

# In the background: the development of international librarianship during the period 1850 – 1945

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## Introduction

During the Belle Époque a variety of scholars, idealistic internationalists and other luminaries were working on the bibliographic organization of the world’s scholarly literature and developing new understandings which gave rise to what eventually emerged as information science. My task today is to focus on what was happening in libraries. Although these are by no means irrelevant to my account, I leave the initiatives of Otlet and Lafontaine and other internationalists striving for universal bibliographic control, to other speakers. My question is, what were librarians doing during the Belle Époque and in the decades after? In this paper, I first attempt to determine the issues with which the emerging library profession was grappling during this period. I then attempt to identify the main international connections, awareness, and activities of the profession, and to discover to what extent internationalism was emerging there. To do justice to this I need to start a bit further back, in 1850 rather than 1870. First, however, I want to clarify what I understand by internationalism.

## I Internationalism

The word ‘international’ was invented by Jeremy Bentham, that prolific creator of neologisms, in 1789, around 140 years after the creation of the Westphalian system. According to the OED<sup>1</sup> the word ‘internationalism’ was first recorded in 1843, and the second of its four meanings, which is the one relevant here, was first recorded in 1851: “The principle of cooperation and understanding between different nations; belief or advocacy of this principle”.<sup>2</sup> It so happens that the advent of internationalism coincided with the rise of modern, professional librarianship. The early 1850s were also pivotal in the history of British and American librarianship, and the developments of librarianship as profession also had an international dimension.

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<sup>1</sup> *Oxford English dictionary*, “Internationalism”, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/view/Entry/98074?redirectedFrom=internationalism#eid>, accessed 2016-01-06

<sup>2</sup> I note in passing that the third meaning, where ‘internationalism’ is frequently spelled with an initial capital, is “A movement or doctrine advocating international proletarian revolution...” This connotation may explain why, for example in the USA, the term ‘internationalism’ may evoke some suspicion.

In examining evidence of internationalism in librarianship, it may be helpful to distinguish, first, between internationalism proper as per the OED definition, and international awareness, by which I mean an awareness of, and interest in, what is happening in other countries, without any particular commitment to international cooperation and understanding. One might call this “internationalism light”. Secondly, as regards internationalism proper, I have found it helpful to follow a distinction made by Herman (1969, 6–8) and further developed by Kuehl (1986), between polity and community internationalism. The distinction was summarized by Kuehl (1986, 4):

The community internationalists perceive society as something more than structured national states. They believe that people possess an autonomy of their own and that an interdependency of human beings does exist. The polity internationalists think primarily along juridical or governmental lines.

Both strands of internationalism were concerned with ensuring lasting world peace. The polity internationalists worked within the framework of the nation-state system to create formal structures for peace such as, in the course of time, the League of Nations and later the United Nations and related intergovernmental organizations. The inclusion of the word “nations” in the names of the League of Nations and the United Nations Organization is significant. International organizations are built up of national building blocks.

The “community internationalists” took more idealistic approaches:

They called for universal brotherhood, advanced the notion of an interdependent world, hoped to spread democracy, achieve disarmament, combat militarism, and abolish warfare (Kuehl 1986, 4).

Kuehl proposed two further categories of internationalists: Socialist internationalists adhered to Marxist doctrine, emphasizing the brotherhood of man and the necessity for the “minds of the masses...[to] be imbued with class consciousness before international cooperation in the form of universal brotherhood can be achieved” (Kuehl 1986, 5). This was sometimes referred to as “red internationalism” (Somsen 2014, 217). I see it as a left-wing form of community internationalism. The other category proposed by Kuehl was that of “liberal internationalism”, which had a middle class character, took a generally optimistic and positivist approach to the development of society, and sought practical means of achieving peace, for example, by arms control and arbitration (Kuehl 1986, 5). This I see as a right-wing form of community internationalism, quite close to, and at times indistinguishable from, polity internationalism. Here I would place what I would call the *scientific universalists*, who held a positivist belief that the sciences offered the solutions to the problems of society, and who sought to create systems and even artificial languages for the universal dissemination of scientific literature. Of course, there were many strands of internationalism, and they cannot be placed in watertight compartments.

My readings on internationalism in LIS led me to the writings of Boyd Rayward, to whom I owe a great debt for his insights, especially in relation to 19<sup>th</sup> century thinking on bibliographic control, information, the rise of documentation during the Belle Époque, and on the close association of key figures such as Otlet and La Fontaine with universalism and utopianism. Their heroic and ultimately unsuccessful project to create a universal database of scientific literature, and similar initiatives by the Royal Society and others, have overshadowed the international activities of librarians and the emergence of international librarianship during the same period.

## II What preoccupied librarians during the period 1850-1914?

### *The early 1850s*

In librarianship the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century was a period of significant development and change: not only one of growth in the number and holdings of libraries in the West, but also a period which saw the birth of librarianship as a profession.

The early 1850s in particular saw significant milestones. Following a study of libraries in certain other countries, in 1850 the British Parliament enacted legislation enabling local municipalities to raise taxes to support public libraries.<sup>3</sup> In London, thanks to rapid growth of its collections, the British Museum was rapidly running out of space. In 1852, Antonio Panizzi, Keeper of the Printed Books, sketched out a plan for the famous circular reading room, construction of which started in 1854 (Miller 1979, 13).

On the other side of the Atlantic, libraries were not yet well developed. In 1851 a survey by Charles C. Jewett, Librarian of the Smithsonian Institution, showed that in the USA there were at that time only five libraries with collections of over 50,000 volumes (Whitehill 1956, 2). But this was about to change. Spurred on by a somewhat controversial French ventriloquist, Alexandre Vattemare, and supported by civic-minded patricians, Boston was somewhat tortuously approaching the founding of the first major urban public library in the USA (Whitehill 1956, 3–17). In 1852 the Trustees of the Boston Public Library issued an influential report, drafted by Edward Everett and George Ticknor, which argued for the establishment of a public library in Boston, and advocating for the public library as an essential agency for the education of the citizenry of a democracy ('Report of the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston' 1852). In 1854 the Boston Public Library opened its doors. It was not the first public library in the USA, but it was the first free tax-funded public library of more than local significance in that country (Harris 1999, 243–244).<sup>4</sup>

The early 1850s also saw the first moves to create state-funded agricultural colleges in the USA; in 1855 legislation was enacted by Michigan for this purpose. Other states followed, enacting laws that were precursors to the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 (Huffman and Evenson 2006, 12–13), which laid the basis of the land grant colleges. During the same period, Americans who had studied at German universities brought back new ideas about curricula, the place of the natural and applied sciences, and the importance of research – with obvious implications for their libraries during a period in which industrialization, economic growth, and philanthropy contributed to the vast expansion of higher education in the USA (Harris 1999, 249–250). The expansion that ensued led to significant growth, both quantitative and qualitative, in college and university libraries.

In 1853 the second World's Fair was held in New York, in imitation of London's "Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations in 1851. This was significant, as it also provided the occasion for a first national convention of American librarians. It attracted some

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<sup>3</sup> The significance of this event is reflected in the choice of 1850 as the starting date for volume 3, 1850-2000, of the *Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland* (Hoare et al. 2006).

<sup>4</sup> Rayward (1976, 210) has suggested that there is little evidence of mutual British and American influence on the founding of public libraries in the two countries.

international interest. Vattemare was in attendance to promote his scheme for international exchanges, and a number of foreign librarians presented papers (Rudomino 1977, 66).

### ***Edward Edwards and “Free town libraries”***

Shifting my focus back to Britain, I need to mention the publication in 1869 of a massive report by Edward Edwards, *Free town libraries, their formation, management, and history in Britain, France, Germany, and America; together with brief notices of book-collectors, and of the respective places of deposit of their surviving collections* (Edwards [1869] 2010). This was an early comparative study of public libraries, intended primarily as a

...Handbook for Promoters and Managers of Free Town Libraries; especially of such Libraries as may hereafter be established under the 'Libraries Acts.' Its secondary purpose is to compare British experience in that matter with Foreign, and particularly with American, experience (Preface, p.v)

Edwards had been collecting library statistics since the late 1840s. These were not always very accurate, but he had rendered useful services to William Ewart, who introduced the Public Libraries Act referred to above (Garnett 1889, 116).<sup>5</sup> Edwards's report is divided into four books. Book 1, "Free town libraries at home", is a medley of chapters, including chapters on administrative and organizational aspects of public libraries as well as descriptions of individual libraries. Book 2, "Free town libraries, abroad", covers France, Germany and (in one chapter) Switzerland, Italy and Belgium. Book 3, "Free town libraries, in America", is very substantial. The author's fascination with collections is evident from Book 4, "Notices of collectors", the longest of the four books. It contains 1093 brief notices of significant book collections, arranged alphabetically by the names of the collectors, and indicates what these collections were comprised of, and by which libraries they were acquired. It is not limited to acquisitions by public libraries, and its relevance to the rest of the work is unclear.

Generally, Edwards's text is crammed with historical details and statistics. There are descriptions of quite small and obscure libraries and much emphasis on benefactors, bequests, gifts, and the growth of collections. An entire chapter (Book 3, Chapter IV) is devoted to the Astor Free Library of New York. Everywhere, laws, and regulations are cited, and reading rooms and conditions of access are described. Throughout the text, the educational and civilizing influence of public libraries is assumed. This is illustrated by the following statement, in which Edwards remarks on the difference between Americans who have visited Europe and those who have not:

It is a difference pregnant with political and social results that may reach very far. If it be true that no amount of book-culture – how broad soever — can supply that breadth of view which travel has at least a strong tendency to bring ; it is also true that the kind of reading which well-chosen Town Libraries, with doors always open, cannot fail in course of time to spread abroad must (as one among its main results) do, for the many, what travel can do for only a very few. The work is of a kind which will be fruitful of good, over a circle very much wider than that of the first recipients. And the progress it has made already — under American energies — is of excellent augury for the time to come (p.343).

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<sup>5</sup> Garnett himself was not very accurate. He referred to *Free public libraries...* (678 pages) as a “small book”.

Deconstructed, it reveals that underlying gap between *us*, the wealthy, educated and cultured elite, and *them*, those in need of being educated and civilized. This permeates much of the writing about public libraries during that period, as shown by Michael Harris (1975).

The book is also of interest as a pioneering contribution to international and comparative librarianship, although there is little by way of explicit comparison. Such evaluative comments as there are in the chapters dealing with libraries overseas are generally of a gentle, indirect, and encouraging nature, as shown this example from the conclusion of the chapter on France (Book 2, Chapter I, “The Town, Communal, and Popular Libraries of France”):

If the remark be added that, in all probability, more would have been already accomplished in some of the many channels of educational effort which have been (very inadequately) noticed in the preceding pages, but for certain official trammels, that remark is submitted in no spirit of presumption. The evidence is conclusive that in certain cases official formalities connected with the establishment and working of Popular Libraries in the French Republic have been so employed as to prove friendly, not adverse, to the promotion of educated thought and free opinion. It is the unfriendly attitude of the French Clergy towards the machinery of true popular education which has chiefly impeded some among the many efforts which have been made to carry good secular literature – no less than good religious literature – over the length and breadth of the Empire. Occasionally, the government censorship over the Popular Libraries has been wisely made the means of holding in check clerical censorship, far less friendly in its character. But it may well be hoped that restrictions of either kind are temporary conditions, not permanent ones (pp.222-223).

Certainly, this is mild in comparison of the critiques of French public libraries by French writers such as Pellisson (1906) and Morel (1908) in the early 1900s.

### ***1876: a pivotal year***

The second national meeting of American librarians took place at the second World’s Fair held in the United States, the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876. There were 103 participants. One British librarian attended (Black 2016, 147) as well as some other foreign guests (Rudomino 1977, 67). On this occasion the American Library Association (ALA) was founded,

...for the purpose of promoting the library interests of the country and of increasing reciprocity of intelligence and good-will amongst librarians and all interested in library economy and bibliographical studies (cited by Olle 1977, 249).

Among the library notables who attended were Justin Winsor, then superintendent of the Boston Public Library and subsequently Librarian of Harvard University, William Frederick Poole, developer of a pioneering periodical index and first librarian of the Chicago Public Library, and Charles Ammi Cutter, librarian of the Boston Athenaeum Library. A lesser-known participant was Melvil Dewey, librarian of Amherst College, who lost no time in moving into the limelight. He went on to become the ALA’s first secretary, the first editor of its organ, the *Library journal*, and the initiator of many other schemes and projects in and outside of librarianship.

As part of the centennial celebrations, the United States Bureau of Education had compiled a report on the state of public libraries nationwide (*Public Libraries in the United States of*

*America: Their History, Condition and Management. Special Report* 1876). This was not simply a descriptive survey. Part I was an impressive tome of some 1187 pages which included contributions by many authors, including those mentioned above. They described all sorts of libraries, by no means limited to public libraries, and discussed “the various questions of library economy and management” (p.xiii) in such detail as to constitute a veritable manual. Scattered throughout its pages are practical details of such matters as purchasing, cataloguing, shelf-marking, shelving, circulating and binding books, mostly based on practice in specific institutions. Among these was a ground-breaking piece by Melvil Dewey: included in Chapter XXVIII, “Catalogues and cataloguing”: a 25-page section in which Dewey described the “decimal classification and subject index”, which he had developed for Amherst College (pp.623-648). This, of course, was the Dewey decimal classification, which was subsequently adopted in libraries throughout the USA and the world, and which was adapted by Otlet to form the basis of what became the *Universal decimal classification*. Part II of the report consisted of a second seminal work, the first edition of Cutter’s hugely influential *Rules for a printed dictionary catalogue*, a major contribution to the theory of library cataloguing (Carpenter 1994, 114).<sup>6</sup> Thus the report included two seminal contributions to the standardization of practice in what we today call knowledge organization.

No entry for “Information” occurs in the quite detailed index to Part I of the *Report*. There is an entry for “Indexing, periodical and miscellaneous literature”. It refers the reader to Chapter XXIX, pp.663-672, of the same title, which is primarily concerned with indexing work in individual libraries. The author, Otis H. Robinson, devoted it mainly to the physical attributes of an updatable loose-leaf book catalogue which he had designed for his library, rather than to the intellectual labour of indexing. The index to the *Report* further shows that, scattered throughout Part I, are occasional references to library conditions and practices in other countries, mainly Germany and Britain. However, the only substantial international comparison is found in Chapter XXVII, “Library reports and statistics”. The tables here were limited to numbers of volumes and manuscripts as reported by various authorities. The accompanying text offered some astute observations on the unreliability of library statistics.

It is worth noting that 1876 was also the year in which Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone and in which Johns Hopkins University was founded. This was the US’s first research-intensive university (Emard 1976); the first of new type of university which would need a large, well-organized research library.

In the following year, British librarians followed the American example, when the Library Association of the United Kingdom<sup>7</sup> was founded at the First International Congress of Librarians<sup>8</sup> in London,

...to unite all persons engaged or interested in library work, for the purpose of promoting the best possible administration of existing libraries and the formation of new ones where desirable. It shall also aim at the encouragement of bibliographical research (cited by Olle 1977, 250).

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<sup>6</sup> A later contribution, Cutter’s *Expansive classification*, laid the groundwork for the Library of Congress Classification but was not widely adopted, except for his system of abbreviating the names of authors for purposes of marking the spines of books. This system, known as “Cutter numbers”, is still in general use today.

<sup>7</sup> In 1896 this was shortened to “Library Association” (Olle 1977, 249)

<sup>8</sup> Also attended by Melvil Dewey (Black and Hoare 2006, 12)

### ***Brown's Manual of library economy (1903)***

James Duff Brown (1862-1914) was an influential figure in British librarianship at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. He authored a number of books, of which his *Manual of library classification and shelf arrangement* (1898), his *Subject classification*, a classification scheme primarily for public libraries (1906 with revised editions in 1914 and 1939) and his *Manual of library economy* (1903 with seven later editions) are the best known. The *Manual* was particularly influential, being used for decades in the training of British librarians. It was intended as “an attempt to provide a text-book of advanced library practice” (p.iii). It purported to deal “mainly with broad principles” and Brown warned that he did not consider it “desirable to notice every detail of library routine work, nor to mention every appliance which has been introduced” (p.v). This is ironic, since his book, which covered all aspects of library work, was mainly concerned with procedures and techniques, notably including 169 figures and much minute technical detail. For example there was an entire chapter (XXIII) on “Mechanical methods of displaying catalogues”, providing information, diagrams and photographs of different formats of card catalogues, with dimensions of cards and cabinets. In a later chapter there are four pages of illustrations of spine marking (pp.336-339). The term ‘information’ is absent from the quite detailed index, although the word occurs some thirty times, mainly in relation to administrative record-keeping and reference service. In Chapter XXXI on “Reference Libraries”, more emphasis is placed on the organization of, and access to, reference collections than on extracting information from them.

Brown's *Manual* remains of considerable historical interest as evidence of the strong practical emphasis which characterized British librarianship and was introduced into the British colonies as well. It is also an unintentional contribution to comparative librarianship. Throughout the book, Brown offered comparative comments, mainly comparing British practice with the USA and to a lesser extent the continent of Europe, especially France and Germany. France in particular elicited disparaging comments, for example, writing about open access to the shelves Brown commented:

In republican France – that hot-bed of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity – the most elaborate precautions are taken to prevent the public from coming into too close contact with their own books. The hours of opening and closing the communal libraries seem specially arranged for the very purpose of giving as few facilities as possible (p.453).

This is in marked contrast to the less critical approach of Edwards. One wonders whether Brown's sarcasm could be explained in terms of the rising tensions between Europe's great powers during this period.<sup>9</sup> Brown's treatment of American libraries was more even-handed. He was appreciative of the new American schemes for library classification (p.251) and of their reference libraries (Chapter XXXI), where users were allowed access to shelves. On the other hand, he detested the American innovation of children's libraries, and could not resist a snide remark about “...the American child, that awful mixture of impudence and precocity” (p.439). To be fair, it has to be admitted that Brown could be very scathing about British public libraries as well.

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<sup>9</sup> It was in this decade of growing competition that the Royal Navy was building its huge battleships of the Dreadnought class (Golson 2014).

### *Librarians' concerns at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, massive growth had taken place in librarianship. In public librarianship, the number of libraries grew. In major urban libraries the acquisition of major collections remained a preoccupation, but librarians were taking a greater interest in library use and users: Brown (1903, 437) approved of the admission of women to the same reading rooms as men even as he deprecated children's libraries; open access to library stacks (at least some of them) was gaining acceptance. Attention was being paid in the USA to the role of public libraries in the assimilation of immigrants; reference services were being developed, branch libraries established in cities, opening hours extended. New buildings were erected in many cities with grant funding from Andrew Carnegie. Efficient organization and administration became an important focus of attention (Harris 1999, 246–248). There was much interest in techniques and technology.

There was massive growth too, in academic and research libraries. This was true in Europe, where, by end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century major universities in Europe had libraries totalling from a few hundred thousand to around one million volumes, including large heritage collections, and sizable holdings of manuscripts. Librarians were having to deal with increasingly complex organizational issues (Harris 1999, 140–147). Growth in the USA, prompted by the adoption of the research model and the expansion in the number of colleges and universities, was remarkable. Librarians here were energetically expanding their collections, seeking gifts from philanthropists, and new, larger buildings to house them. Collections had to be catalogued and shelved. University library collections numbering into hundreds of thousands of volumes were no longer exceptional. There was a growing professionalism as librarians got to grips with increasing complexity and rapid growth (Harris 1999, 249–252).

The latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century also saw remarkable growth in national libraries on both sides of the Atlantic. The Copyright Act of 1870, which brought all US copyright deposits within the ambit of the Library of Congress, contributed significantly to the increase of the Library's collections from around 300,000 volumes in 1876 to 840,000 volumes in 1897. By the end of 1901 the Library of Congress became the first American library to reach one million volumes (Cole 1993, n.p.). In Europe the Russian Imperial Library, much augmented by war booty, was second in size only to the French Bibliothèque Nationale, which held more than three million printed volumes by 1908 (Harris 1999, 133–137). These huge institutions were important symbols of national pride, and tools of imperialism (cf. Black and Schiller 2014, 649). Their management called for juggling the priorities of accessioning, cataloguing, organizing and housing the current legal deposit collections, caring for heritage collections, and adding to these as opportunities arose. These posed huge challenges. Histories of national libraries are punctuated by accounts of acquisitions, titanic struggles to catalogue them (including the development of national cataloguing rules), and monumental building projects to house them.

During the same period there was, at least in public and special libraries, a gradual shift away from the purely curatorial role of the librarian towards more user-oriented librarianship. The growth of public librarianship raised new questions concerning access and library users: which categories of persons (genders, age groups) might be allowed to visit the library and its various departments, be allowed to borrow, or be allowed direct access to the shelves; how to provide services to the blind and persons living in rural areas. As enrolments grew, similar questions arose in college and university libraries. However, collections remained an important focus, serving as a measure of a library's significance and of the librarian's

prestige. Thus, the directors of the new academic libraries and the large urban public libraries enthusiastically set about accumulating large collections. Information as such did not yet feature in librarians' discourse.

I return to the question I posed at the beginning of this paper – what preoccupied the library profession while Otlet and Lafontaine were creating their *Répertoire Universel*? The short answer is: collections. Or perhaps, less simplistically: building institutions devoted to acquiring, cataloguing, accommodating, and providing access to, collections.

### III Librarians active internationally, 1850-1914

In the remaining two sections of the paper I attempt to marshal evidence of internationalism in librarianship, distinguishing as I suggested earlier between internationalism proper as per the OED definition, and international awareness (“internationalism light”).

#### *Increasing contact across the Atlantic*

From the preceding account, it is clear that the development of librarianship as a profession in the mid-Nineteenth Century went hand in hand with increasing international contacts and influences across the Atlantic. In a recent article on visits by British librarians to the USA, Alistair Black wrote that, since its inception “professional librarianship has displayed a marked internationalist dimension”. Imbued with an ethic of sharing knowledge, librarians were positively disposed to:

...the exchange of knowledge between interested professionals across national boundaries. As modern librarianship matured, a notable aspect of this desire for global cooperation was the cross-fertilization of ideas and the building of strong links between the British and American library worlds (Black 2016, 146–147).

This was by no means limited to relations between the two English-speaking nations, as I shall attempt to show in what follows.

International schemes for the exchange of publications were among the earliest international library activities. These originated during the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and from mid-century gained impetus through national and international meetings of librarians held in conjunction with universal exhibitions. These mainly concerned the exchange of dissertations. An initiative taken by two German universities, Marburg and Breslau, in 1817 to form an *Akademische Tauschverein* (academic exchange association), gradually expanded to include universities outside Germany. An *Agence centrale des échanges internationaux* (centre for international exchanges) was set up by Alexandre Vattemare in Paris in or around 1832 but did not survive its founder's death in 1864 (Krüss [1933] 1961, 820–821). On the other side of the Atlantic, the Smithsonian Institution (founded in 1846) in 1852 embarked on a large-scale international program for the exchange of government publications (Krüss [1933] 1961; Gwinn 2010). In 1882 an international intergovernmental conference took place in Brussels at which resulted in conventions on the exchange of government and parliamentary publications (Rayward 1993, 383).

### *National and international conferences*

Earlier I referred to international conferences that formed milestones in the development of librarianship as a profession. Krüss ([1933] 1961, 823–824) discussed the founding of national library associations and states that these served as carriers of the idea of international cooperation among libraries: at their conferences they discussed international issues; they welcomed participants from other countries to their conferences, and from time to time they held joint meetings with organizations in other countries, several of which morphed into true international conferences. The American and British library associations engaged in international activities at an early stage. At its conference in Montreal in 1900 the ALA established a Committee on International Cooperation. This was the ALA's earliest formal commitment to international cooperation.<sup>10</sup> It is not clear what became of it, for in 1905 the ALA established a Committee on International Relations (Krüss [1933] 1961).

For a brief period (1877-1882) the American and British library associations shared a journal, that of the ALA (Olle 1977, 252). However, Olle (1977, 254) stated that once the Library Association had established its own journal and the *Library journal* was no longer the official organ of both associations, the relations between the two “became intermittent and, even then, rather slight”. The drafting of the joint Anglo-American cataloguing code of 1908 was a notable exception – all the more notable given that national cataloguing rules of the major European countries, developed during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, held sway until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>11</sup> During this period, many library journals and magazines were founded. These too contributed to raising awareness of matters international (Krüss [1933] 1961, 824–825).

In her chapter on the “prehistory of IFLA”, Rudomino (1977, 66) described eleven international conferences of librarians, bibliophiles and archivists which preceded the founding of IFLA.<sup>12</sup> She considered the national convention of American librarians which took place at the New York World's Fair of 1853, referred to above, to be the first international library conference. However, almost a quarter of a century passed before the first truly International Conference of Librarians (also referred to above) took place, in London in 1877 (Krüss [1933] 1961, 821–822). It was attended by 219 delegates from nine countries. The production of printed catalogues as well as card catalogues and open access to the shelves were among the issues debated. Melvil Dewey was in attendance to publicize his classification scheme, which elicited a mixed reception (Rudomino 1977, 67–68). The British librarians followed up this success by holding the Library Association's conference in Paris in 1892. Although not strictly an international conference, its programme was the result of collaboration of British and French librarians. Again the main subject of discussion was library catalogues (Rudomino 1977, 69).

The second International Conferences of Librarians was held in 1893 in Chicago in conjunction with the conference of the American Library Association, held within the framework of the World's Columbia Exhibition or Chicago World's Fair, which celebrated

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<sup>10</sup> Mohrhardt (1977, 84) also reported a motion in 1904 to create “a special committee of five to consider plans for the promotion of international co-operation among libraries”, which was also mentioned by Krüss ([1933] 1961, 828). The relationship of this committee to that of 1900 is not clear.

<sup>11</sup> Which is not to say that the drafters of the AA code had not studied the codes of cataloguing codes of other European countries (Rayward 1976, 219).

<sup>12</sup> Opinions differ on which events should be counted as an international conferences of librarians. Cf Krüss ([1933] 1961, 821–828)

the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the voyage of Christopher Columbus to America<sup>13</sup> The Fair featured a model of a small American public library, the titles being shelved according to Dewey's *Decimal classification* as well as Cutter's *Expansive classification*.<sup>14</sup> Public libraries were the main focus of attention at the Conference, which gave impetus to the international diffusion of the new Anglo-American public library concept. Foreign participation was small, but a German librarian, Otto Hartwig, read a paper arguing for the inter-library lending of manuscripts.<sup>15</sup> Another German librarian, Konstantin Dziatko, had prepared a report for the conference on international book exchange, so that libraries could become vehicles for the international sharing of ideas (Rudomino 1977, 69–70). This is interesting as a manifestation of an internationalism which goes beyond simply learning from how things are done in other countries.

Further international conferences of librarians took place in 1897 (London), Paris (1900), St. Louis (1904) and Brussels (1910), the latter three in connection with the world's fairs in those cities. At the Paris conference there was an interesting attempt to deal with legal deposit: reviewing conditions in individual countries in order to derive general principles and recommendations (Krüss [1933] 1961, 827). The conference in St. Louis was again organized as part of an enlarged ALA conference. Here it was decided to set up a "Special Committee: to consider plans for the promotion of international cooperation among libraries" (Krüss [1933] 1961, 828). The idea was pursued in 1910 at the "International Congress of Archivists and Librarians" during the Brussels Universal Exposition. This congress was attended by 389 participants from 21 countries, most of which were represented by national commissions or national delegations, which suggests that the concept of international collaboration was taking root in professional structures at the national level. It also suggests an acceptance of the concept of national building blocks as the basis for an international nongovernmental organization.

Among the topics dealt with were the exchange of theses and dissertations, creation of information bureaux, training of librarians, international lending of books and manuscripts, international cataloguing rules, and a union catalogue of incunabula. The need for an international federation of library associations was again raised and it was decided to set up an international committee (*Commission Permanente des Congrès internationaux des Archivistes et des Bibliothécaires*) consisting of two delegates from each national association, or one from each country which did not yet have such an association. It was to be based in Brussels and was tasked with organizing future international meetings, which would be held regularly. In 1914 the permanent committee decided to have the next congress in Milan, but the outbreak of the First World War put paid to these plans (Krüss [1933] 1961, 828).

In addition to these general international conferences or congresses – in which, in addition to matters of an international nature, many technical and professional matters of no particular international import were discussed – a number of smaller and more specialized international meetings took place during this period. For example, an international conference on the preservation and reproduction of manuscripts was held in 1898, followed by a second one in

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<sup>13</sup> "7 things you may not know about the 1893 Chicago World's Fair", History in the headlines, <http://www.history.com/news/7-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-1893-chicago-worlds-fair>, accessed 2017-02-06.

<sup>14</sup> Gambee (1968) described the American exhibit in some detail. He also provided useful information on the representation of American librarians at other world's fairs.

<sup>15</sup> "Direkte Handschriftenversendung zwischen den Bibliotheken". Rudomino translated "Versendung" as "exchange". I have not seen this paper. but I think it more likely that Hartwig was referring to lending.

1905. In 1901 draft guidelines for direct international inter-library lending were drawn up within the newly founded (1899) International Association of Academies. In the meantime, of course, in 1895 the International Institute of Bibliography had been set up by Otlet and Lafontaine, which gave rise to a number of international bibliographical conferences and congresses. It is to be noted too that the Royal Society's conference had taken place in 1896 (Krüss [1933] 1961, 825–827). Here the Society had launched an ambitious scheme for a world Catalogue of Scientific Papers. Coblans (1974, 26–27) traced the germ of this scheme back to a proposal made by Joseph Henry, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, in 1854. The conference attracted a sizable American contingent, the ALA being represented by John Shaw Billings, then of the New York Public Library, who also assisted in the planning of the Catalogue (Ludington 1954, 115). Could this be of interest as evidence of cross-fertilization between librarians and documentalists?

### *Exporting American ideas*

A significant phenomenon in late 19<sup>th</sup> Century librarianship was the international transfer of library innovations, which included not only technical matters (technology, techniques and procedures), but also more fundamental matters of policy and values. By the latter I mean new thinking about who constituted the library's clientele, what their legitimate needs were, how libraries should serve them, and what role of libraries should play in society.

Increasingly American ideas were being exported to the rest of the world. American influence in Britain is particularly interesting. American ideas were received there with quite mixed responses, as already shown in the case of James Duff Brown. Brown was one of two British public librarians whose visits to the USA have been briefly discussed by Black (2016, 147–148). Neither came home with unadulterated admiration, but Duff's observations probably reinforced his support for open access to the shelves by the public. Some American innovations were admired, but the cultural context in which American libraries functioned was found less appealing. The relationship was one of mingled admiration, scepticism and annoyance, which reflected the complex geopolitical relationship between their two countries (cf. Black 2014).<sup>16</sup> The mixed reception of American library ideas was reflected in the British colonies, for example in Australia, where the Melbourne Public Library's introduction in 1910 of Dewey's Decimal classification to replace the older British system of fixed shelf locations led to a major public controversy (Carroll and Reynolds 2014).

American influence on libraries in Scandinavia has been well documented. In a chapter on library governance in Europe, Carnovsky (1954, 63–68) dealt briefly with US and British influence in Norway, Sweden and Denmark, finding the latter the most highly developed and exerting influence on the other Scandinavian countries. Danton (1957) devoted a brief monograph to US influence on Norwegian librarianship, highlighting the significant role of Norwegian librarians who had spent time working in the USA or had received their training there. American influence in Scandinavia has also been touched on by authors from Norway (Byberg 1993) and Sweden (Thomas 2004; Renborg 2001; Torstensson 1993). Dahlkild (2009) mentioned the influence of Carnegie library architecture and later US examples in the development of Nordic library architecture. In turn, Nordic librarianship has served as a model for the development of libraries in southern Europe (Torstensson 1993; Thomas 2004).

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<sup>16</sup> Alistair Black is working on a larger study of this topic.

In the case of Germany, there was transatlantic influence in both directions. I have already referred to the significant influence of the German research universities on those of the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, specifically the influence of the university library of Göttingen. That university was attended in the first two decades of that century by a number of Americans, such as George Ticknor, who later took leadership positions in American librarianship (Rayward 1976, 212; Vodosek 2003). From that point on, however, the transatlantic influence seems to have been mainly from West to East, certainly as far as public libraries are concerned.

Early attempts to introduce American public library ideas in Germany were not very successful. In a study of American influence on public librarianship in Germany, Chaplan (1971) distinguished three periods: the mid-1800s, the late 1800s; and the period following the Second World War (WW2), when a large part of Germany was under American occupation. Her account of the first two periods is of particular interest because it describes the efforts of leading German librarians who, having visited the USA, returned to Germany inspired to establish popular libraries on the model of American public libraries. Very limited success was achieved during the first two periods, mainly because of social and cultural differences between the two countries. In the second period, that of the *Bücherhallenbewegung*<sup>17</sup> (Thauer 1970), a considerable controversy, the *Richtungsstreit*<sup>18</sup> (Stieg 1986), arose between supporters of the Anglo-American public library model and those adhering to the more elitist German concept of the role of public libraries, which emphasized the “literary-aesthetic education of the people” (Chaplan 1971, 44). Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, in Germany there was much interest in the Scandinavian public education model and public library models. But although the Scandinavian examples generated respect, they were received with the same “twofold attitude of part recognition and part rejection” that was accorded “Anglo-Saxon librarianship” (Greguletz 1993, 56).

Already in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century American influence was being felt in French public librarianship. A model American library, organized by Melvil Dewey and his team from the State Library of New York, formed part of the US pavilion at the Universal Exposition in Paris in 1900. Leading French librarians and library advocates such as Maurice Pellisson (1906) and Eugène Morel (1908) wrote with admiration of public libraries in the USA. The work by Pellisson is an early French example of the “ameliorative” strain of international comparisons which aimed to stimulate action in the writer’s country by showing how unfavourably their libraries compared with libraries in other countries. Pellisson devoted considerable attention to well-researched descriptions of public libraries and school libraries in a number of countries, with emphasis on public libraries in the USA and Britain. His comparisons of these with French libraries, while diplomatically phrased, brought home the need for radical change. In contrast with Pellisson, the similarly ameliorative comparison by Morel, a massive work in two volumes, was anything but diplomatic. Written in the first person singular, Morel’s passionate advocacy for library improvement in France, took on a polemic, even, by his own admission (1908, 15), “aggressive” tone. Given the obstacles posed by the centralized French bureaucracy as well as political and cultural traditions, these two major comparative studies had little effect. Neither, I may add, did a much later academic thesis by Hassenforder (1967).<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The *Bücherhallenbewegung* was a movement (*Bewegung*), inspired by American examples, to establish popular libraries (*Bücherhallen*).

<sup>18</sup> The *Richtungsstreit* was a fight or controversy (*Streit*) about the direction (*Richtung*) or policy to be adopted.

<sup>19</sup> For more on the complex relationship between the American and French public library models, see the excellent comparative “genealogy” by Bertrand (2010).

American library influence was not limited to Europe. To name just two quite dissimilar examples, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, about which more later, was already active in the British Dominion of New Zealand, where grants were made to 18 libraries before 1914 (Rochester 1981, 1–2). In China, an American teacher, Mary Elizabeth Woods, was at work establish American library influence, promoting the establishment of libraries and the training of Chinese librarians in the USA, and going on to found China's first library school in 1920 (Zheng et al. 2010). The word "missionary" is not inappropriate to describe the expansion of American library influence during this period. Within less than fifty years, from being a relative backwater in librarianship, the USA had emerged as the world's prime exporter of new library ideas – and this with something akin to missionary zeal. This does not imply that there were no commercial motives as well. Melvil Dewey, for example, was an entrepreneur (Miksa 1983).

### *Two strands of internationalism*

This quite cursory overview of the development of international librarianship until the outbreak of First World War leads me to suggest that during this period the "marked internationalist dimension" perceived by Black (2016, 146) was manifested in two main, co-existing strands of internationalism in librarianship. The first strand was an embryonic, self-centred "internationalism light" or international awareness that was concerned with learning about what librarians in other countries were doing. This had four main motives: (1) to identify and purchase materials for acquisition, and build relations with suppliers, a particularly important motive in the USA as American energetically built research collections;<sup>20</sup> (2) to discover, evaluate and possibly adopt new ideas for use at home;<sup>21</sup> (3) to seek reassurance that one's own country was ahead of the others or at least among the leaders internationally – to keep up with, and if possible outdo, the neighbours; or (4) to upset the complacency of librarians and library authorities in one's own country in order to prompt them to remedial action.

The second strand was a collaborative and idealistic internationalism which was concerned with a more altruistic sharing of experiences, and with cooperative projects to enhance access by scholars to library resources regardless of where they were held. Admittedly, resource sharing is mostly motivated by enlightened self-interest, which cannot always be clearly distinguished from altruism. In both strands we perceive a tension between cooperation and competition. This is illustrated by the ambivalence of the world's fairs, which were at the same time platforms for showcasing national achievements and opportunities for sharing and cross-fertilization. As Rayward (2014, 6) has stated, these events "embodied a universalist aspiration that was harnessed to goals of nationalist prestige". This, I suggest, was also reflected in the nascent internationalism of the library profession.

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<sup>20</sup> Mohrhardt (1977, 84) stated that some American librarians became "better acquainted with foreign booksellers and publishers than with the librarians of these countries".

<sup>21</sup> It is worth noting that the flow of ideas was in two directions. American librarians travelled to Europe as well, to learn what was happening there (Mohrhardt 1977, 83–84)

#### IV International librarianship in the inter-war years

In the immediate aftermath of the First World War, there was a strong current of idealism in international relations. The idealists, also called liberal internationalists or utopians, sought to prevent another major conflict and ensure peace by creating “a respected system of international law, backed by international organizations” (Korab-Karpowicz 2013, n.p.). However, in international relations the idealism that led to the founding of the League of Nations was soon followed by a new realism. In one of that country’s periodic retreats into isolationism, the USA failed to join the League, a serious blow to its authority. Major powers such as Germany withdrew from it when it suited them to ignore criticism of their policies, and gradually the scene was set for the Second World War. To some extent this was reflected in the fortunes of the inter-war library initiatives by non-state actors.

##### *Relief and reconstruction*

A great deal of international library activity followed the First World War. The inter-war period 1918-1939 saw a significant growth in international librarianship, which continued right up to the outbreak of the Second World War. Initially much of the activity was concerned with disaster relief and reconstruction. Libraries in war-affected areas had suffered physical damage and losses. Probably the most notorious example was the deliberate destruction of the Library of the Catholic University of Louvain, in neutral Belgium, by German forces as a reprisal measure after some German soldiers had been killed by resisting civilians or *francs-tireurs* (snipers) The destruction, cannily exploited in Allied propaganda, had aroused international indignation. Even before the end of the war, committees had been set up in more than 25 countries to collect books and funds for reconstruction of the library. A major book collection drive in Britain was spearheaded by the Johns Rylands Library in Manchester. A Franco-British Commission was set up; in the USA various committees worked to collect materials and funds (Guppy 1926). Germany was an unwilling contributor: after the war the German Government was compelled, as part of war reparations, to pay ten million francs towards the purchase of materials, and German libraries were forced to contribute duplicated copies of their treasures (Civallero 2007, 13). After the war, a new building, designed by Whitney Warren, was erected with American funding. This is in itself a fascinating chapter in international librarianship, as an example of how international library relations and aid projects are often driven by foreign policy objectives. The project was not entirely altruistic, but also served as a demonstration of American power, but the funding was slow in coming and had to be scraped together to save American face. The planning and execution of the project became mired in a decade-long controversy which tested diplomatic relations between the USA and Belgium (Proctor 2015). It was completed in 1928 (Derez 1996, 622–623). In 1940, during the Second World War, the new library was again destroyed by German forces (Hodgson 2014). All in all Louvain represents a most unfortunate example of “international library activity”.

The effects of the war were felt more widely. In most institutions, acquisitions had been affected by the interruption of relations with suppliers such as publishers, booksellers and exchange partners. This was exacerbated by post-war austerity measures that affected libraries as governments diverted resources to the rebuilding of infrastructure (Breycha-Vauthier 1961, 835). There was a great need to re-establish pre-war relationships among libraries and to re-open sources of supply of foreign materials so as to fill gaps in collections.

This was a priority for the German *Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft*,<sup>22</sup> for example (Krüss [1933] 1961, 829).<sup>23</sup>

### ***Library renewal projects***

The horrific destruction wrought by the war stimulated other humanitarian and library development activities in Europe, notably by American organizations, which had a long-term impact on libraries in Europe, especially children's and public libraries. One of these organisations, set up in 1917, was the American Committee for a Devastated France (ACDF, better known as CARD, for the initials of its name in French, *Comité américain pour les régions dévastées*), which contributed to renewing public library work in France.<sup>24</sup> In 1920 CARD opened four small model public libraries in the *département* of l'Aisne, north-west of Reims, which had seen great devastation in the course of major battles. This was followed in 1921 by the erection of a larger public library in Soissons, in the same *département* and finally of the first children's library in France, opened in Paris in 1922, which was subsequently taken over by the City of Paris (Bertrand 2010, 37).

Another initiative was the establishment in Europe of a number of American-style children's libraries. In November 1918 a group of American women set up a foundation named the American Book Committee on Children's Libraries, which aimed to develop the "literary culture" of school-age children. The children's libraries were named "l'Heure joyeuse" (the happy hour). The first was opened in Brussels in 1920. The foundation also helped to disseminate the "American model of user-centred librarianship" through training of local librarians (Mitts-Smith 2007, 464–466). A second such library, opened in Paris in 1924, "soon became an embodiment of new ideas that were promoted by those who sought to bring about a radical paradigm shift in French librarianship" (Maack 1993, 258). It was later taken over by the City of Paris, which then developed a network of neighbourhood libraries for children (Ferguson 1971).

In addition, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace funded the erection of a number of public libraries in European cities that had suffered particularly heavy damage during the war. One of these was erected in Reims. Donations were also made to smaller French cities by the Endowment and other American organizations (Bertrand 2010, 37).

A further consequence of the First World War was the founding of the American Library in Paris in 1918. During the war, many American libraries had participated in the Library War Service, which collected almost one-and-a-half million books for distribution to American servicemen on the battlefield. After the war, the American Library Association set up the American Library in Paris with a core collection of these books. Brewster (1976, 200–202)

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<sup>22</sup> Emergency Organization for German science.

<sup>23</sup> In this section I refer frequently to the detailed and usefully documented contributions by Krüss and Breycha-Vauthier to the magisterial *Handbuch der Bibliothekswissenschaft* (Handbook of library science), founded by Fritz Milkau before the Second World War (first edition published in 1933), and revised subsequently under the direction of Georg Leih (1961). Both Krüss (who contributed to the first edition) and Breycha-Vauthier (who contributed to the second edition) were deeply involved in international librarianship and wrote at first-hand about international library congresses, IFLA, and the League of Nations. Brief biographical notes are given in Appendix A.

<sup>24</sup> CARD was the creation of Anne Tracy Morgan, daughter of John Pierpont Morgan. For a recent commemorative account see Dormont (2017).

discussed the role of the ALA in the establishment of this library, which was frequented by many literary figures such as Gertrude Stein, Hemingway, and Samuel Beckett, and is still in existence (Maack 2007; American Library in Paris 2013).

An American training course for public librarians, which became known as the Paris Library School, was also established in 1923 and housed in the American Library. It was set up by the ALA, with the approval of the French Ministry of Education, and funded by foundations including CARD, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and the Rockefeller Foundation (Witt 2013). It was staffed by both American and French librarians. The French lecturers, who included leading figures such as Eugène Morel and Gabriel Henriot,<sup>25</sup> gradually assumed its leadership (Bertrand 2010, 37). The ALA, which saw in the School an “opportunity to advertise and inculcate American library methods and ideas”, continued to play a significant role in running it until it could no longer secure funding for it. It closed down in 1929. (Brewster 1976, 202–204). Witt has discussed this school against the background of an American internationalism that gave the United States a key role in promoting civilization and peace world-wide. He emphasised its evolution as “a hub for international exchange and cross-cultural understanding” (Witt 2013, 143), and placed it in the context of a growing “cultural internationalism”, globalization, and the rise of international non-governmental organizations (Witt 2014, 505–506). Bertrand (2010, 37–38) noted that the time was not yet ripe for the adoption of American-style public libraries in France, but that the School exerted a long-term influence through alumni who, infected with “anglo-saxomanie” (Richter, cited in Bertrand 2006, 122) pushed for modernization of French public libraries.

American relief initiatives were significant in expanding US influence in European libraries – an influence reinforced by a continuing stream of European students at US library schools and visitors to US libraries who went back to their countries to spread American library ideas.

## **The League of Nations**

The League of Nations was founded in January 1920 as a result of the Paris Peace Conference that ended the First World War. A proposal made at the League’s first session in that year led to the establishment two years later of the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation. In Valderrama’s (1995) *History of UNESCO* a chapter is devoted to this International Committee, which is considered to be the forerunner of UNESCO. National committees on intellectual cooperation were set up in many countries. A secretariat for the International Committee was provided by France, which funded the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation and provided accommodation for it in the Palais Royal in Paris. The Institute was opened in 1926 (Valderrama 1995, 1–3). It took an active interest in libraries and archives. Various surveys on library matters were conducted and a Standing Committee of Library Experts<sup>26</sup> was set up, which met annually at the Institute. A Sub-Committee on Bibliography met annually in conjunction with this meeting. Among the projects it oversaw were an annual listing of the most important works published in the various countries, the publication of guides to international interlibrary lending and international exchange services, the *Index bibliographicus*, the *Code of titles of periodical publications* and the *Index*

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<sup>25</sup> Henriot later became the President of the French library association and played an important role in the founding of IFLA.

<sup>26</sup> This is referred to by Breycha-Vauthier (1961, 841) as an annual conference of library directors.

*translationum*. The Institute also established a Committee of Archivists (Valderrama 1995, 13–14).

Breycha-Vauthier (1961, 842) reported that an issue that came up for discussion was whether the Committee should undertake projects in these areas itself or rather encourage and support professional organizations in undertaking such projects. The trend was towards the latter, and this was an important factor in the success of some of the work of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), notably on the organization of international inter-library lending.

## ***IFLA***

Like the League of Nations and the international relief and reconstruction activities mentioned earlier, IFLA was the result of the “new, more zealous spirit growing out of World War 1” (Kraske 1985, 6). Its origins are closely bound up with the series of international conferences or congresses, referred to earlier, that were interrupted by the War. They resumed only in 1923, when the “International Congress of Librarians and Bibliophiles” was held in Paris. This was a big conference, attended by 700 participants from 28 countries. The participants included not only librarians but also authors, publishers, booksellers, printers, and book collectors. As a result, there was a heavy emphasis on various aspects of the book, and less attention was paid to the international issues, such as international exchanges, which had featured so prominently in earlier conferences. However, the idea of an international body, expressed earlier in the 1910 congress resolution to set up an international committee to organize future international meetings, was followed up three years later in 1926, when an “International Congress of Librarians and Book-lovers” was held in Prague. At this Congress, which attracted over 100 papers presented in six concurrent sections, Gabriel Henriot, President of the Association des bibliothécaires français, proposed that a permanent committee on international relations consisting of representatives of national library associations should be set up. It was to hold annual meetings in different countries. The Congress approved the setting up of an interim committee for this purpose. It was instructed to approach the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation in Paris and to raise the question of establishing a permanent international committee of librarians (Rudomino 1977, 75–76).

Three months after the Prague Congress, the ALA celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a substantial foreign presence, which gave further impetus to the formation of an international body. In the following year, 1927, when the Library Association similarly celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Edinburgh, the foundation was laid for an international federation of library associations (Krüss [1933] 1961, 830). This was initially named the International Committee for Librarianship and Bibliography,<sup>27</sup> which met for its first session in Rome in 1928. Here it was decided to organize a World Congress for Librarianship and Bibliography in Italy in the following year. Thus in 1929 the Congress met (somewhat chaotically) in Florence and

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<sup>27</sup> Wilhite (2012, 97) referred to this as the “International Library and Bibliographical Committee”. In the literature dealing with these bodies, various versions are found of the names of the congresses/conferences and committees/commissions referred to in this paper. In most cases the different versions occur because the names were translated by authors writing in different languages, or using English as a second language. In particular, the terms ‘commission’ and ‘committee’ are used more or less interchangeably, the former being used consistently by non-English-speaking authors, possibly under the influence of French. I have translated ‘commission’ as ‘committee’ except where it appears that inter-governmental bodies are referred to.

Venice, while the International Committee itself met for its second session in Rome. On this occasion it decided to call itself the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA).

Somewhat confusing accounts have been given of the founding of IFLA. Some authors regard 1926, others 1929 as the founding date. Various degrees of credit for the founding of IFLA have been claimed on behalf of protagonists from various nations – the USA (Mohrhardt 1977; Kraske 1985, 6), France (Wieder 1977, 12–13), Czechoslovakia (Málek 1970), Britain (Byrne 2007, 36–37), and Italy (Guerrini and Speciale 2012). According to Wieder (1977, 13) Gabriel Henriot, from France, was regarded as the “spiritual father of IFLA”.<sup>28</sup> Wilhite’s (2012) chronology provides clarity. What the meetings in Italy in 1929 produced was a rather loosely structured federation of associations, meeting annually in “sessions” attended by between 20 and 60 delegates. It was not until the 1950s that attendance at sessions reached three figures. However, every five years, a “World Congress” would be held. The Second World War interrupted this pattern. Only four “world congresses” were held, in 1929, 1935, 1955, and 1977.<sup>29</sup> These congresses attracted much larger attendances of up to about 1500 (Wilhite 2012, 97–100, 348–349). By 1977 substantial conferences were being held annually, and from 1980 onwards IFLA sessions were officially called “conferences”.

The role of the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation in the early years of IFLA should not be overlooked. From the outset IFLA maintained a close relationship with it. IFLA’s long-serving first Secretary General, Dr Tietse Sevensma, was the head of the League’s Library in Geneva, and this is where IFLA’s headquarters were set up. This coincided with a period during which IFLA’s second President, William Warner Bishop was also the chairman of the League of Nations Library Planning Committee. The establishment of IFLA’s head office at the Library of the League of Nations provided considerable assistance to IFLA’s budget, for example, covering the travel costs of IFLA’s Assistant Secretary, Arthur C. Breycha-Vauthier, who was the League of Nations Law Librarian and subsequently Chief Librarian. Sevensma moved to the Netherlands in 1938 to become the Director of Leiden University Library, but remained Secretary General, while Breycha-Vauthier ran the Secretariat in Geneva. During the 2nd World War communications between Leiden and Geneva were disrupted and IFLA was largely dormant. However, the IFLA secretariat participated with a group of Geneva-based international organizations in the “Consultative Committee for reading facilities for prisoners of war and internees”, set up in Geneva in 1940 with the help of the International Committee of the Red Cross (Breycha-Vauthier 1977).

### *Other international initiatives*

This period saw American philanthropic foundations playing a greater role in international librarianship. Mention has been made of the contribution made by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. The Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, established in 1913, funded public library and other projects in the British Isles, where its philanthropy helped establish the principle of open access to the shelves (Black 2009, 233). Starting before the First World War and continuing during the 1920s and 1930s the Carnegie Corporation of New York, through its British Colonies and Dominions Fund, provided significant funding for library

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<sup>28</sup> This is interesting because Gabriel taught at the American Library School in Paris, as mentioned earlier.

<sup>29</sup> By 1977 substantial conferences were being held annually, and from 1980 onwards IFLA sessions were officially called “conferences” (Wilhite 2012, 69).

development in British dominions: Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, supporting initiatives to develop modern public and academic libraries and national library infrastructure (Rochester 1996). These American interventions prompted some conflict within the library professions of the latter three countries, where librarianship had been introduced largely by British-trained librarians. American ideas on library education encountered particular resistance. The Rockefeller Foundation was particularly involved in Canada (Buxton and Acland 1998) and contributed significantly, albeit reluctantly, to the erection of the new University Library building for Louvain (Proctor 2015). It funded the erection of the League of Nations Library in Geneva (Breycha-Vauthier 1961, 837)

During this period, too, the American Library Association was not only involved in the relief and reconstruction projects already mentioned, but also in library development projects elsewhere. From the 1920s onwards the ALA was active in Latin America (Brewster 1976, 215–219, 224–234). Towards the end of the inter-war period an increasing Axis presence in the Western Hemisphere prompted Franklin Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor policy and the creation of a Division of Cultural Relations in the US State Department (Brewster 1976, 10–13). The ALA collaborated in this Division’s cultural diplomacy initiatives, which intensified during the Second World War. This included the establishment of “binational centers” and libraries, such as the Biblioteca Benjamin Franklin in Mexico (Collett 1972). It is worth noting that American foundations were also involved in much of this work, as described in considerable detail by Brewster (1976). The development of such cooperation between non-state actors (foundations and non-governmental organizations) and foreign ministries in international aid and cultural diplomacy projects became particularly prominent and pervasive during the Cold War era and continues to this day.

## Conclusions

Not everything I expected to find when I started working on this paper has turned out as I expected. In conclusion, I identify a number of themes that emerge from the narrative. Each of them deserves further study.

The first theme concerns the background against which internationalism emerged in librarianship. I suggest that the development of internationalism in librarianship is related to the issues which preoccupied librarians and to the development of librarianship as a profession during this period. Librarians were concerned with building institutions containing large, rapidly growing collections of physical artefacts, and, increasingly, with organizing these to serve users. The growing complexity called for new technical and managerial responses. I see the professionalization of librarianship against this institution-based background. Evidence of the growing professionalization is found in the growth of a technical and managerial literature, the development of formal training, the holding of meetings, and the founding of associations in which leading practitioners could share experiences and insight and learn from one another. It is significant, I think, that at an early stage this sharing and learning had an international dimension. It signifies an awareness of responsibilities and concerns which transcended national borders – an essentially professional phenomenon. This is not to say that there was an immediate shift from concerns with books to concerns with institutional issues. Manuscripts, rare books, and collecting continued to receive a great deal of attention; as we saw earlier, bibliophiles and collectors played prominent roles in the proceedings at the world library congresses. Information did not yet feature as a topic.

A second theme concerns the question of how internationalism developed in librarianship. Can we discern a progression from an international awareness largely motivated by self-interest (“internationalism light”) to a true internationalism concerned with cooperation, international understanding, and ensuring world peace? There is some evidence of such a progression already before the First World War. Initially what librarians brought home from their international travels and meetings was primarily of value for the participants’ own institutions and countries – for example, learning of new and better ways of doing things, or making contact with potential exchange partners and library suppliers. The more collaborative manifestation of internationalism related to projects motivated by enlightened self-interest, such as international exchange of publications and inter-library loans. Some of this, as we have seen, predated the 1850s. A high degree of altruism may be ascribed to the American export of new library ideas to the rest of the world. This seems to have been, at least during this period, altruistic and fuelled by enthusiasm – the missionary spirit of the recently converted.

The real shift to a more altruistic and idealistic internationalism came during the First World War, prompted by revulsion at the carnage and destruction. Initially, humanitarian and missionary motives appear to have predominated, although the case of the Louvain University Library shows that things were not that simple. The advent of the League of Nations (and later UNESCO) provided fruitful channels for humanitarian and idealistic energies. The International Committee for Intellectual Cooperation may not have the resources that UNESCO later had, but it did play an important role in the evolution of what Rayward (1981) has called “an international library and bibliographic community”.

A third theme relates to the distinction between community and polity internationalism which I introduced earlier. Where can the internationalism of librarians be categorized? I suggest that the origins of librarians’ internationalism can be found in the liberal, bourgeois strand of community internationalism, which appears to me to be where international non-governmental organizations mainly have their origins. But liberal internationalism itself is closely aligned to polity internationalism. In the history of internationalism in both librarianship and documentation, I see much evidence of ambivalence and tension between these two strands. This is seen in the early initiatives to found an international organization for librarianship, for example at the international congress of 1910, where the committee tasked with creating that body was composed of representatives of national associations and (in cases where such associations did not exist), countries. This is in accordance with the polity internationalist assumption that international cooperation should be based on national building blocks. IFLA appears to have roots in both community and polity internationalism, the latter being reinforced by IFLA’s close relationship with the League of Nations. But it has been noted that in its early years IFLA resembled nothing so much as a “gentleman’s club” (Wilhite 2012, 23) – suggesting an element of bourgeois liberal internationalism.

A fourth theme concerns the role of polity internationalism in international library activities and structures. I suggest that the mechanisms and structures of polity internationalism tend to co-opt or capture those of community internationalism. This is illustrated in the rebuilding of the Louvain University Library after the First World War, where initiatives taken in response to the disaster by what we would today call civil society were quickly harnessed by national state actors for propaganda purpose and in order to project national prestige and influence. As tensions rose in the 1930s and war clouds gathered anew, a close collaboration developed between the US State Department and the American Library Association. In Latin Americas

the library cooperation activities of the ALA were closely aligned to the State Department's efforts to counter German influence there.

Embedded in the word "international" is the word "national". To a large extent international activities in librarianship by civil society are inspired or indirectly driven by national interests. This is clearly illustrated by the flourishing of international librarianship in the USA (along with area studies, "international" library education, and library development aid to the developing world) during the Cold War, and by the responses of US foundations to opportunities offered in Central and Eastern Europe when the Soviet Union broke up.

A final theme concerns the parallel development of internationalism among librarians and documentalists, broadly speaking. I had hoped to pose questions about the relationship between the two fields. What links were there? What were the differences between the protagonists in terms of their professional backgrounds and institutional settings? How did their concerns and emphasis differ, e.g. in terms of bibliographic control? Was this the period in which documentation, the precursor of information science, drifted away from librarianship? From what I have discovered so far, I am not at all sure that the two fields were ever close enough for us to speak of "drifting away". There is incidental anecdotal evidence, for example in Rayward (1981, 460), who mentions Otlet's attendance at the 1926 world congress in Prague. We know too that Dewey's Decimal classification was adapted by Otlet, and that some librarians and documentalists were present at the same meetings. But to answer these questions requires access to sources not available to me in South Africa. There is great scope for research on these questions in the archives of FID and IFLA in the Royal Library in The Hague, the United Nations Library in Geneva, the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, and elsewhere. Much remains to be discovered concerning the history of internationalism in librarianship and documentation.

## **Appendix: Hugo Andres Krüss and Arthur Breycha-Vauthier**

**Hugo Andres Krüss** (1879-1945) (German) was intimately involved in international librarianship from 1925 to 1945, while he was the General Director of the Prussian State Library. His appointment to the Prussian State Library was at the time very controversial, since he had no library background, but he proved a highly competent administrator. He had a gift for languages and diplomacy, and played a leading role in international bodies. He is regarded as one of the founders of IFLA. Among others, he attended the 1877 ALA Conference, where he proposed the motion requesting W.W. Bishop to undertake the preparatory work for founding what became IFLA. He and served as a German representative on the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (Schochow 1995). He contributed a chapter (Krüss [1933] 1961) on “international library work” in Fritz Milkau’s *Handbuch der Bibliothekswissenschaft*. This covered the period from the origins of international librarianship up to the League of Nations in the early 1930s. It was posthumously republished in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the *Handbuch* (editor Georg Leyh), where it formed the first part (pp. 819-834) of Chapter 11. The second part of this chapter (pp. 835-844), which covered the period since 1933, was contributed by A.C. Breycha-Vauthier (1961).

He was highly regarded internationally, but under the Nazi regime his international reputation was severely compromised. In 1940, he became the “Reichskommissar für die Sicherung der Bibliotheken und die Betreuung des Buchgutes im westlichen Operationsgebiet”, and as such responsible for German control of library resources in occupied France. His wartime role is mentioned in various works dealing with German looting during the Second World War, e.g. Sutter (2008).

**Arthur C. Breycha-Vauthier** (1903-1986) (Austrian) was the son of a ministerial official and studied law and political science. He joined the League of Nations Library in 1928, serving first as Law Librarian and from 1945 as the Library’s Director. During his time at the League of Nations Library he served as IFLA’s Assistant Secretary (1929-1958), Treasurer (1958-1963) and as Editor of the *Actes du Conseil de la FIAB* (1930-1962). He was made an Honorary Member of IFLA in 1964, the year in which he became Austria’s Ambassador in Lebanon. After his term as ambassador he became the Director of the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna (1968-1988). Sources: Koops and Wieder (1977, 158); Wikipedia, “Arthur Breycha-Vauthier”, [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur\\_Breycha-Vauthier](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Breycha-Vauthier), accessed 2017-02-15.

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