several occasions. The facts are impressive; hundreds and hundreds of subscribers beg us to finish it. They are interested; they merit our sympathy; they are impatient...

What can be said about our progress toward that moment when we will have discharged our obligations. We must give our consciences some peace.

I appeal to you, my dear Mr. La Fontaine, to take an energetic decision, so that the common subdivisions can be prepared, so that a more or less perfect alphabetical index can be issued.

Save us from this nightmare. For my part I am morally and physically exhausted, and the pleasure I took in helping the enterprise to be successful has been replaced by a strong regret at having delivered myself to the duty of lying and making vain promises to so many people who deserve better treatment.<sup>43</sup>

#### ALINGH PRINS AND CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT

The year 1931 was a year of great change for the IIB. It was the year in which work on translating the UDC into English was formally begun. It was the year that, because of the prospect of this translation, concordance with the American edition was recognised as having become only desirable rather than imperatively necessary. It was the year of German translations; a year in which the centralist character of the Institute was further eroded by the growing strength of national sections. It was the year in which the Institute's name was changed and a Dutch President, J. Alingh Prins, took office, cementing Dutch power in the management of the Institute's affairs, and confirming and accelerating the changes begun by Pollard.

Early in 1931, Pollard wrote to Godfrey Dewey requesting permission to translate the CD into English. Dewey was alarmed:

Education Foundation (Lake Placid Club) protests officially and earnestly against English translation of Classification Décimale which would be direct violation of fundamental agreement with International Institute of Bibliography. I will be in London about June 1 to discuss the underlying problem which is concordance.<sup>44</sup>

In London he met Pollard, two of the IIB Secretaries-General (Donker Duyvis, reporting on the meeting, does not mention who the other was), and representatives of the BSIB and ASLIB (Association of Special Libraries and Information. Bureau). The meeting was judged successful and it was agreed that:

1. All parties would renew their efforts to achieve complete accord between the library and bibliographic editions, and would strive for the establishment of central machinery provided with the necessary

support and authority to ensure success, to effect such accord and ensure its preservation in the future.

2. The parties responsible for the projected English translation would explore the possibilities of providing in that translation (which would automatically become the standard authorised edition of the IIB) sufficient re-adjustment of discordant sections to enable the Educational Foundation [of the Lake Placid Club] to accept this as a valuable evidence of good will.

3. Preferably, such preliminary revisions would be made in the main three-figure divisions, as far as practicable.

4. The results of this preliminary survey would be communicated to Mr. Dewey in order that he might put them before the Educational Foundation as evidence of co-operation and good will.<sup>45</sup>

What had become of Dorcas Fellows' project for concordance is obscure, and Donker Duyvis makes no mention of it in his 1931 report on the Classification Committee's work. From a comment of his, it seems clear that he envisaged the English translation of the CD as being significantly different from the DC. «It seems impossible», he said, «to realise the concordance all of a sudden, therefore we should try to make the two editions approach each other gradually in subsequent editions».<sup>46</sup> This comment reveals again his attitude of getting the CD into translation and into print as a basis for future revisions. Though belief in the desirability of concordance was never quite lost in Europe and some work appears to have been done on it, after 1931 the work was token and the belief vague. Permission was granted by the Americans in 1933 for the printing of the English edition subject only to the provisos that «substantial concordance on 1000 heads be reached», and that a formal acknowledgement of the origin of the CD in Melvil Dewey's DC be made.<sup>47</sup> The work was to be issued as a British Standard.

The Germans emerged as an important group in the fortunes of the Decimal Classification and the IIB in 1931. In his report on the activities of the Classification Committee for that year, Donker Duyvis described the new shape the organisation of work on the UDC had taken following his scheme of extension and revision through translation. In Germany, he announced, an abridged manual of the UDC was being prepared. Great hopes were had of this work:

This edition will be far more extensive than the French «abrégees», and may be considered a true «library edition». It may serve the following purposes:

1. Classification for public libraries,
2. Classification for larger general libraries such as university libraries,
3. Classification for special libraries. In that case the translation of the part of the complete manual in connection with the special field of the library should be used together with the German abridged edition.
4. Introduction and general guide to the complete manual.<sup>48</sup>

Moreover, German translation of a number of special sections in the field of the «technical sciences» of the complete manual were undertaken under the supervision of Carl Walther. Translation involved «retouches», and Donker Duyvis advised those who wanted extensions or to co-operate in some way in the preparation of the German edition of the special sections to put themselves into communication with Walther who presided over a special committee, the *Deutscher Ausschuss für Universal Klassifikation*, to coordinate German efforts. «Practically all learned and technical societies in Germany» were represented in this Committee which had official status.<sup>49</sup>

In England emphasis was on work in the pure sciences and the medical sciences. The English collaborators tended to work through the intermediary of the Science Library. A joint committee of ASLIB and BSIB, however, had been formed to work on the translation of the whole CD manual. The emergence of a strong English and German interest in the UDC meant that now four national groups were deeply engaged in the affairs of the Institute — English, German, Dutch and Belgian. The provision written into the 1924 revision of the IIB statutes, stressed by Pollard in 1928 though his concept of «daughter societies» and further encouraged by the allocation of voting rights in 1929 which emphasised the importance of national sections in the Institute, was now taking effect with a vengeance through work on translation of the UDC. As the national sections increased their activity and influence, the central position of Otlet, La Fontaine and the IIB Headquarters in Brussels, was gradually undermined. Noting the emergence of strong nationalist forces in the IIB in 1930, Otlet observed to Godfrey Dewey: «I believe there is going to be a crisis».<sup>50</sup>

The UDC now became the key to renewed League interest in the IIB. The Committee of Library Experts had decided in 1929 to explore ways of League collaboration with the IIB in terms of the study and co-ordination of bibliographical classification. Pollard, emphasising the widespread use of the UDC in England and the IIB's «international network of affiliated Societies», had suggested to the Committee that it formally adopt the Decimal Classification and set the IIB up as a Branch of the Institute.<sup>51</sup> The Committee, however, recommended that the classification, the largest existing attempt at universal classification, «should be improved across the various sciences but taking into account the needs of libraries which has not been done before». It made it clear that there could be no intimate participation of League and IIB in this venture and resolved that

it is not possible for the Sub-Committee for Sciences and Bibliography or the Committee of Library Experts to collaborate directly in this work: that, moreover, it is desirable that the Brussels Institute

ensure the collaboration of experienced librarians in the improvement of the schedules and the Index; that the French edition of the Schedules and the Index, now in the course of publication, should be translated into other languages, especially into German and English.<sup>52</sup>

De Vos Van Steenwijk gathered that the major objections to the Classification «related to the fields of the humanities and social sciences and also to non-Catholic theology»<sup>53</sup> — just the parts of the new edition for which Otlet and La Fontaine were responsible and which were essentially reprinted from the first edition.

The following year, de Vos Van Steenwijk asked Donker Duyvis if he and another representative of the Brussels Institute would appear before the Committee of Library Experts to discuss the classification further. At Donker Duyvis's recommendation, Pollard was chosen as the second representative. The desire at the Paris Institute, the two men were informed, was «to end up doing something practical» and it was suggested that Pollard should make specific proposals for collaboration to the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation.<sup>54</sup> Donker Duyvis willingly agreed to all of this, emphasising the view which governed his whole attitude to the classification and to Sub-Committee participation in the work of his Classification Committee, a view which infuriated Otlet, that the UDC «in no way constituted a definitive system, but was more the basis for study for future developments».<sup>55</sup>

In June 1930, Pollard as President of the IIB and Donker Duyvis as Secretary of the Classification Committee having met with the League of Nations' Committee of Library Experts to discuss the UDC,

The Committee, confirming the appreciation it had already formed of the whole system in a preceding session, observed again the importance and the diversity of the applications that it has found and the extensions that it will probably be called upon to make in the years to come.

It believes that it is desirable that an authorised organisation should be created or developed consisting of bibliographers, librarians, and other competent persons, an organisation which should establish direct relations with the International Committee for the Decimal Classification in order to collaborate with it in perfecting the decimal system.

In order to establish a liaison which seems necessary, the expert committee recommends that the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation should be represented by an observer on the International Committee for the Decimal Classification.

The Committee has learned with satisfaction of the publication of a review which will be devoted not only to the Decimal Classification, but to general questions of classification and documentation in general.

The Committee regrets that the present resources of the International Institute for Intellectual Co-operation do not enable it to grant the International Committee for the Decimal Classification the subsidy it



had envisaged for encouraging work at the moment in the hands of private persons. It would be happy to see the Dutch Government help materially the work on the Decimal Classification as it is managed by the Nederlandsch Instituut voor Documentatie en Registratuur.<sup>56</sup>

It is interesting that the Expert Committee did not acknowledge the long neglected agreement that existed between the League and the IIB. Moreover the Expert Committee had showed itself convinced that the Dutch were in charge of the development of the UDC and had recommended that the Dutch Government support the work. There was no indication in the report that the Classification Committee was merely a Committee of the IIB whose official Headquarters were in Brussels. Nor was there any indication that the review, *Documentatio Universalis*, whose appearance the Committee had applauded, was not the organ of this Committee but officially replaced the *IIB Bulletin* and was edited at the Palais Mondial.

These resolutions were accepted in Paris and Geneva and ways of implementing them were at once explored. The Dutch government was officially requested to subsidise Donker Duyvis's Classification Committee (CC). After much debate in the League Sub-Committee it was decided that a permanent League representative on the CC was not necessary and that one of the Committee of Library Experts, particularly Marcel Rodet, Swiss National Librarian, might participate in CC meetings when this seemed warranted «in order to offer practical collaborations».<sup>57</sup> But the Secretary of the League Committee in Geneva made it absolutely clear that there «must be no financial charge whatever from the fact of this liaison».<sup>58</sup> The Dutch government found itself obliged to decline to meet the League Committee's request for subsidy for the CC and Donker Duyvis was then asked what the Paris Institute should do next to assist in the creation of the «national organisms» to work with the CC as recommended by the Sub-Committee. Some countries, Donker Duyvis replied, already were working with the IIB and had more or less active sections. The Institute in Paris, as far as these organisations were concerned, might communicate the Sub-Committee's resolutions to them, and to the national academies of science and organisations of engineers and technicians requesting greater collaboration and enlarged scope. In other countries, especially Austria, Hungary, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Spain, Italy and Roumania, the national academies of science and other similar bodies should be asked to set up national groups to work with the CC.<sup>59</sup> The Paris Institute followed Donker Duyvis's suggestions and a number of countries reacted positively, though in some the matter, referred to various bodies for study, was allowed to drop.

At the annual conference of the IIB in 1931 at The Hague, the basis for further transformations was laid. In the summary report of the conference<sup>60</sup> Otlet observed that the success of the Decimal Classification was now assured, but commented that

efforts should be made to guarantee the maintenance and the unity of the system. Certain people believe that they can present different versions. This is an error and a fault. The IIB has laid down principles for the protection of the work of which it is the guardian in the common interest. Translations and publications of extracts of the official version can be made only with permission.<sup>61</sup>

Now that the UDC had been reprinted, Otlet suggested that other important work of the IIB, left in abeyance for a time, could be resumed. He mentioned the RBU and the various publications of the IIB. He presented a paper on the *Bibliographia Universalis* to the Conference, reverting to an earlier concept of co-operation in the RBU, though the paper was essentially a collection of «observations and recommendations for the publication of bibliographical notices and collections».<sup>62</sup>

Debate, however, was sparked by a report presented by Jean Gérard, Director of the International Office for Chemistry in Paris, on the creation largely by Gérard in France of a Union of organisations connected with Documentation (L'UFOD—Union Française des Offices de Documentation).

The debate permitted the exchange of general views on the orientation and organisation, even, to be given to the IIB in the future. It was unanimously considered wrong that certain people had identified the Institute with some of its methods. On the contrary, the Institute has a very general object. Without a doubt, it attaches a critical importance to the elaboration of a complete and rigorous method permitting co-operation; without a doubt it attached a particular value to the Decimal Classification because of this. But to become a member of the IIB does not imply the acceptance of those methods; no profession of «decimal orthodoxy» has ever been demanded of its members. Thus, with its central establishment, its specialised commissions, its national sections, its annual conferences, the IIB presents itself as the general organisation for documentation...

At the conclusion of the debate, it was decided to join to the name of the IIB that of International Institute for Documentation and to interpret it in the sense of a veritable World Union...<sup>63</sup>

The transformation of the name of the Institute Otlet interpreted as a step towards the creation of the International Union for Documentation, that haunting idea that reached back to the very foundation of the Institute itself, and particularly to the work of the IIB Conferences of 1908 and 1910.

At the 1931 Hague Conference, however, not only was the name of the IIB changed, Pollard was replaced by Alingh Prins as President of the Institute which now had a Dutch President and a Dutch Secretary-General who was also Secretary of the Institute's most important Committee, the International Committee for the Decimal Classification. Losseau gives a clue to the significance of the IIB's change of name and the

apparent triumph of the Dutch section in the Institute. He had read an account of the Conference in the pages of *La Librairie*, «I don't understand», he complained to Otlet

why you have consented to the IIB's change of name. I consider that it will be an incalculable error if this decision is maintained. It will be an impossible blow to the Institute. You are discouraging old faithfuls to encourage young ones perhaps, but in any case, people who are not imbued with principles. The Dutch I repeat it to you, do you great wrong. I have always considered that they did you wrong but this time they compromise the very existence of your work... Watch out, my dear Otlet, you are at a dangerous turning.<sup>64</sup>

This was indeed true. On the 20th November 1931 on stationery headed in bold black type «Institut International de Documentation» with the legend in slightly less bold type «de la Part de la Présidence, La Haye (Pay-Bas) ...», Alingh Prins wrote Otlet the following note:

We very sincerely request that you refrain from any intervention in the management of the finances of the IID (not the IIB). They are in the hand of the Assistant-Secretary at the moment, and we must await the outcome.<sup>65</sup>

The unpleasantness created by this extremely curt instruction was dissipated after «clear and full discussions». Later, Otlet, explaining his and La Fontaine's position, sketched the outlines of what became an open disagreement between their older concept of «the ends and methods» of the Institute and the new concept embraced by Alingh Prins and others:

As far as we are concerned, we believe that a view of the whole field of bibliography and documentation, such as the Conferences held before the War delimited and which we had ourselves begun to cultivate, should never be lost. This field comprised the Decimal Classification, the Universal Bibliographic Repertory, the Organisation of an International Network, Central Collections of Documentation, the parallelism of the two parts of Documentation, the one scientific, the other administrative; the Theory and General Methodology in this area (Bibliology or Bibliotechnology), the co-operation and federation of forces; the liaison of the international organisation of Documentation, with the international organisation of intellectual work.<sup>66</sup>

Alingh Prins and his colleagues were concerned with administrative problems within the Institute, especially those surrounding the organisation of conferences, the implementation of their decisions and the finances of the Institute. Letters such as the following suggest how pressing these problems were becoming. The Librarian of the John Crerar Library in Chicago had received a post-card request for the Library's 1930 subscription to the IIB. «In reply», he wrote:

I beg to inform you that we have received nothing from you on our membership for 1930 unless you consider a list of your 'members' as your publications. As we are operating with public funds, I have no right to pay you a 'cotisation'. I believe that for several years we have had no communication from you except an annual bill on a postcard.<sup>67</sup>

In Europe, Alingh Prins and others had become suspicious of the unrealistic scope of Otlet's program, they had learned to distrust the RBU and the information service based on it. They were exasperated by the inefficiency of the Headquarters Office in the Palais Mondial. They turned towards concrete, practical matters of getting the Institute functioning on a secure financial and administrative basis and performing limited but obviously useful work.

## CRISIS

By July 1932 Otlet had become convinced that the crisis he had foreseen was upon the Institute. He addressed to La Fontaine a «note» setting out what he believed had happened. There were some general facts to which he first drew La Fontaine's attention.

A. Technical groups in various countries are being asked to form national sections when the sections should represent all the forces of documentation.

B. There has been a tendency to put the spotlight on the Decimal Classification, one of the elements of the Institute, and leave in shadow or silence the other elements, notably the *Bibliographia Universalis* and the Universal Bibliographic Repertory on cards.

C. The original plan of obtaining official aid from governments for the central Institute is being departed from.

D. The program arrived at or in the process of being arrived at with the League of Nations had not been taken up again on an enlarged basis, and the signed convention has been abandoned.

E. All the importance desired has not been given to the participation of the special international associations.

F. No consideration at all (on the contrary) has been given to the fact that the IIB is one of the institutes installed in the Palais Mondial, is able to give support to this (the Mundaneum) and can receive valuable help from it.<sup>68</sup>

Apart from these general points, Otlet had a great many particular grievances. The Dutch, he alleged, had shown constant suspicion of the founders of the IIB, and their intervention had led indirectly to «the paralysis of action at the Centre» in Brussels. Donker Duyvis had been made a third Secretary-General in 1928 without prior warning — an action of open distrust of the General Secretariat as it was then constituted. The 1930 Conference had been held in Zurich when it should have been held at Brussels because 1930 was an anniversary year for the Institute (and, of course, for Belgium). The 1931 Conference had been held at The Hague, once more passing Brussels by. The 1932 Conference was to be held in Frankfurt. Moreover, there had been interference from Holland in the *IIB Bulletin* in its new form as *Documentatio Universalis*, and there was talk of confiding its publication to the Czechoslovakian section. (It was actually transferred to Nider and was edited by G. A. A. de Voogd under the title *IID Communicationes* in 1933.) Something else which rankled was the fact

that the supplements issued to the CD showed them as originating from «The International Institute of Documentation, the Hague» not Brussels. He noted, too, the conversations which had occurred between Donker Duyvis and Pollard and the League Committee of Library Experts, conversations which had resulted in a report proposing to grant a subsidy to the International Commission for the Decimal Classification, not the IID (IIB). The management of the Classification had been acknowledged to lie in the hands of this Commission and to be under the control of the Dutch, and the support of the Dutch Government had been requested for it. In Germany the situation was as bad or worse, in Otlet's view. The general interests of the IIB had been so neglected by the German Ministerial Commission for the Decimal Classification that «in M. Walther's opinion, no one knows what the position of Germany is with respect to the IIB». Certainly, said Otlet, no one had intervened in Germany to obtain a clear understanding of the IIB's rights in the Decimal Classification there.

In all of this, Otlet now revealed explicitly how much he distrusted and resented all the major changes that had taken place in the Institute since 1924. He was equally disapproving of the changes which had taken place through Donker Duyvis's influence in the Decimal Classification itself. Donker Duyvis, he said, had rewritten the parts for science and technology «according to hardly any principles or rules. Upon a request for an indication of the rules followed, he had replied: the rules will be determined when it is finished». Otlet was indignant that

many profound ... modifications had been made, destroying the stability which is an absolute desideratum at the base of the system ... New propositions continue to be made in little bits, division by division, with no indication of reasons, rapid reply being demanded on the propositions with only a few days interval ... Collaborators are not guided by instructions and they change, add and modify without rhyme or reason ... No appeal is made to the international organisations ... There is no central document upon which efforts can be fixed with respect to Dewey ... The CD is modified without any assurance that DC will be.

Otlet was very discouraged by all this. He thought he would stay at home in Brussels and not go to the Frankfurt conference in August where there was sure to be unpleasantness. But he declared that he «categorically refused» to accept the principles according to which the Institute's affairs appeared now to be conducted. The real source of all the trouble, he believed, was «the double betrayal» that he and La Fontaine had suffered:

that of the Belgian Government at the time of expulsion in 1923-1924, and that of the League of Nations at that same important moment when the Committee and the Institute of Intellectual Co-operation had been created according to the circumstances of that time. At that

critical moment those who could have and should have spoken out loud and clear did not.

Whatever the case, he reminded La Fontaine, there remained two things: the International Office of Bibliography and the Central Office of the International Associations. There was no reason why these offices should not take up independent activity, should not begin again, rejecting the recent past, if the Institute of Bibliography or the Union of International Associations «deviated from the original ends».

Otlet himself provoked ill feeling however, when he published a study of the Common Subdivisions in April 1932 as IIB Publication 169 without proper authorisation of the Executive Council of the IID (IIB).<sup>69</sup> Bradford, aware of moves in Europe to publish the German Abridged Edition and a Spanish abridged edition, confronted with Otlet's unauthorised work, but unable to attend the Frankfurt conference, wrote to «The Secretary» of the IID:

I desire that you will be so good as to put the following recommendations before the Executive Committee on my behalf as a member of that body and a delegate of the British Section:

- 1) That in view of the recent issue of Publication No. 169 and of proposed new editions or translations, the Committee should reaffirm the London resolution, that official publications of the Institute should be issued only after authorisation by the Executive Committee.
- 2) That it is desirable that the proposed Spanish abridged edition should conform as far as possible to the German abridged edition, in accordance with The Hague resolution that the latter edition should serve as a basis for the preparation of other abridged editions ...<sup>70</sup>

Donker Duyvis was in a sense caught in the line of fire. Above him in the Dutch Patent Office and President of the Institute was Alingh Prins, and confronting him in Belgium was the disgruntled Otlet who in the space of four months fired off twenty-six «notes» at him. Otlet's notes ranged from one to as many as half a dozen pages or more and covered an extraordinary variety of subjects from the theoretical («Classification and classified language»), to the highly concrete matter of exchanges on the unauthorised Tables of the Common Subdivisions when these were in proofs.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, Otlet corresponded «illegally» with the South Americans who were preparing the Spanish abridged edition and generally interfered in the Classification Committee's affairs.

Eventually, Donker Duyvis was forced to expostulate. He agreed with Otlet that too many people regarded the UDC as an end in itself and not as a means. But he also observed that it was necessary to distinguish scientific matters (such as the Classification which was satisfactorily under way) and administrative matters which were not. The major problems in the IID, in Donker Duyvis's view, were administrative and arose from the absence of paid personnel. It had to rely too much on voluntary work. This made itself felt in the organisation of



conferences, for example, and he pointed out that Alingh Prins had criticised him for various inadequacies in the organisation of the approaching 1932 conference. A division of work was needed, Donker Duyvis concluded. «Alas!» he said, «it is your fault that you cannot give work away to anyone...» But when he discussed the really crucial problem that the IID faced he described the distrust and suspicion, the increasing lack of sympathy that was growing for Otlet and the Institute's Center in the Palais Mondial. The real problem, said Donker Duyvis is that

decisions are not kept to. I beg you to take this seriously. The IID will be destroyed because of the lack of strictness in carrying out decisions. Perhaps the Dutch are difficult and cause trouble. With the Germans, the English and the Swiss it is worse. They are beginning to turn their backs on you. The Swiss and the English are annoyed by the official publication (not authorised by the Committee) of No. 169. The English, the Germans and the Dutch are dissatisfied with the sad editorial organisation of the CD. The Germans above all are dissatisfied about the Spanish edition. We have forced them to modify and delay the edition of their «Kurzausgabe» in order to make it a model to serve more or less as a standard for other editions. This has cost them a great deal of money. As for the South Americans, you absolutely ignore the Hague decision... you ignore the Kurzausgabe by forgetting to warn the Argentinians that an edition by them should be based on publication 168 (Deutsch Kurzausgabe) of the IID and not No. 151 [the 1926-1928 full edition]. These are small administrative carelessnesses which are killing the IID and will end up in a schism... The Ausschuss für Universal Klassifikation... is afraid to co-operate with Brussels simply because of this administrative carelessness...

I beg you to consider in your turn what realisable, practical measures (theoretical and unrealisable means are of no use to us) can be taken to establish the confidence of our national sections in the central administration.<sup>72</sup>

Eventually Donker Duyvis submitted a draft of his own for the common subdivisions and provoked from Otlet an extraordinary response in which he again made clear the rift that was widening between them over the development of the Classification:

Upon receipt of your counter-draft, I could express only three sentiments: discontent, sadness or merriment. I have experienced all three successively, but I have expressed only the last, for I want to have friendly dealing with you and continuous collaboration... Little by little we have followed divergent routes, and the counter-draft you have sent me is like a map of our respective positions at the moment... This is the position. My draft is the development of decimal thought pursued in the course of thirty-seven years. Yes, thirty-seven years, a nothing, a straw. I believe that in 1893 I understood that trait of genius of Dewey's, decimalisation, better than anybody else. My efforts revealed the classification, and presented it theoretically and practically to the first conference. Because of the addition of the common subdivisions, the IIB adopted the Decimal Classification. Since then, the common subdivisions have never ceased to be objects of my research and invention. Now, not only can I not rally any one to my

solutions, I cannot even interest them in my way of expressing the problem...

Never mind! As it is a question of standardisation and not of science, I bow to the vote of the majority. Everything that was said at The Hague now exists, and your counter-draft will be printed. But if I have to accept it from a practical point of view, from a theoretical point of view I look for a diversion for my «sadness» and my «discontent» by laughing at the really «comical» situation we have reached. One can be right on each point and detail and be wrong as to the whole...

My exposé showed at the same time the problem and the proposed solution. It attempted to show the complexity in things themselves and not in the proposed system and it attempted, on the other hand, to justify what the system makes relatively complicated by the multiplicity of subproblems, the desiderata which it meets. On the contrary... you enunciate a series of prescriptions with no explicit link attaching one to the other and yet you ask that they be remembered and applied in the mind of the novice whom you have plunged into a global impression of extreme complication.<sup>73</sup>

As the year progressed, matters worsened. Early in June 1932, Alingh Prins wrote to La Fontaine requesting financial information. The Assistant Treasurer had attempted to draw up a financial report on the IID for the forthcoming Frankfurt conference but found he lacked certain data. The problem was the relationship of the finances of the central Office International de Bibliographie to those of the Institute. Was the Belgian Government's subsidy to the Office to be construed as part of the Institute's finances?<sup>74</sup> La Fontaine, Senior Vice President of the Belgium Senate, much occupied by his other internationalist concerns, did not reply to Alingh Prins's first letter. Nor did he reply to a second letter written a month later. Alingh Prins then brought the matter up before the Frankfurt conference whereupon «M. La Fontaine replied formally that the International Office of Bibliography was completely separate from the IID and that the IID Council had neither power nor responsibility with respect to the management of the collections and expenditures in Brussels». As a result, the Council assumed that they were two different organisations. Otlet, however, who had decided to attend despite the prospect of unpleasantness, considered that, despite repeated interventions by him, Alingh Prins had deliberately instigated a formal decision at Frankfurt by which the Office and the Institute were severed from one another.<sup>75</sup> He was not to change this opinion.

Furthermore, not only had Alingh Prins tried to separate Office and Institute (at least in Otlet's eyes), he had spoken out against the RBU.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, Otlet was dissatisfied with the whole way in which the conference had proceeded. There had not been prior agreement on the program. Important people had been officiously excluded from the meetings of the Institute's various commissions if they were not members, when

their informal participation, Otlet believed, could have been useful. Indeed, Otlet himself had been prevented from presenting his annual report properly, even though, as he said «logic and all precedent» suggested the propriety of reading it and discussing it as the meeting's first business. Moreover, Alingh Prins «in a most inelegant manner» had opposed the tradition by which the Presidency was rotated amongst the members of various countries.

Early in the year, Alingh Prins and Otlet had received copies of two draft documents from the International Institute for Intellectual Co-operation. One was a report by Jean Gérard to the Committee of Library Experts on «the World Organisation of Universal Documentation».<sup>77</sup> The other was a report «On the Co-ordination of Scientific and Technical Documentation» prepared within the Institute of Intellectual Co-operation itself. Comments were solicited from IIB officials together with a brief account of the IIB itself. The second document proposed that a committee to co-ordinate the work of organisations concerned with scientific and technical documentation should be formed. The first document proposed, more sweepingly, that an International Union for Documentation should be created. It described some existing national organisations for documentation but did not mention the IIB or its program, though Gérard's report resembled very closely in manner and in its recommendations various formulations of Otlet's on the same subject.

Gérard was at Frankfurt and Otlet thought that an opportunity was presented as a result for the «enlargement of the organisation» of the IIB along the lines suggested by Gérard. Here, he thought, was the moment to lay the foundations through the IIB of the Union proposed by Gérard (and espoused for so long by Otlet himself as a necessary element in the international organisation of documentation). But nothing was made of this opportunity because of the «incomprehensible attitude» of Alingh Prins. Moreover, the Secretary of the International Institute for Intellectual Co-operation, D. Secretan, who was conducting the Institute's enquiry into international scientific and technical documentation, was also at Frankfurt. His presence constituted in Otlet's eyes the final element necessary for the secure establishment of the long-hoped-for Union. But even though, as Otlet pointed out, the League of Nations had signed a convention with the IIB giving the League the right to have a delegate sit on Council, «the Dutch excluded» the representative from its sessions.<sup>78</sup>

It seems clear, however, that Otlet had either misinterpreted what had taken place at the Conference, or had been deliberately kept in the dark. Secretan had been fully briefed before he went to Frankfurt as to what to expect and what his

stance should be. The Institute, at this stage, he was informed, need not choose between the two schemes being advanced. He was merely to present them at the Conference and seek general opinions about them before the Institute took any action on either. He was also carefully briefed on the history of the relations of the Institute for Intellectual Co-operation with the IIB and was informed that any improvement in the rather tenuous relations with the IIB since 1927 has stemmed from the fact that «M. Otlet, though still Secretary-General, had been abandoned by the Directors of this institution».<sup>79</sup>

The result of his visit to Frankfurt was embodied in the official letter sent out by the Director of the Paris Institute, Henri Bonnet, on 18th November 1932. In this letter Bonnet indicated that the Institute had been charged by its Committee in Geneva to conduct a preliminary enquiry on the best way of ultimately co-ordinating documentation internationally and the various individuals and bodies to whom the letter was addressed were asked to give their views as to whether international action in their field was possible and desirable and what kind of plan the Institute might draw up to improve the situation now existing. In documents, which included Gérard's plan, annexed to the letter, the work of the IIB was described and it was observed that «the 11th International Congress of Documentation has been officially informed of the decision of International Committee and that the Office of the Institute of Documentation has declared that it was very happy with this decision and quite ready to collaborate in the Institute of Intellectual Co-operation's Enquiry».<sup>80</sup>

In September, Alingh Prins drew up a report on the IIB for submission to the Institute for Intellectual Co-operation. In it he made clear his attitude to the RBU, first expressed at Cologne in 1928 and again at Frankfurt in the previous month.

As to the Universal Bibliographical Repertory, it seems desirable to conceive of this in a larger sense than previously... Given the existence already of a great number of specialised services of documentation provided with competent personnel in different countries, it seems desirable to profit from what exists and to co-ordinate the documentary work already done by considering that existing repertories together represent the universal repertory in a decentralised but co-ordinated form.<sup>81</sup>

Alingh Prins's report was a great shock to Otlet to whom it was sent for comments. He criticised it in great detail. Alingh Prins and Donker Duyvis took each of Otlet's points in turn and revealed, as they discussed and refuted them, more clearly than ever before the differences of attitude and belief separating them. They pointed out that their opinion of the RBU was not merely «personal» as Otlet had alleged, but corresponded «to the opinion of the majority of our members». It may be, they observed, that the idea of a «repertory localised

in a single place was splendid in 1895», but one must recognise «that there has been a progression of ideas and to-day federation replaces the local individualism» of other times. Moreover, the information service at the Palais Mondial based on the centralised RBU continued to leave a great deal to be desired. So bad had it become, they felt obliged to point out that «there is considerable general dissatisfaction about the replies received (or not received) when written requests for documentation are made to the Palais Mondial». They concluded that it was «undesirable that the Institute should encourage the use of this center». Nor would they include in their report vague and elevated expressions about the role and success of the Institute as Otlet had desired. «Up till now we have not observed that real enthusiasm with which the 'whole world' has greeted the great idea of organising international co-operation for documentation.» The opposite was the case, in fact. «The Institute is regarded with great reserve throughout the whole world. That is why it is necessary to give a clear and objective account of the state of the institution without exaggeration or lies». It was because of the «cold account», they believed, provided by Pollard and Donker Duyvis that ties with the League Committee of Library Experts had been established in 1930.<sup>82</sup>

When Otlet read these comments, he wrote to Alingh Prins that neither he nor La Fontaine would sign the report. «We believe», he said, «that the RBU and the International Center equipped for common collections and services constitute an essential part of the whole work». Otlet reminded his Dutch colleague that some time earlier he had asked Donker Duyvis «clearly and frankly» when the latter was on one of his visits to Brussels «do you or don't you want our whole program? He replied Yes and that is why until now we have not sought public explanations».<sup>83</sup> The Dutch replied placatingly. The differences, they believed, that had occurred between them and the Belgians arose only «when it becomes a matter of the execution» of the whole IID program as laid down in the Statutes. They explained again their view of what the RBU should be like:

In our opinion a localised Universal Bibliographic Repertory in a single place has only a small value (practice proves this, moreover) and we prefer a solution which is really universal and international: the Federalised Universal Bibliographic Repertory. As far as the international center is concerned, we are equally of the opinion that it should limit itself to the work of co-ordination.<sup>84</sup>

There matters rested until the end of November when Alingh Prins wrote to Otlet and La Fontaine about translation rights and royalties from the publication of the Universal Decimal Classification about which there had been some earlier

correspondence. The decisions of the London Conference in 1929 about translations were still in force, but for the first time, it seemed to Alingh Prins that the question of significant profit from the sale of translations looked as if it might now arise. He proposed, therefore, that «50% of future profits should be transmitted to the IID which would put them at the disposition of the International Office of Bibliography in view of the debts of this institution with respect to its old founders. It is my opinion that the formal debts of the Office should be considered as debts of honour for the IID».<sup>85</sup> Otlet and La Fontaine would have none of this. «It is not, it has never been», they said, «a question of compensation for MM. Otlet and La Fontaine». It was a question of what they had created and worked for.

What they have worked for and are working for can be defined as follows: Documentation constituted by a Universal Network formed by a World Center and of auxiliary national, local and special centers. To link and symbolise the whole, a Universal Bibliographic Repertory registers and classes all the product of human thought... Any mutilation of this work cannot win their approval for it would be a contradiction of the very principles of its foundation.

Proceeding from this point of view, Otlet and La Fontaine then asserted:

After the separation precipitated at Frankfurt last August between the Office and the Institute, it is, with all the collections, the International Office of Bibliography to whom belongs the rights of publication and it is with it that agreement will have to be made A) for the development, and B) for the publication of the tables of the Decimal Classification.<sup>86</sup>

Immediately Alingh Prins received Otlet's letter claiming copyright for the OIB in the Decimal Classification, he protested that:

The «Universal Decimal Classification» is published by the International Institute of Bibliography whose Executive Committee functions as a Publications Committee by virtue of a decision taken at the Tenth Conference of our Institute. Being convinced of the necessity for a German and an English translation of the Code, I have the duty and the right to submit this request to the Executive Committee... I regret that I do not see either the duty or even the right of addressing myself to the International Office of Bibliography.

Once more he explained that no separation had been provoked at Frankfurt, and carefully reviewed the events that had led to this misapprehension. Moreover, at Frankfurt Otlet and La Fontaine had agreed to the budget prepared for the IID of which the Committee for the Decimal Classification was part. They therefore «recognised the right of control of the IID's Council in the management of the C.D. ...» In his opinion, Alingh Prins said, nothing had really changed because of the disagreement at Frankfurt. «In reality it is only a question of an administrative matter, which needs to be understood



clearly and exactly.» Alingh Prins ended on a conciliatory note:

Please be convinced, my dear Mm Otlet and La Fontaine, that I have the greatest desire to put an end to these mis-understandings, and that I desire that we should collaborate together in the common goal in a spirit of friendship and mutual understanding.<sup>87</sup>

Donker Duyvis was shaken by Otlet's letter and spoke out strongly. The last edition of the Classification, he said, contained only a little borrowed from Dewey. The rest of it was the result of the work in Europe of a great many collaborators. «In asking for the co-operation of collaborators, I requested them to contribute their work to the International Committee for the Decimal Classification which acted as the representative committee of the IIB after the regulations laid down in 1924.» All the collaborators had worked without any claim to copyright. He renounced any such claims himself and regretted, rather tartly, that such claims were being made «for an institution of the Belgian Government of which I know little more than the name and with which neither any of the collaborators nor I myself have had any relation». He observed that the work of many of his collaborators was often «mutilated to force it into the superannuated scheme of Dewey». It would be only a little trouble to abandon the whole scheme and set about devising a «universal classification responding more to modern needs (particularly we want to overturn sections 1 to 4)», the sections in the new edition, for which Otlet and La Fontaine had been responsible. But Donker Duyvis did not want this to happen. «It is therefore with the greatest insistence that I beg you not to mutilate the existing organisation — an organisation founded by you — in which you have co-operated and acted as the co-directors since its foundation in 1924.»<sup>88</sup>

Otlet, however, continued to believe that the Dutch had attempted to separate the Office and the Institute and to bear a strong resentment towards them. He continued to refuse to accept the various changes that had occurred in the Institute over the preceding years. On Boxing Day 1932, he drew up a report «On the Present Situation of the IID» which he wanted to submit to the Council and members of the Institute. It set out all the grievances mentioned in his earlier report to La Fontaine in July and added to them his opinions on what had happened at the Frankfurt Conference and subsequently.<sup>89</sup> On the 28th and 29th December Donker Duyvis and Alingh Prins came down to Brussels from The Hague and Otlet read his draft report to them. They discussed it and they came to an agreement which Otlet drew up formally. Important provisions of the agreement were to reinstate the RBU as an «integral part of the international organisation of documen-

tation». Even more important were the decisions made about the Decimal Classification:

- a) The Decimal Classification is confirmed as the property of the International Office of Bibliography, but the scientific development is confided to the International Institute of Documentation. This will carry out its elaboration through the Committee for the Decimal Classification... Anything that is a matter of translation, adaptation, abbreviation or other rights will be the object of an agreement whose purpose will be to safeguard the integrity of the work as well as the moral rights and material benefits which derive from it. The financial benefits of the Edition of the CD as well as other publications will be put to the development of the Office and the Institute.
- b) Some general rules will be laid down for the development of the classification and for successive editions...

The International Office of Bibliography and of Documentation was to be developed as an autonomous international organisation. Its relations with the Institute would be controlled by a formal agreement, though a common headquarters would be maintained. The Office would also have its own series of publications. Other publications bearing the name, IID, would have to be approved by Council.<sup>90</sup>

In December Alingh Prins prepared an official reply to the two documents received from the Institute for Intellectual Co-operation in Paris. He dealt with each of these in some detail. He pointed out that Gérard's report, particularly,

contained a brilliant exposition of the problem of documentation and of the different forms under which documentation presents itself. Similar expositions on these principles have been made previously by M. Otlet and have acted as the bases for action of the International Institute for Bibliography now the International Institute for Documentation.

He indicated that all existing national unions and federations of documentation were at present already members of the IID. There were two exceptions, Aslib, which had, however, a joint and very active Committee with the BSIB on the Decimal Classification, and Gérard's own French Union of Offices of Documentation. It was clear to him that the IID actually already filled the requirements for an international organisation for documentation set out in different ways in the two reports, or could do so with some support from the Institute for Intellectual Co-operation.<sup>91</sup> Otlet, not satisfied with this, prepared a «personal» reply to the proposals set forth in the two documents. He re-iterated what had become his standard concepts expressed in a standard form, concluding his recommendations, «Documentation, Science, Human Thought wish it».<sup>92</sup> Here was what Alingh Prins had come to distrust in content and manner of expression in Otlet's writing. His own «cold account» is a model of directness, relevance and clarity by comparison.

## THE CRISIS RESOLVED

For the purposes of this study, the year 1932 is taken as the point at which Otlet's influence ceased to be of any primary importance in shaping the structure and work of the International Institute for Documentation. In that year in the evolution of the Institute's history it was as if youth and age, innovation and reaction, future and past at last confronted each other decisively. There were no pitched battles between the opposing forces, only a number of minor skirmishes representing sharpening clashes between diverging but still closely related ideologies. There was certainly no final or completely decisive victory. Triumph would have sacrificed on the one hand a past rich in association and achievement, and on the other the possibilities of a promising future. Moreover, one or other side might have lost the rights to the Decimal Classification. Neither side, therefore, looked clearly to win, and both were, on the whole, polite and scrupulous of each other's sensibilities. Nevertheless the changes which had been made were not reversed and more changes ensued upon the pattern of earlier ones as the Institute gradually, inexorably perhaps, pursued the new directions set in The Hague. Otlet and La Fontaine continued to be Secretaries-General until 1939 when they were ceremoniously created Honorary Vice-Presidents.<sup>93</sup> They were Secretaries-General of the Institute, then, in 1937 when it went through yet another modification of statutes and a change of name to become the International Federation for Documentation (FID).<sup>94</sup> Otlet continued to work on the Decimal Classification, continued to correspond incessantly, indefatigably with Donker Duyvis. His slightly stooped figure with its high, domed forehead and vividly white moustache and beard continued to appear at the annual meetings of the IID, then the FID. At these, peering through small round steel-rimmed spectacles, he still read the Annual Report of the General Secretariat. But upon specific matters of policy he appeared to have little perceptible impact after 1932. Moreover, the compromises he had insisted upon at his meeting with Donker Duyvis and Alingh Prins in December 1932 were maintained, at least until 1934 when the Belgian Government once again shut the Palais Mondial, and they accentuated the changes that had occurred. Indeed, in August 1933 Otlet altered his will to exclude the Institute from its provisions because of the separation that had taken place and to make the Office of Bibliography, whose continued existence and independence he had attempted to protect, specifically its beneficiary.<sup>95</sup> He seems never to have lost a sense of alienation from the reshaped Institute with its younger leaders and narrower program and he kept ever before him the ideals of his Palais Mondial even when physically it remained inaccessible to him.

Perhaps 1932 may be best described as the year in which the conflicts that attend succession of leadership, following earlier intimations that they were likely to occur, finally struck the Institute in a sharply focused form. Otlet, the old leader in Brussels, was a man sixty-five years old and of declining powers. He had grown inflexible and was heavy with the history of his Institutes. Gradually, he had been forced to give way to Donker Duyvis who represented a new order. Donker Duyvis, the young leader in The Hague, was fresher, freer, more single-minded than Otlet. Unlike Otlet, there was for him no wearying, increasingly weighty burden of few and small victories overwhelmed by the more frequent defeat of past aspirations. Nor was he encumbered by the compulsions of philosophy.

Otlet was, in a sense, rewarded for the renunciations demanded of him, though he may not have recognised it, by elevation in the eyes of many to a status high above the often petty imperatives of politics and action, to that of founder, benefactor, pioneer, for whom respect and admiration, untrammelled by daily dealings, could become something like reverence. From this position his utterances throughout the years following 1932 commanded attention from those who had previously begun impatiently to reject them. To those seeking direction in a simple, concrete, realisable program clearly and forcefully expressed, he had offered only abstractions, loftiness of ideal, a preoccupation with the past and a future evoked in the suspect terms of an antiquated philosophy. Now his eloquence no longer produced exasperation but, at least, tolerant affirmation of its generous sentiment, at most, inspiration.<sup>96</sup>

Whatever the reward, the struggle had upon Otlet a serious effect. As it progressed he wrote that his «physical, social and moral forces» were so diminished that he found himself wishing to be relieved of the work he had undertaken. «I conceived an institution», he said, «I developed it. I have defined the stages of its future extension: the Institute of Bibliography, the Union of International Associations, the Museum, the Palais Mondial, the Network for the Mundaneum, the World City». Confronting him were so many problems that he believed that it had become necessary that those who were to be the «beneficiaries» of his work, those who were «strong and aware», should act to ensure that «any deviation from the fundamental idea» be prevented. Around them all was a world torn by «crisis, war, revolutions». He was himself in a deplorable financial situation, physically exhausted, unable to continue his work. The time had come, he believed, for the promotion of the World City, the final stage in his pro-

gram of international institutions, but he feared that he was no longer able to do it himself because of his «failing strength... insufficiency... impotence... impatience».<sup>27</sup>

# FOOTNOTES

1. Paul Otlet and Le Corbusier, *Mundaneum* (Publication No. 128; Bruxelles: UIA, 1928).
2. Paul Otlet, *Sur la Bibliothèque Mondiale* (Publication No. 154; Bruxelles: 11B, 1928).
3. Richardson probably meant the Author Repertory, the International Finding List, upon which the League agreement had focused.
4. Ernest Cushing Richardson, *Some Aspects of International Library Co-operation* (Yardley, Pa.: F. S. Cook, 1928), p. 108.
5. Ernest Cushing Richardson, Chairman of the ALA Committee on Bibliography to the International Institute of Bibliography, *VII<sup>e</sup> Conférence Bibliographique Internationale, Cologne (Pressa) 17 et 18 septembre, 1928* (Publication No. 146; Bruxelles: 11B, 1928), pp. 18—19.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
7. Edith Scott, «IFLA and FID—History and Programs», *Library Quarterly*, XXXII (1962), 6—7.
8. «Copie de la lettre de M. E. C. Richardson, Chairman Committee on Co-operation of the ALA, Washington en date du 4 octobre, 1932» Note No. 2548, 24 October 1932, Office Internationale de Bibliographie, Palais Mondial, Bruxelles.
9. Pollard to Otlet, *VII<sup>e</sup> Conférence... 1928*, pp. 19—20.
10. *VII<sup>e</sup> Conférence... 1928*, p. 7.
11. Paul Otlet, *Institut International de Bibliographie, 1928* (Publication No. 155; Bruxelles: 11B, 1928).
12. *VII<sup>e</sup> Conférence... 1928*, pp. 12—13.
13. S. C. Bradford, «Fifty Years of Documentation», *Documentation with an Introduction by Jesse Shera and Margaret Egan* (London: Crosby Lockwood, 1953), p. 136.
14. E. M. R. Dittmas «Dr. S. C. Bradford», *Journal of Documentation*, 4 (1948), 170.
15. Bradford, p. 138.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
17. Samuel Bradford to Prof. Gilbert Murray, 22 August 1928. Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle. Institut de Documentation: D VIII. 13, Unesco, Paris.
18. Donker Duyvis to de Vos Van Steenwijk [English translation of Dutch text] 13 December, 1928. *Ibid.*
19. Secretary, Committee on Intellectual Co-operation to Professor Murray, 29 August 1928 (in English), *ibid.*
20. Reference here and in the following paragraphs is to *VII<sup>e</sup> Conférence... 1928* and no further citations will be made from it.
21. The Committees then existing according to Otlet's *Institut International de Bibliographie 1928*, p. 12 were: Committee for the Decimal Classifi-

cation; Committee for Cataloguing Rules; Committee for Documentary Techniques; and, oddly, Section for Bibliological Psychology.

22. Reference in the following paragraphs, except where otherwise indicated, is without further citation to *VIII<sup>e</sup> Conférence Bibliographique Internationale, Londres. 1929* (Publication No. 163; Bruxelles: 11B, 1929).
23. *League of Nations Official Journal*, II (LVI) November 1929, pp. 1538 and 1548—9.
24. De Vos Van Steenwijk to Pollard, 3 February 1930. Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle: Institut International de Documentation: DVII. 13, Unesco, Paris.
25. 11B, *Documents*: I. Sommaire sur l'Institut International de Bibliographie présenté au Congrès International de Bibliothèques et de la Bibliographie, Rome, 15 juin, 1929; II. Commission Internationale de la Classification Décimale... (Publication No. 159; Bruxelles: 11B, 1929).
26. Carl Walther became Chairman of the Classification Sub-Committee of the German Standards Institute and like Bradford, was an ardent «decimalist». He was mainly responsible for the 1932 Abridged German edition and worked for twenty years (1934—1953) for the completion of the full edition. He died at the age of 84 in 1960.
27. Georges Lorphèvre, «Donker Duyvis et la Classification Décimale Universelle», *F. Donker Duyvis: His Life and Work* (Nider Publication Series 2, No. 45; The Hague: Netherlands Institute for Documentation and Filing, 1964), p. 19.
28. F. Donker Duyvis, «9th Annual Report of International Committee of Decimal Classification (sic)», *IID Communications*, III, Fasc. 1, (1936), col. DD11.
29. Georges Lorphèvre, «Donker Duyvis et la Classification Décimale Universelle», p. 19.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 21—22.
31. *VIII<sup>e</sup> Conférence... 1929*, p. 11.
32. John Phillip Comaromi, *A History of the Dewey Decimal Classification: Editions One through Fifteen, 1876—1951* (Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, School of Library Science, University of Michigan, 1969), p. 321. The quotations in the following paragraphs are from Comaromi pp. 321—326. Dorcas Fellows, it will be observed, followed an even more extreme form of simplified spelling than Godfrey Dewey.
33. He died at the age of 80 in 1931.
34. *VIII<sup>e</sup> Conférence... 1929*, p. 11.
35. Godfrey Dewey to Otlet, 7 April 1930, Dossier No. 259, «Dewey», *Mundaneum*.
36. Otlet to Godfrey Dewey, 23 April 1930, *ibid.*
37. Comaromi, p. 326.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 328.
39. Otlet to Godfrey Dewey, 5 September 1930, Dossier No. 259, «Dewey», *Mundaneum*.
40. Comaromi, p. 328.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 329.
42. *VII<sup>e</sup> Conférence... 1928*, p. 12.
43. Léon Wouters to Henri La Fontaine, 19 March 1930, Dossier No. 259, «Dewey», *Mundaneum*.



44. Comaromi, p. 329.
45. F. Donker Duyvis, «5th Report on the International Committee of Decimal Classification», *Documentatio Universalis*, No. 5—6 (1932), p. 210.
46. *Ibid.*
47. Comaromi, p. 331.
48. F. Donker Duyvis, «5th Report...», p. 209.
49. *Ibid.*
50. Otlet to Godfrey Dewey, 5 September 1930, Dossier No. 259, «Dewey», Mundaneum.
51. Vos Van Steenwijk, «note pour M. le Directeur [de l'Institut]», 23 January 1930; and A. F. C. Pollard to de Vos Van Steenwijk, 21 January, 1930, Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle: Institut International de Documentation: DVIII. 13, Unesco, Paris.
52. Réunion des Experts-Bibliothécaires, 27—28 Janvier 1930: Classification Décimale, résolution. Société des Nations. Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle. C. T. B. 19. 1930.
53. De Vos Van Steenwijk to Pollard, 3 February 1930. Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle: Institut International de Documentation: DVII. 13, Unesco, Paris.
54. De Vos Van Steenwijk, «Note», 18 September 1930. Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle: Classification décimale: DVIII. 5, Unesco, Paris.
55. *Ibid.*
56. «Société des Nations: Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle, Comité d'Experts Bibliothécaires», *Documentatio Universalis*, Nos. 5—6 (1932), p. 213.
57. A. Dufour [Under-Secretary-General, Director of the Section for International Offices and Intellectual Co-operation, League of Nations, Geneva] to Henri Bonnet [Director Institute for Intellectual Cooperation, Paris] 26 October 1931, Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle: Classification Décimale: DVIII. 5, Unesco, Paris.
58. M. de Montenach [Secretary to the International Committee for Intellectual Co-operation, Geneva] to M. Bonnet, 20 November, 1931, *ibid.*
59. Donker Duyvis to A. Rossi [Principal Secretary. Institute for Intellectual Co-operation], 5 March 1932, *ibid.*
60. «La X<sup>me</sup> Conférence Internationale de Bibliographie et de Documentation, La Haye, 24—29 août 1931», *Documentatio Universalis*, No. 3 (1931), pp. 83—88. This was anonymous but was reproduced in part in Paul Otlet, «Institut International de Bibliographie, X<sup>me</sup> Conférence à la Haye... résultats généraux», *Palais Mondial*, No. 20 (January 1932), pp. 7—10.
61. «La X<sup>me</sup> Conférence... 1931», p. 85.
62. Paul Otlet, *Bibliographia Universalis*... (Publication No. 166; Bruxelles: IIB, 1931). This was also published in *Documentatio Universalis*, No. 3 (1931), pp. 112—134.
63. *Ibid.*, subtitle.
63. «La X<sup>me</sup> Conférence... 1931», p. 85.
64. Losseau to Otlet, 4 December 1931, Dossier No. 256, «Losseau», Mundaneum.
65. J. Alingh Prins to Otlet, 20 November 1931. This and the following letters and documents, unless otherwise indicated, are from a file marked «Incident Hollandais» in the Otletaneum.
66. Otlet to Alingh Prins, 12 February 1932.
67. Librarian, John Crerar Library to IIB, 16 July 1931, Dossier No. 488, «John Crerar Library», Mundaneum.
68. Paul Otlet, «Sur la crise de l'IIB: Le vrai rapport annuel», Note No. 2946, 29 July 1933, IID. This note is marked in Otlet's hand «Personnelle — Paul Otlet à Henri La Fontaine». The following points and quotations are taken from this note.
69. Paul Otlet, *Classification Décimale Universelle: études et projets. Les subdivisions communes* (IID Publication No. 169; Bruxelles: Palais Mondial, 1932).
70. Samuel Bradford to the Secretary IID, 10 August 1932.
71. «Liste des notes envoyées à M. Donker Duyvis depuis le mois d'avril 1931», Note No. 2947, 1 August 1932, IIB.
72. Donker Duyvis to Otlet, 5 August 1932.
73. Otlet to Donker Duyvis, 23 August 1932.
74. In his letter of 8 October 1932 to Otlet, Alingh Prins quotes from the earlier letters to La Fontaine. They are not in the file «Incidents Hollandais».
75. Otlet to Alingh Prins and Donker Duyvis, 8 October 1932.
76. Otlet's account of the Conference is given in his «Sur la situation actuelle de l'IID: au conseil de l'IID, Ses membres et ses amis — rapport de M. Paul Otlet, 26 décembre, 1932», Note No. 3003, IID. This is marked «projets» and «envoyée à M. La Fontaine».
77. Jean Gérard, «L'Organisation mondiale de la documentation universelle», Comité d'Experts Bibliothécaires. VI<sup>ème</sup> réunion (16—17 juin 1932), International Institute for Intellectual Co-operation, Document C.T.B. 10, 1932.
78. Paul Otlet, «Sur la situation actuelle de l'IID...».
79. Unsigned copy of note to D. Secretan, 18 August 1932. Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle: Institut International de Documentation: DVII. 13, Unesco, Paris.
80. H. Bonnet, Director, form letter C.L. 49.1932, 18—30 November 1932 and annexes, *ibid.*
81. On 15 September 1932 Otlet was sent a document from the Hague «Concept du rapport à soumettre à l'Inst. Int. de Coop. Int. Critique priée avant 21 septembre», and it was marked «urgent». Otlet revised this, and there is a copy in the file, «Incidents Hollandais», with his MS. interpolations and corrections.
82. Alingh Prins and Donker Duyvis to Otlet, 1 October 1932.
83. Otlet to Alingh Prins and Donker Duyvis, 8 October, 1932.
84. Alingh Prins and Donker Duyvis to Otlet and La Fontaine, 21 October 1932.
85. Alingh Prins to Otlet, 29 November 1932.
86. Otlet and La Fontaine to Alingh Prins, 14 December 1932.
87. Alingh Prins to Otlet and La Fontaine, 14 December 1932.
88. Donker Duyvis to La Fontaine and Otlet, 21 December 1932.

89. Paul Otlet, «Sur la situation actuelle de l'IID...»
90. «Directives et orientations», Note No. 3004, 30 December 1932. This is anonymous but contains MS corrections and additions in Otlet's hand. The section on the UDC is difficult because of much scratching out and interlineation. It suggests where matters stood finally though it is not clear if it was formally adopted by both parties.
91. Allingh Prins to H. Bonnet, Director of the International Institute for Intellectual Co-operation, 16 December 1932.
92. Paul Otlet, «Réponse personnelle de M. Paul Otlet à l'Enquête sur la Documentation de l'Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle», Note No. 3023, 24 February 1933, IIB.
93. *IID Communicationes*, V, Fasc. IV, (1939), p. 127, an example, perhaps, of what Peter calls, «the lateral Arabesque».
94. «Congrès Mondial de Documentation, Paris, 16—21 août, 1937», *IID Communicationes*, IV, Fasc. III (1937), pp. 8—19.
95. «Codicille à mon testament», 25 août 1933, No. 30 *Testament: Paul Otlet*, Otletaneum.
96. These inferences are suggested by remarks in the *IID Communicationes* upon the appearance of the *Traité de Documentation* which was presented to the Annual Meeting in Brussels of the IID Council in August 1934 (I Fasc. IV, (1934), 12), and by comments, such as G. A. de Voogd's, on Otlet and La Fontaine as pioneers, made at the 1934 Copenhagen conference (II, Fasc. IV (1935), at which Otlet's report called «L'IIB—IID, hier, aujourd'hui, demain» was read (II, Fasc. IV (1935), col. Ot 1—12), and a description of an impromptu address by Otlet at the 1937 World Congress of Documentation in Paris (IV, Fasc. III (1937) 9):
97. «Mes chers amis», 25 June 1932, No. 25 *Testament: Paul Otlet*, Otletaneum.

## Chapter XIV

### LAST DECADES

#### THE MUNDANEUM

During the latter part of the 1920s and the early 1930s Otlet was by no means solely occupied with developments in the International Institute of Documentation, as the last chapter may have suggested. His main activities, on the contrary, were firmly directed towards the Mundaneum. The Mundaneum was the expression of his philosophy and he devised and carried out a program of work using and expanding its collections in an attempt to realise its educational potential. Within it he studied, lectured and wrote.

In the late twenties, after Masure's death, he attracted, perhaps unexpectedly for he had feared he would not be able to replace Masure, two new colleagues to work with him, two disciples, Georges Lorphèvre, then a very young man, and the older André Colet. Moreover, after the closure of the Palais Mondial in 1924, a group of supporters joined together to form a non-profit association designed to help in its reconstruction and subsequent development along the lines of Otlet's theories. This association called itself Les Amis du Palais Mondial. Its members were a corps of volunteers replacing the paid assistants of earlier more prosperous days. The program of the Mundaneum, both social and educational, was directed primarily at them, and notices about it appeared in an information bulletin, *Palais Mondial*, issued from the Mundaneum regularly between 1929 and 1932.

During the period 1927 to 1930 a cycle of lectures and other activities was held. In 1930 another triennial cycle began. It was described in the following way:

It [the triennial cycle] constitutes an important form of instruction with a special character: the complement, preparation for, or repetition of general and specialised instruction given before. It is distinguished by three characteristics:

1 This instruction in all its parts is dominated by a central idea: to make known the general life of the world under the form of its

development through things (Nature, Man, Society), through space (Nations, Countries), through time (History, Evolution, Revolutions, Transformations).

2. This instruction is supported by the vast documentation already assembled in the Museum, the Library, the Archives and the Repertories of the Palais Mondial. Such documentation permits everyone, at any time, to deepen and extend his studies: it simplifies oral exposition... The documentation of the Museum in particular allows one to see and touch things themselves or reproductions of them: «The Silent University of Sight and Touch».

3. Moreover, this instruction extends to everything. It covers the great fundamental facts, the links, the connections, the recurrences, the repercussions, the interdependencies. In this form it constitutes in essence «Modern and Generalised Humanities». It draws its inspiration from these adages: you are a man and nothing human should be foreign to you; you have become a citizen of the world and no part of the world should lie outside your knowledge; you are a son of the twentieth century and none of the great common tasks, now imposed or proposed, should leave you indifferent...

The Palais Mondial's cycle of triennial instruction takes many forms: lectures, still and moving pictures, phonograph concerts, demonstrations, guided tours with commentaries, meetings with enquiries, questions and debates. General meetings are complemented by conversations, by initiation into the methods of Documentation and intellectual work by means of courses and practical work in the workshops of the Palais Mondial.<sup>1</sup>

In this program Otlet had endeavoured to put into practice the educational uses to be made of the collections of the Mundaneum upon which he had expatiated in 1926. The range of subjects dealt with in the lectures, many accompanied as the program promised, by slides or other primitive forms of what nowadays are called the audio-visual media, was extraordinary. Otlet himself in just the first half of 1930 lectured on «The International Bank», «The Hague and London Conferences», «The International Organisation of Vices», «The Problems of Language», «From the Cave to the World City», «The International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation — Its Re-organisation and the Institutes of the Palais Mondial», «Concerning the Revolution of 1830 and of all other Revolutions that have or will be seen in the World», and «Philosophy of Life and Universalism».<sup>2</sup> Other lecturers ranged in their discourses from «The Necessity for Dental Hygiene», to «The Enigmas of the Universe».<sup>3</sup>

During this period, too, a special effort was made to interest children in the work of the Mundaneum. In 1930 Georges Lorphèvre set about organising a children's library at the Mundaneum for the Jeunes Amis du Palais Mondial (sometimes known as JAPM) who were taking up their work at that time, it was remarked, «with enthusiasm».<sup>4</sup> The aims of the Jeunes Amis du Palais Mondial were defined as «developing the faculties», and «extending the knowledge» of its members, thus permitting them to make «some worthwhile contribution to the Palais Mondial while helping themselves».<sup>5</sup> In some

remarks directed to parents, Otlet enlarged upon the usefulness to the Palais Mondial of this group of young people, and the personal value they would themselves discover in their association with it. Generalising, typically, from the particular instance of this group, Otlet proposed that a Union of Youth for the Mundaneum should be created. This would be worldwide and would stand to social and intellectual matters much as the Boy Scouts stood to «physical» matters.<sup>6</sup> The activities of the Jeunes Amis du Palais Mondial, in reality Bruxellois all, one supposes, took the form of meetings, debates, dramatic presentations and special tasks in the Palais Mondial.

The situation of the Palais Mondial was extremely serious at this time. Belgium's centennial celebrations were held in 1930, but it was a year for the Mundaneum, Otlet said, not of «rejoicing» but of «mourning»<sup>7</sup> for, six years after the events of 1924, it was still incompletely restored. Early in 1930, as Director of the Mundaneum, Otlet apologised for its continuing deteriorated physical condition. It was, he admitted, «in a bad state of repair and the upkeep leaves a great deal to be desired. The Management offers its apologies». The best that could be done in this year of celebration for Belgian institutions, he believed, was the mounting of a public opinion campaign to shame the authorities into offering adequate future support for the Mundaneum and some reparation for the damages inflicted on it. Now was a time, he suggested, when «complaints, protests, demands, resolutions, grievances, regrets, and statements of consequences in any form whatever should be sent either individually or collectively to those who can help».<sup>8</sup>

The problems faced by the Mundaneum were reflected in its various collections which continued to be tended and some of which grew slowly in the decade 1924 to 1934. Early in 1931, the RBU contained nearly fourteen million cards. Since 1927 only about half a million cards had been added to it. Some additions of national and special sections were also made to the Museum. In 1931 the Documentary Encyclopedia comprising 10,000 files and containing about one million items, stood unchanged from 1927. The Atlas of Universal Civilisation, however, the first studies for which Otlet and Anne Oderfeld had presented in 1928 and 1929, contained about three thousand charts in 1931 and the microfilm collection, the Encyclopedia Microphotica Mundaneum, grew quite rapidly.<sup>9</sup>

The RBU, which in Otlet's view culminated the work of the IID and was at the root of international intellectual co-operation, illustrates the problems and inefficiencies of the International Headquarters of the IID. Though the RBU was for Otlet the central IID collection and had been recognised as providing a basis for an international finding list by the In-



ternational Committee for Intellectual Co-operation, no attempts were made until 1928 to have resumed the shipment to the Mundaneum of the British Museum Library's accession slips. These shipments had begun in 1909 after official representations to the British government from the Belgian government. Ten years after the end of the War, which had, of course, interrupted the shipments, all accession slips from the period 1914 to 1928 were at last sent to the Palais Mondial. These shipments continued for two years only.<sup>10</sup> No attempt at all was made to have the Library of Congress continue depositing its sets of printed cards in the RBU, cards which had become particularly valuable after 1930 when they began to carry Dewey Decimal Numbers which would permit their being filed immediately, or with only slight modification (given increasing divergence between the CD and DC) into the RBU. In 1922 Putnam, the Librarian of Congress himself, wrote to Otlet about the cards:

The shipment of depository cards to your Institution was of course interrupted by the War. We rather expected that when you were again ready to receive shipments of our cards you would write to that effect. We are advised by Mr. Ernest Kletsch, who recently called on you, that your institution has apparently recovered from the War period and seems ready to handle the cards again. If you are ready to receive the cards we will send within a few weeks those that have been issued since shipments were suspended in 1914...<sup>11</sup>

No action was taken on this letter at the Mundaneum and the cards were never sent.<sup>12</sup> All of this suggests the validity of the criticisms voiced by Alingh Prins and others against the great, centralised RBU which was becoming more and more dinosaur-like, more and more incomplete and more and more out-of-date with each passing year.

It is tempting to speculate that at this time, an old, discouraged, slightly bitter man, Otlet had begun to retreat from the world of action, from the practicalities of his extraordinary ambitious program of international organisation. Lorphèvre and Colet were beside him protectively, and around him was a band of faithfuls. As they worked, however ineffectually, among the collections of the Mundaneum, Otlet seems to have turned increasingly to his own private study and writing, to a rather reclusive life of scholarship the idea of which had appealed to him so strongly as a young man. Then, fifty years ago, he had been prevented from following whole-heartedly what he had thought of as a natural bent of his character by the necessity of working with his father to restore the family fortune. Now after years of intermittent, but cumulatively extensive study there was nothing to restrain him from almost complete devotion to it, particularly no constraints of obvious success. What seems to have been his attitude to the RBU at this time may have been generally typical. He defended the

idea of it, paying attention only to what it could become as part of the grandiose whole his past theorising had envisaged as being achievable at some indeterminate future time. What the RBU was as an actual tool of scholarship, against the demonstrable efficiency of which his theories might be (and were) tested, seems not to have much concerned him. His attitude to all the alarms and encounters in the IID, which so distressed and exhausted him, seems to have been similar. The fascination with an abstract ideal of perfect parts in a perfect whole infinitely larger than the partial world of the IID, the justifications of anterior theorising, the prospect of future fulfilment and the ideal conditions that must obtain for it — these ceaselessly drove his pen. Facing him, rejected, their importance not clearly understood, not admitted, were practicalities, questions of efficiency, immediate problems of action, of co-operation, of co-ordination, of the conflicting opinions, expectations and self-interest of his many colleagues. Acknowledging these the IID began hard and realistically limited work and to enjoy the prospect of some success. Retiring from them, Otlet, impatient, dispirited, improverished, immured himself ever more thoroughly within the physical and the conceptual walls of his Palais Mondial.

«It is necessary», he had written to Geddes in 1925, «to go over the same ideas, to deepen them and classify them better, to correlate them, to find a more lively expression for them, to simplify their presentation, and above all to make them less local».<sup>13</sup> This was written about his course on «Universalism» at the Institute of Higher Studies in Brussels. But it is probably true of everything he wrote in the last fifteen years of his life. Certainly, he continued to experiment with his course on universalism. In 1931 it was described as a «course of general studies synthesising facts, the object of the Palais Mondial itself». With some help, pursuing his conviction that there was a great need for adequate «teaching aids», Otlet presented a universal «pictorialisation» «in the form of charts destined for the Atlas of Universal Civilisation, and a demonstration by recently constructed equipment on the model of 'planetariums' (sic.) but extended to the world and the whole of the sciences (Mundanarium)».<sup>14</sup> But as he went over and over old ideas in his writings and teachings, he did so, one might hazard the guess, not to develop and refine them in the sense of theory interpreting new facts, of new facts transforming previously held theory, but merely to add more instances and to organise his work into smaller, more clearly discrete sections, like cards in a pack of cards, which could be shuffled and rearranged.

He seems to have tried to write every day. Each time he wrote it was on a precise topic — a page, two pages, on occa-

sions as many as six, but rarely more. Often the pages were signed and dated and the fact of their ultimate relation indicated by a common «Note» number. There is, for example, in the Mundaneum, a typescript with the title, «Concerning the World Republic: Crisis, War, Revolution, Peace, Prosperity, Progress, Humanity, Civilisation, a Second League of Nations». <sup>15</sup> This bears the Note Number 6268. The first section or «number» of the series following an introduction was called «Problems and Forces Confronting Us». This consisted of several different parts, all separately labelled, each beginning on a new page. The second «number» was called «The Form of Future Battles». These and succeeding parts were not dated and were presumably written in January 1931, the date of the Introduction. «Number» 7, however, «World Law: International Law, Universal Rights, 'Cosmo-Meta-Political Law'», was dated 4th February 1931. Next day, «The Ideal, the World of Ideas and Abstraction» was written. On that same day Otlet also took up a discussion of the United States. Other numbers were written throughout the rest of the year, number 39 of the 21st September 1931, «The Future and Infinity, Eternity and God», necessarily exhausted the series. Some of the parts were written and rewritten. Some were used in Otlet's many lectures, addresses, and demonstrations at the Mundaneum. Others were used in *Monde* published in 1935. <sup>16</sup> Similar collections of notes were called «World Plan», and «Military Duty, Peace, Disarmament». <sup>17</sup>

Otlet actually published very little during the first three or four years of the thirties. He prepared some of the material which appeared in *Palais Mondial*. He published his study of the World Bank in two forms in 1931, as an article in a local journal and as pamphlet. <sup>18</sup> For the Fourth International Congress of the Administrative Sciences held in Spain in 1930 he wrote «On the Possibility of Administrative Entities Having Their Situation at Every Moment Presented Documentarily». <sup>19</sup> Above all in 1932 he wrote his «Systematisation of Documentation» for *Documentatio Universalis* <sup>20</sup> which was a precursor for his *Treatise on Documentation* published in 1934.

#### CLOSURE OF THE MUNDANEUM

On the whole, work in the Palais Mondial seems to have proceeded calmly in the four years from 1930 to 1934. Otlet had his struggles with the IID and with his personal financial problems, all of which depressed and worried him, but he continued to write, study and lecture. On the 1st June 1934, however, calamity once again befell the Palais Mondial. The Government once more closed it down. An announcement appeared in the *IID Communicationes*, which was a transformed *Documentatio Universalis* issued from The Hague, that:

Following deplorable circumstances the offices of the Headquarters and General Secretariat of the IID have had to be transferred from the Palais Mondial to 44 Rue Fétis, Brussels, an address, which is, however, only temporary. <sup>21</sup>

The address, that of Otlet's home, was not temporary. The Palais Mondial never again opened its doors in its old form. At the end of 1938, four years later, the Government did at last agree to provide alternative quarters for it in the Palais du Cinquantenaire, but the Second World War intervened, and with mobilisation in Belgium, «a cavalry regiment occupied the locations destined for the Mundaneum». <sup>22</sup> After the outbreak of War, these troops were replaced by others — German troops. Otlet protested the closure of the Mundaneum by keeping vigil outside its locked doors during the whole of the 1st June 1934. <sup>23</sup>

The government's action, as terrible as it was for all of Otlet's hopes for the Palais Mondial, probably had the beneficial though incidental effect of bringing the Dutch and Belgians together, or at least, of arresting the widening rift between them. Whatever their differences of opinion about centralisation of the IID around a unique bibliographical collection, these had all been obviated by the government when it turned the key in the doors of the Palais Mondial. Now all that was left was Otlet's office in the Rue Fétis, the Dutch office maintained by Donker Duyvis, the national sections, and the UDC. Any work at all within the Institute had to be carried out through its new structural and procedural machinery which had largely been introduced at the instigation of the Dutch after a similar action of the Belgian government ten years before. Betrayed once again by the government and denied even the OIB whose integrity he had attempted to preserve in the face of organisational changes within the Institute, Otlet now rescinded the codicil in his will in favour of it. <sup>24</sup> It seems that Otlet and La Fontaine had recourse to the Courts for redress. The case was heard in October 1935 and it was revealed

that the state had no grievance at all against the Union [of International Associations]; on the contrary, its defending lawyer publicly praised the representatives of the Union, the founders of the Palais Mondial. The defence limited itself simply to pleading the precarious nature of [the Government's] engagement [with the UIA]. It completely denied the legal value of the terms, however formal, of a confirming letter of 1926 of the Minister of Sciences and Arts of the time: «while awaiting the building of convenient locations your collections will not be dislodged». <sup>25</sup>

The League, embroiled in major political and economic struggles, was once again informed of the events and once again ignored them. <sup>26</sup>

The closure of the Palais Mondial did not stop its educational work. Nothing, of course, could be done on the col-

lections, but the programs of lectures and visits continued. They were held in a variety of places, even in Otlet's home. He began to give quite extensive courses such as one of eight lessons beginning on the 18th January 1936 on «An Introduction to the Encyclopedia of Knowledge and Documentation».<sup>27</sup> A formal celebration of the 1,000th lecture of the Mundaneum was held on the 25th February 1940, and an elaborate invitation was issued for it.<sup>28</sup>



# Célébration de la Millième Conférence du Mundaneum

1940-02-25

Et maintenant la Nel, portant le Mundaneum et ses Espoirs, vogue sur la mer des Réalités, le cap sur l'Ideal.

A Monsieur  
Conférencier au Mundaneum

Invitation Issued to the 1,000th Lecture Sponsored by the Mundaneum

Otlet published the culmination of his life's work of study and speculation in 1934 and 1935. *Traité de documentation*<sup>29</sup> appeared in 1934 and *Monde*<sup>30</sup> and *Plan Belgique*<sup>31</sup> appeared in 1935. These works, encyclopedic in scope, packed with detail, represent the systematisation to their respective dates of all he had thought and studied. In their fields they dealt avowedly with «everything». Otlet followed documentation, for example, from the beginning of writing, through the history of books and libraries to «Meta-Bibliography», and into «transcendental regions». The ultimate form of documentation he now expressed as «codification». Codification consisted of «(1) saying things only once; and (2) expressing things in terms such that the general idea precedes the particular idea and is elevated to the rank of principles, norms, laws, rules».<sup>32</sup> He had returned to some of the ideas first expressed in «Sur la structure des nombres classificateurs» of 1895/1896.<sup>33</sup>

The enumerations of *Monde*, proceeding from the world of things, through those of space and time, culminated in «the equation for the world» in which the first term was «the world in the unity of its synthesis», and the other terms and expression of «the elements of its analysis».<sup>34</sup> It was explained thus.

The world appears in the development of a single great equation whose terms are expressed in the degree of detail and according to sub-classifications as are convenient, whose terms are expressed with sufficient conciseness in order that from a single view one can perceive and meditate upon their respective connections.

The World =	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 1. \text{ Things (Nature} \\ \text{Man} \\ \text{Society} \\ \text{Divinity)} \\ 2. \text{ Space} \\ 3. \text{ Time} \end{array} \right.$	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 4. \text{ The Ego (Knowledge} \\ \text{Feeling} \\ \text{Action)} \\ 5. \text{ Creations (Synthesis} \\ \text{Harmony} \\ \text{Organisation)} \\ 6. \text{ Expression} \end{array} \right.$	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 7. \text{ The} \\ \text{Unknown} \\ \text{and} \\ \text{Mystery} \end{array} \right.$
$W = \frac{T}{S} (N+M+S+D)$		$\frac{E(K+f+a)}{C(s+h+o)} (X+Y)$	

35

It is hard not to see these works of 1934 and 1935 as a kind of *reductio ad absurdum* of Otlet's thought. The equation in which the world received its ultimate «codification» was a meaningless descriptive device. On the basis of the text of *Monde* (the equation is introduced at the beginning and repeated at the end as though having been demonstrated) Otlet discussed «world sociological prediction» and presented a formula of «fundamental sociological elements». This was contained in an appendix. Other appendices set out his idea of the necessity for a World Plan (again with formula), a World Constitution, a description of the Mundaneum and the World



City. A brief examination of Belgium's place in the World Plan was the basis for the fuller study of *Plan belge*. The pivotal role of «documentation» in Otlet's thought (for it was the point from which his speculations and essays in international organisation always departed and to which they always returned) was expressed very clearly in *Monde*. For him it related to «expression», the sixth term of his equation:

Work—book—book as instrument of human thought—thought, the essence of the human being and also the instrument of a milieu which extends, enlarges, amplifies human being. As the world goes now, on the lines of hyper-separatism, there will soon be only documentation to establish regular and benevolent contact between man.<sup>36</sup>

In his discussion of documentation, Otlet showed once again that receptivity to technological innovation, a foreshadowing of future inventions, which had already appeared from time to time in his writing:

Man would no longer need documentation if he were to become an omniscient being like God himself. A less ultimate degree would create an instrumentation acting across distance which would combine at the same time radio, x-rays, cinema and microscopic photography. All the things of the Universe, and all those of man, would be registered from afar as they were produced. Thus the moving image of the world would be established—its memory, its true duplicate. Any one from afar would be able to read the passage, expanded or limited to the desired subject, projected on his individual screen. Thus, in his armchair, any one would be able to contemplate the whole of creation or certain of its parts.<sup>37</sup>

Though Otlet showed himself as something of a visionary whose visions later, long after his death, assumed some reality, he was also a product of his times and particularly of his positivistic philosophy of universalism. In these major works, the *Traité* and *Monde*, the fruits of a lifetime's labour, there is implicit a belief that the method of analysis and the presentation of material which they exhibit are scientific, that «social facts» can be isolated, set down and related, thereby providing a basis for the derivation of a rational, necessary plan of world organisation and action which would advance the general welfare of Humanity. «Humanity», for Otlet, was a unitary concept, something graspable and directable as a whole, and social facts and laws were expressible in formulae. These formulae, however, were not «scientific». They were purely descriptive. They allowed no prediction as a form of deduced consequence from them. The result, an absence of theory and a vast collocation of diverse observations, is extraordinarily sterile. Otlet placed a value on enumeration that was an exact correlate of his belief in a universal classification of knowledge. His work was a piling of instance upon example, and a careful integration and classification of data in support of a number of fairly pious, general, prescriptive statements. One manifestation of his «atomistic» approach was

his use of language. Titles and parts of his text consist of long strings of nouns or noun phrases, articles often omitted, grammatical connections sometimes unclear, joined (or separated) by semi-colons. In the text the subordination of strings is shown by the use of section headings carefully numbered to show the relation of each section—a classificatory device.

His method of work, his emphasis upon a certain kind of analytical approach to his studies, his wide scholarship, led to a fascinating, logically consistent conclusion. In early middle age Otlet became convinced that the ceaselessly proliferating results of his lucubrations formed a whole, that his notes, his index cards, his files, constituted unwritten volumes. They were data that with organisation imposed by a classification scheme, would prove all of his points again, and add to the body of that which he had already demonstrated. As early as 1915 he wrote in his will

All of my papers will form a mass: (a) my study material will be for my Institutes where I ask that a friend proceed to the sorting and publishing of those that are still useful; (b) my useless business papers will be remitted to my brothers; (c) my personal papers (letters, memoirs) will be preserved sealed for twenty years in the Institute and will be made available after this time without restriction to any one as an archive of a man and the times.<sup>38</sup>

In 1923, having considered the problem further, he was more specific

I desire that all my papers, manuscripts, notes, documents should be preserved after my death as a whole. They are those which served in the preparation of the *Palais Mondial* and that which should follow it, the *World City* and the *Intellectual Synthesis* for which I have worked. Those that I have been able to finish and publish are only a small part of what I have conceived, projected, studied, imagined. I hope that this whole will remain undivided as it is undivided in my mind, and should I not have the time to give it the intellectual and physical shape (documentary) that I still propose to give it, I hope that my friends will honour my memory by themselves bringing this about. This desire is formulated only in the conviction that my life has been one and that living I would have been able to develop the work of the P. M. (sic) much more, dead I would be able to continue the work through these manuscripts.<sup>39</sup>

This preoccupation grew greater as time elapsed and was frequently expressed in the provisions of the wills that Otlet regularly drew up. It was as though, as age advanced and mortality stood as a kind of presence at his elbow, he became more anxious to avoid the sacrifices they would inevitably exact. In 1932 he became afraid that he might die before *Monde* and the ideas it contained appeared. He began, therefore, to speculate about the constitution of a legal foundation to preserve the desired unity in the papers from which *Monde* was emerging. The foundation would have the task of encouraging the publication and the propagandising of his ideas.<sup>40</sup>

In 1938 he wrote:

1. all my papers, I repeat, form a whole.
2. ... They are a true work in which all the parts belong. They are a «Mundus Mundaneum» an instrument conceived for knowledge of the world, and the establishment of the Mundaneum.
3. *Conserve my papers.* Do this for them — what I would have done. They are the heart of the Mundaneum, its sanctuary; universal, studied, analysed and synthetical reality and thought. Don't destroy them.<sup>41</sup>

In 1941 he made formal provisions for the creation of a foundation upon his death to be called «Otletaneum: Foundation Paul Otlet — Cato Van Nederhasselt». The foundation was to have three goals:

1. to receive and preserve my papers, my books, my documentation;
2. to be the legatee of the goods my wife possesses;
3. to work in the same sense as I have worked all my life with the help of my wife and which I can summarise in this one word: Mundaneum.<sup>42</sup>

The foundation was to be administered by a commission consisting of his two faithful disciples, Georges Lorphèvre and André Colet, a member of his family, either his son, Marcel, or his grandson, Jean, and a member of his wife's family. Of Lorphèvre and Colet he wrote movingly of their devotion both to himself and to his ideas, and of his decision to make them his executors. «I have confidence that they, at least», he wrote, «joining me in the worst days when they truly had nothing to hope for themselves, will know how, will wish to, and will be able to do all that is desirable».<sup>43</sup> In 1942, he went a step further in describing what was to be done with his papers:

When I am no more, my documentary *instrument* (my papers) should be kept together, and, in order that their links should become more apparent, should be sorted, fixed in successive order by a consecutive numbering of all the cards (like the pages of a book).<sup>44</sup>

In 1937 the Institute for Intellectual Co-operation organised a World Congress for Universal Documentation in Paris. This was an enormous congress attended by representatives of governments as well as by those interested in documentation in a more private capacity. It was, in fact, the first time that such a large, influential congress had been held in the field since the IIB conferences of 1908 and 1910 and those of the UIA in 1910 and 1913. Here Otlet and La Fontaine came into much respectful praise. Their positions as grand old men of European documentation were clearly acknowledged. The idea of a Universal Network or System for Documentation was taken up and the IID once more changed its name and statutes to become the International Federation for Documentation, in order better to promote this. Here there was much talk of H. G. Wells' idea of a World Brain, a new



Paul Otlet at the World Congress of Universal Documentation  
Paris, August 1937

form of the encyclopedia, an idea which, in a different form, Otlet had been writing about for decades. Here Otlet met Wells and made «magnificent improvisations».<sup>45</sup>

Bradford regarded the World Congress of Universal Documentation as the culmination of a rival scheme. Jean Gérard, he asserted, had induced the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation to call the Congress with the view to setting up a new Institute for Documentation in Paris. Gérard had powerful support and for Bradford there was «no doubt the project would have been achieved, had

not the International Institute [for Bibliography] meanwhile grown up». The mobilisation of forces within the Institute's national sections and much arduous work at the Congress itself were necessary to avoid defeat. «At every meeting», Bradford reports, «resolutions were proposed in favour of [Gérard's] plan» and «at first the members of the Institute were, every time, outvoted». Eventually, however, «knowledge, experience and logic made their mark», and with a change in name which emphasised the decentralised «federalised» nature of the organisation, the Congress voted to support it and not proceed with Gérard's proposal.<sup>46</sup>

Otlet, however, did not share Bradford's view of the Congress. He was pleased that it recognised the need for a Universal Network for Documentation and saw this aspect of its work as recapitulating his own ideas.

It is indeed paradoxical that libraries and archival repositories preserve large masses of documents without having the resources to catalog, analyse and circulate them; that offices and services of Documentation establish vast repertoires without power of themselves disposing of (actual) works; that learned and administrative bodies publish them without full co-ordination or care for their utilisation; that provincial workers in all countries are deprived of the means of study. The Universal Network of Documentation is called on to organise the liaison of these reservoirs and repertoires, of producers and users. The ultimate goal is to realise the World Encyclopedia according to the needs of the twentieth century.<sup>47</sup>

The most important result of the Congress for him was its demand to know the intentions of the new Belgian Cabinet to the Palais Mondial. He interpreted the Congress's deliberations as «posing imperiously the question of a Central Headquarters. Can Belgium», he asked, «continue to be the Headquarters, or must other steps be taken?» He recounted the facts of the absence of official Belgian representation at the Congress, and the «painful duty» imposed upon him of having to explain «the attitude of the Government brutally closing the Palais Mondial in 1934». He expressed a fear of the German influence at the Congress — 18 delegates directed by a «Führer».<sup>48</sup> No world gathering could be without political overtones, he observed, and every attempt should be made to maintain the increasingly tenuous contacts between nations. With the British Empire, the Pan-American Union, Russia, Asia and a Fascist bloc in Europe, the world was threatened by disintegration. In Europe tensions had grown to such a point that «Europe is no more than a word». These observations served to highlight for him the need to reopen the Palais Mondial with the utmost dispatch. It was urgent that the Belgian government should make its attitude clear. The three years of closure, of battles to secure the Palais Mondial's future, were, he claimed, also three years of prepa-

ration, and the Belgian government had to decide either to abandon the Palais Mondial to a more hospitable country, or open it again and support it.<sup>49</sup>

Otlet, blinded by the intensity of his purpose, exaggerated the interest of the World Congress in the Palais Mondial. But his view of the world politics of the time was perceptive and anguished. The government may have been influenced by the fact of the Congress's expressions of esteem for Otlet and La Fontaine to offer the Palais Mondial alternative quarters in the Palais du Cinquanteaire late in 1938, but by then it was too late. Otlet's belief in the efficacy of the Palais Mondial and all it stood for in helping to promote peace and understanding, remained steadfast as he observed developments in European political situation. He expressed this view most clearly in a letter to Donker Duyvis in 1936:

Hitler has become «well known» in Holland and Belgium. War or Peace; an equal and just peace; economic, and social and intellectual peace; ...once more...the confrontations of opposing, repugnant, bestial alternatives...which go on again...and again...and again. Therefore from the C. D. (sic) to Documentation; from Documentation to the organisation of intellectual work; from intellectual work to Universal Civilisation. Therefore to realise them, that which is necessary, commissions and institutions, and the bibliographic repertory, and the Mundaneum; and the World Constitution, and the new League of Nations; and the World City.<sup>50</sup>

## A LAST CRISIS

The Mundaneum remained closed, crowded, its materials gathering dust, mouldering, useless. During these last years Otlet appears to have become increasingly introspective. He returned to a form of that self-communion which produced his youthful diary. One can imagine him hunched over his desk, surrounded by perilously balanced mountains of documents, cards, books and papers, drawing before him some sheets of paper to note down the thoughts that came as he contemplated his life. In 1938 a little more than a week before his birthday he reflected that soon he would be seventy, and La Fontaine eighty-four. He had done, he thought, all he could to ensure the future of their work although his had been essentially a lonely, isolated position during all those years in which he had developed the Palais Mondial. His thoughts turned to Cato, his wife, one of the few who had stood beside him unwaveringly:

Cato, my wife, has been absolutely devoted to my work. Her savings and jewels testify to it; her invaded house testify to it; her collaboration testifies to it; her wish to see it finished after me testifies to it; her modest little fortune has served for the constitution of my work and of my thought.



As he reflected further, he knew that, despite his unfavourable treatment in Belgium, the country of his birth and that of his family, he must continue to struggle to try to achieve security for his life's work though the news in the world was desperately bad («Hitler is in Vienna»). He had some encouragement when at last he received a promise that the Palais Mondial would be re-opened.<sup>51</sup>

In the evening a week after these thoughts had been recorded, a few hours before his birthday, he looked back across the many years of his life once again and thought «Such a long life... what have I done in it? With what have my hands been full and with what have they been empty?» As he peered down the years, he mused about «the nature of a man», and upon his own beginnings. First came birth, then the death of his mother and the family's removal to Paris. And then Fernande. Upon this period his memory touched gently, lightly, wandered, lingered. They were «years of a vegetable life» lived with «sheep and goats» but with some few and faithful friends, too. He recalled an incident involving his father. They were dining together, and, enraged at Otlet's «pigheadedness» about some sugar «I saw», he recalled, «to my stupification, my father hurl an empty coffee cup to the floor near some people»... and there had been a ball given by his father... and the «transformation in Fernande who became quite changed».<sup>52</sup>

Later in the year Cato lost patience with Otlet's protracted failing attempts to restore the Mundaneum. «Cato has opened my eyes», he said. She had made him face up to the fact that his optimism about the future of his institutes was thoroughly ill-founded. But he was more concerned, more alarmed about what she had said about herself. «I make Cato suffer», he wrote, «who has been the only person who has really loved me, and has proved it continuously». He decided that

the prolongation, the continuation is impossible. I cannot ask her to exceed the limits of good will. I have imposed an unbearable life on her for too long, for she has had to look forward to a conclusion about which she has become sceptical because she has suffered too much... (she has) become indifferent to the work, to my work.

Cato had delivered an ultimatum, and once more, Otlet, now at the end of his life, faced the same kind of personal conflict over which he had agonised as a young man. The resolution, however, came more easily. «Can I demand a continuation?» he asked himself, and answered unhesitatingly, «No!» At seventy years of age he was in the classical predicament of being torn between love and duty. «I do not want her to suffer nor to make the work suffer.» He recognised the dilemma himself. «To choose between two loves, two duties. I do not know how to unite them in one sentiment.» Upon just this

thought had he dwelt over fifty years before as a young man in a train, travelling to visit a «princesse lointaine» in Munich. His choice had to be Cato for «she is a living reality and she is for me the highest concrete representation of Humanity which in my work is an abstraction. To make a living and loved being suffer for an ideal and problematical being. No.» In practical terms he decided to put Cato first and do much less for his work though he continued to hope for the long-expected miracle.<sup>53</sup>

The miracle did not occur. The government granted Otlet new quarters and resumed them at once for War. Upon the German occupation of Brussels the Palais du Cinquantenaire was requisitioned for enemy troops. Otlet sought permission from the Ville de Bruxelles to take over an old University building near the Parc Léopold. He was granted the use of this building and moved all the collections of the Palais Mondial thither, though not before the Germans had destroyed sixty-three tons of periodical publications. After the move, as Lorphèvre wryly remarked, «the situation was no better: no subsidy, no Belgian or foreign donations and... no heat».<sup>54</sup> Otlet and his assistants, however, created some sort of order in the collections in the new building, at once called the Mundaneum, as it is still to-day.

There, in the last few, sombre years of his life, Otlet worked, conscious of the black shadow of War and a mad demagogue, and careful of his duty to Cato. But he did work, and in the very year of his death gave at the new Mundaneum the twelfth session of a week-long Course on Documentation which he had devised.<sup>55</sup> In 1943 La Fontaine, a man rich in eighty-nine work-filled, useful years, died. The loss to Otlet was enormous, for even though in their later years they worked very little together, they kept constantly in touch, speaking for hours together on the telephone.<sup>56</sup> A year later on the 10th December 1944, having worked with Lorphèvre that day until seven in the evening, Otlet died.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. «L'Année 1930—1931», *Palais Mondial*, Nos. 13—14 (July—October 1930), 22.
2. «Programme des conférences publiques», and «Conférences données pendant le 1<sup>er</sup> trimestre 1930», *Palais Mondial*, No. 12 (April 1930), 11—12 and 16.
3. «Conférences, cours, démonstrations», *Palais Mondial*, No. 16 (March 1931), 12.
4. «Les Jeunes Amis du Palais Mondial», *Palais Mondial*, Nos. 13—14 (July—October, 1930), 7.
5. *Ibid.*

6. «La Jeunesse et Le Palais Mondial», *Palais Mondial*, No. 16 (April 1931), 31. Part of this is a note «de la part de la Direction du P. M. (sic.)» to parents.
7. Otlet to Director-General, 5 January 1930, Dossier No. 368, «Ministère des Sciences et des Arts», Mundaneum.
8. «Le Palais Mondial à Bruxelles», *Palais Mondial*, No. 12 (April 1930), 15–16.
9. «État des travaux et collections», *Palais Mondial*, No. 16 (March 1931), 12. A poster, *Le Palais Mondial et Ses Instituts*, proclaimed in 1927 the size of all the collections (it is F. No. 9177, Mundaneum).
10. The receipt of all slips issued from 22 August 1924 to October 1928 was acknowledged 31 October 1928. Subsequent acknowledgements of receipts of slips ceased in 1930. Dossier No. 215, «British Museum», Mundaneum.
11. H. Putnam to Otlet, August 30, 1922, Dossier No. 297, «Library of Congress», Mundaneum.
12. On 13 December 1945 Georges Lorphèvre wrote to the Principal Librarian, Library of Congress asking that all cards which had accumulated since the beginning of the First World War be sent to the Mundaneum. He cited Putnam's letters indicating Putnam's willingness to resume shipments in 1922 (Dossier No. 297 «Library of Congress», Mundaneum).
13. Otlet to Geddes, 1 September 1925, Dossier No. 92(G), Otletaneum.
14. «Conférences, cours, démonstrations», *Palais Mondial*, No. 16 (March 1931), pp. 26–27.
15. The cover page reads: Paul Otlet, «De la République Mondiale: crise, guerre, révolution, paix, prospérité, progrès, humanité, civilisation, une deuxième Société des Nations», Note No. 6268, Bruxelles, 1931 (typescript).
16. Paul Otlet, *Monde...* (Bruxelles: Editiones Mundaneum, D. Von Koerberghen et fils, 1935), 399–400.
17. The cover page reads: Paul Otlet, «La Plan mondial», Note No. 6453, 16 July 1932; and «Le Devoir militaire, la paix, les désarmements», Note No. 6680, 22 March 1932.
18. Paul Otlet, «La Banque nationale et le plan économique», *La Vie Économique*, IX (1931), 129–134. This, a first article, was followed by another in a succeeding issue.
19. Paul Otlet, *Sur les possibilités pour les entités administratives d'avoir à tout moment leur situation présentée documentairement*; Rapport au IV<sup>e</sup> Congrès International des Sciences Administratives, Madrid, 1930 (IIB (sic) Publication No. 162; Bruxelles: IIB (sic) 1930).
20. Paul Otlet, «La Systématique de la documentation», *Documentatio Universalis*, «Annexe» (1932), pp. 272 ff.
21. «Change d'adresse», *IIB Communicationes*, I, Fasc. III (1934), 25.
22. Georges Lorphèvre, «Otlet (Paul)», *Biographie Nationale*, (I. XXXII; Bruxelles: Académie Royale des Sciences des Lettres et des Beaux Arts de Belgique, 1964), cols. 555–556.
23. *Ibid.*
24. «Codicille à mon testament», 25 August 1933, No. 30 *Testament Paul Otlet*, Otletaneum. Beneath the codicil Otlet wrote «à raison des incidents avec l'état belge et de la fermeture de le Palais Mondial j'annule la disposition ci-dessus». This was dated 15 juillet 1933, but the executors note that Otlet had made a mistake in the date because the Palais Mondial was closed on 1 June 1934.
25. «L'Union des Associations Internationales et la Société des Nations» *Periodicum Mundaneum*, January 1936. (*Periodicum Mundaneum* appears to have been a new name for *Palais Mondial*. This is shown as UIA Publication No. 144 which was the number assigned to *Palais Mondial*, though many of the issues of *Palais Mondial* have no UIA Number.
26. *Ibid.*
27. «Calendrier du Palais Mondial», *ibid.*, p. 2.
28. «Célébration de la millième Congrégence du Mundaneum», invitation, Otletaneum.
29. Paul Otlet, *Traité de documentation* (Bruxelles: Editiones Mundaneum, Palais Mondial, 1934).
30. Paul Otlet, *Monde: essai de universalisme — connaissance du Monde, sentiment du Monde, action organisée et plan du monde op cit.*
31. Paul Otlet, *Plan Belgique: essai d'un plan général, économique, social, culturel, plan, d'urbanisation national; liaison avec le plan mondial: conditions, problèmes, solutions, réformes* (Bruxelles: Editiones Mundaneum and D. Von Koerberghen et fils, 1935).
32. Paul Otlet, *Traité de documentation*, p. 411.
33. Paul Otlet, «Sur la Structure des nombres classificateurs», *IIB Bulletin*, I (1895–96), 230–243 (see Ch. V).
34. Paul Otlet, *Monde*, p. XXI.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 400.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 387.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 390–391.
38. «Le Haye, 28 Mai 1915», No. 33. *Testament Paul Otlet*, Otletaneum.
39. «1919.12.16 Mes papiers», No. 42, *ibid.*
40. «1932–02–? Testament. Projet codicille à mon Testament», No. 60, *ibid.*
41. «1938.01.08, Mes papiers», No. 55, *ibid.*
42. «1919.11.24. Statut de la Fondation», No. 63, *ibid.*
43. «1937.01.27. Codicille à mon testament: la vie», No. 53, *ibid.*
44. «Testament, 1942.01.18», No. 67, *ibid.*
45. For an account of this Congress with its resolutions on the Universal Network for Documentation and incidental references to Otlet and La Fontaine see «Congrès Mondial de Documentation, Paris, 16–21 août, 1937», *IID Communicationes*, IV Fasc. III (1937), *passim* but especially pp. 16–18.
46. S. C. Bradford, *Documentation* (London: Crosby Lockwood, 1953), pp. 142–143.
47. «Le Congrès Mondial de la Documentation». This is a single page of typescript in the Otletaneum dated 1937.09.20 and signed Paul Otlet.
48. «Le Congrès Mondial...», and «Après le Congrès Mondial», typescript, Mundaneum.
49. «Après le Congrès Mondial».
50. Otlet to Donker Duyvis, 3 April 1936, Otletaneum (the construction and meaning of the first paragraph are not clear).
51. A document without heading other than that date «1938.04.14».
52. These pages are not headed. A phrase opens them «Dans quelques heures mon âge j'écrirai avec un 7...», Otletaneum.
53. «Examen de situation: examen de conscience...», Otletaneum.
54. Lorphèvre, col. 556.
55. «Invitation: cour de documentation XII<sup>e</sup> session», Office Internationale de Bibliographie, Bruxelles (sic).
56. Remark of M. Lorphèvre to the author.

## Appendix

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