Abstract
A joint conference of the International Federation for Documentation (FID) and Aslib (the British Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux) was held in Oxford and London in late September 1938. It attracted large numbers of international delegates and a cast of distinguished speakers from the world of documentation, as well as celebrities such as H. G. Wells. It is now mainly remembered because it coincided with the “Munich” crisis (September 15–30, 1938), a context that apparently caused great tension among delegates, especially in relation to the substantial contingent from Nazi Germany. However, this article, following a detailed analysis of conference presentations and debates, observes that it also marked something of a turning point in the history of documentation itself. The project of the early twentieth-century documentalists—the “universe of knowledge” and its international mobilization—was called into serious question by some speakers; a state of affairs intensified by the disintegration of international relations outside the conference doors. In the end, this article argues, the Oxford conference heralded the emergence of a new, mid–twentieth-century world information order shaped during World War II and focusing upon the primacy of national (and later) commercial interests. In 1938, the dreams and schemes of Wells, Otlet, and their followers began to be recognized, for the time being at least, as the illusions that maybe they always were.

Introduction
In 1983, Boyd Rayward published a paper in Library Quarterly entitled “The International Exposition and World Documentation Congress, Paris, 1937” (Rayward, 1983). Its basic theme—the possibility of “uni-
universal bibliographic control and of encyclopaedia” (p. 267)—is one that resonates throughout most of Rayward’s work, and it is illustrated in the Library Quarterly paper through an analysis of the key issues and tensions that surfaced at the Paris congress. Rayward focuses upon a turning point in the history of information: the point in time when Otlet and Lafontaine’s International Institute for Bibliography (IIB), from its foundation in 1895 based in Brussels, finally became a looser federation of national and sectional institutions and organizations. This process had been unfolding since the early 1920s: in the face of advances in technology, communications, and systems of knowledge, it was becoming increasingly difficult to justify a central, universal, bibliographic repository such as the Brussels IIB (Rayward, 1975, pp. 274–303; Heuvel, 2012). From 1928 on, an energetic new IIB general secretary, Frits Donker Duyvis of the Dutch Patent Office, oversaw the gradual decentralization of the IIB and the transfer of its administration to the Hague. In 1931 a new organizational name—The International Institute for Documentation (IID)—was adopted, reflecting the expansion of the Institute’s interests “beyond bibliography” (Donker Duyvis, 1940, p. 182). Finally, at the 1937 Paris Congress, after a standoff between the IID’s supporters and its critics (some of whom, especially the French, wanted to create their own “international” organization), it was agreed to form an International Federation for Documentation (FID). While this new FID maintained a commitment to global standardization through schemes such as the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC), its structure became more federal in nature, increasing the influence of its national affiliates, especially those in France, Germany, Great Britain, and Holland. In effect, Paris 1937 signalled the end of Otlet’s centralized conception of universal documentation. It would be, in the eyes of the new establishment of the FID, supplanted by a federal, or networked, internationalism. As Rayward (1983, p. 266) observes, “The organization [Otlet] had created was moving away from him.”

In the aftermath of the 1937 Paris congress, many questions arose about the structure, function, and purposes of the new FID. On an administrative level, these were resolved efficiently enough by the Hague secretariat: a quarterly bulletin, *FID Communicationes*, was produced; progress on both UDC and other matters of international standardization was maintained through committees and publications; conferences were planned for Oxford (1938), Zurich (1939), and Frankfurt (1940) (Donker Duyvis, 1940). However, the most fundamental question of all—the very identity and survival of the FID—was one that generated increasing nervousness in the Autumn/Spring of 1937/38. The 1937 Paris conference had been held at the end of a relative lull in the international tension that beset the 1930s, due in large part to a temporary phase of “consolidation” in Germany on the part of the Nazi regime. However, in March 1938, Hitler annexed Austria and the persecution of the Jews resumed in earnest with atrocities
in Vienna. This Anchluss was followed in early summer by threats to invade and “repatriate” the Sudeten, ethnic German parts of Czechoslovakia. Together with its “axis” partners, Italy and Japan, in alliances concluded in 1936, Germany now openly repudiated the liberal internationalism of the League of Nations, arguing for a new kind of international order based on national, cultural, and racial hierarchy (Mazower, 2009, 69–71). The extent to which such an ideology was compatible with the liberal and universalist principles underpinning the FID was undoubtedly a question that troubled many, including Paul Otlet himself. Rayward cites in his biography of Otlet a note entitled Après le Congres Mondial, written in late 1937, where Otlet “expressed a fear of the German influence . . . 18 delegates directed by a Fuhrer.” But he insisted nevertheless that “in a world threatened by disintegration . . . every attempt should be made to maintain the increasingly tenuous contacts between nations” (Rayward, 1975, p. 358).

His sentiments were shared, as we shall see, by many of the delegates who assembled for the first conference of the new FID, held in Oxford, September 21–26, 1938.

The conference, to be held at Oxford University’s Lady Margaret Hall, was planned as an ambitious five-day joint venture between the FID and Aslib, the British Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux. This, it was hoped, would avoid the repeat of “the very poor affair” that had characterized a previous IIB conference in London in 1929, when “only about 30 people attended” (Gossett, 1977, p. 175). The British affiliate of the FID, the British Society for International Bibliography (BSIB), was in fact little more than a “think tank” for documentation, with a reported membership of only 58 in 1935: it had had much intellectual, but limited organizational, viability, and ran entirely on voluntary labor (Pollard, 1940, p. 25). On the other hand, Aslib was by 1938 recovering from the 1930s economic depression under the direction of its supremely competent salaried general secretary, Edith Ditmas. With indirect state support through UK government-sponsored industrial “Research Associations,” it was developing as not only a professional focus for UK special librarianship but also as an embryonic “national intelligence service” linking and networking its corporate membership of, by 1939, 340 industrial, technical and commercial organizations (Muddiman, 2007, pp. 84–85).

Although Aslib’s emphasis was firmly national rather than international, few members objected to its links with the BSIB, and through it the FID: in fact a liaison committee between the two organizations had met since 1930 (Muddiman, 2007, p. 91). A joint conference thus promised much for both Aslib and the BSIB: organizational viability and a wide potential attendance base in the UK, coupled with a prestigious international cast of speakers and contributors.

The conference was therefore intended from the start to be a high profile international celebration of the new science of documentation.
S. C. Bradford, recently retired from his post as Keeper of the Science Museum Library in London, was chairman of the organizing committee and the aforementioned Edith Ditmas was, together with Miriam Gossett of the Science Museum Library and BSIB, its joint Executive Administrator. Spread over five days, eleven themed sessions attracted a total of 106 papers that attendees were posted in advance and were supposed to read before the conference presentations and discussions. For the final session on microphotography and reprographics, on Monday September 26, the conference moved to the Science Museum in London where exhibitions of new equipment, especially from Kodak of the USA, were set up. As well as the international leaders of the FID and its affiliates—Pollard, Prins, Donker Duyvis, Krüss, Frank, Watson Davis, Briet, Cain—who were to give papers, it was hoped that Paul Otlet and Henri Lafontaine themselves would attend. Other celebrities with interests in documentation were also invited: Nobel Prize–winning crystallographer William Bragg was enlisted as conference president; economist and social reformer William Beveridge was to give the Aslib presidential address; and throughout early 1938, H. G. Wells was courted by the BSIB in an attempt to persuade him to give a keynote speech. Other diversions included the usual fare of international professional hospitality: visits to the Bodleian Library and selected Oxford Colleges; Oxford University Press; Morris Motors; Stratford upon Avon; and, for tea, a Cotswold manor house. All of this, including accommodation, was covered by a conference fee of £4 15s 0d (approximately £270 GB or $400 US in today’s money), which seems in retrospect a good deal. Wives were admitted free of charge (International Federation for Documentation, 1938a). It is perhaps no surprise that between 335 and 350 “congressists” signed up to attend (Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux, 1938b, p. 17; International Federation for Documentation, 1938b, p. 131).

Setting these pleasantries into stark relief, however, were menacing developments in the Sudetenland crisis, which escalated as the conference approached. After a summer of propaganda in German newspapers about Czech “atrocities” against ethnic Germans, on September 12, at the annual Nazi party rally in Nuremberg, Hitler threatened an invasion of Czechoslovakia unless the Sudetenland was granted “self-determination.” In response, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain set in chain the events of arguably the first summit of modern times by flying to Munich on 15th September in an attempt to engineer a solution, appease Germany, and (perhaps) delay what looked like an inevitable European war. There followed a period of tense shuttle diplomacy, which ended only fifteen days and three meetings in Germany later when Chamberlain famously announced “peace in our time” on his return to Heston airfield in West London.2 However, delegates arriving in Oxford ten days or so before this apparent triumph would not have been so sure: on September
20/21, the “Munich crisis,” as it was by then called, was in full flow. Trenches, sandbags, and gas masks began to appear in British cities; a booklet *The Protection of Your Home Against Air Raids* was delivered to homes and offices; and rumours abounded about the mobilization of the army and the fleet (Reynolds, 2007, p. 78). As the conference opened, Edith Ditmas and Miriam Gossett detected a “tension that was unnerving to the organisers,” reflecting perhaps the fact that twenty-nine governments (including those of both Germany and Czechoslovakia) were officially represented. Characteristically, they responded by using their native “tact . . . lodging incompatible groups as far apart as possible” (Ditmas, 1961, p. 261). Despite its superficially apolitical agenda, and its promised bonhomie, it was clear from the beginning that this was going to be a conference under duress.

**Dramatis Personae: Delegates, Ideas, and Ideologies**

Events in Germany notwithstanding, the conference opened on schedule in Oxford on September 21, 1938. In terms of attendance, as the figures quoted above suggest, it was obviously a great success, and even by twenty-first-century standards, it boasted a prestigious cast of characters and a genuinely international flavor. The list of nations “officially” represented included not only those from the FID’s West European and Nordic core but also the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. Less predictably, seven delegates appeared from states in Eastern Europe; two from the Middle East (Turkey and Iraq); three from Asia (China, Burma, and Ceylon), and five from South America. Only Africa was officially unrepresented, although a few librarians attended from British South Africa (Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux, 1938b, pp. 5–13).

Beyond geography, the 350 participants clustered into three broad categories. Perhaps one third can be considered to have been hard core documentalists: the hierarchy of the FID and active members of its national affiliates. The majority of this group, but not all, worked in national, scientific, and technical libraries or allied areas such as patents, standards, and research. Many of them gave papers; the majority were West European, Nordic, or British, although a good number also came from the United States, especially in the fields of microphotography and reprography.

A second tranche of approximately 100 or so delegates, exclusively British, comprised the “Aslib” contingent. These were, in the main, librarians and information officers from industrial, commercial, and scientific libraries, preoccupied with the techniques and management of information in their chosen field. Interestingly, many of this group were women, undoubtedly reflecting the development of scientific and technical information work as a niche female profession in 1930s Britain (Plant, 2007). Some of this Aslib group gave papers: most of these focused on the practical concerns of running an information service, as opposed to theory or
policy. According to the conference publicity in *Aslib Information*, Aslib conferences were “by tradition” events where “delegates are kept in close touch with the grindstone” (Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux, 1938a, p. 1).

A third category of delegate, perhaps unusually large at this conference, comprised “outsiders”: those with little or no professional knowledge or experience of documentation or special librarianship and information work. Some outsiders (a type perhaps familiar to aficionados of international conferences today) seem to have appeared from nowhere and have had little or no familiarity with the subject matter under review: the “Chilean ambassador” mentioned by A. F. Pollard in a later account of the conference (1940, p. 25) is probably representative of this group. Others, however, were invitees whom the organizers had deliberately recruited to both heighten the public profile of the conference and to reflect upon the importance of the new commodity of information and the role of the documentalist in harnessing it. As we have already noted, H. G. Wells, William Beveridge, and William Bragg were perhaps the most important members of this category. Others were invited to present papers on the potential applications of documentation in their own field of expertise. These included art historian (and by this time Soviet spy) Anthony Blunt and the “doyen of archivists” Hilary Jenkinson, of the British Public Record Office.

Cutting across these categories, however, and arguably no less important than them, were various national and regional assemblages of professional identity and politics. The FID itself had changed significantly since the 1937 Paris conference. Otlet and Lafontaine were still nominally members of its secretariat but had effectively retired from active involvement and did not appear at Oxford. By now, modernizers such as Ernst Mathys of the Swiss National Library and J. Alingh Prins of the Dutch Patent Office, who had been FID chairman since 1931, constituted a dominant European group. Frits Donker Duyvis, the youthful general secretary (he was aged 44 in 1938) embodied this new FID more than anyone. A chemical engineer by training, he had been one of the founding members of NIDER (the Netherlands equivalent of Aslib) in 1921. He had then worked with Prins in the Patent Office and in 1925 was a co-founder of NIVE, the Dutch National Institute for Management (Buckland, 2008, p. 51). As these interests suggest, as well as international bibliography, Donker Duyvis was deeply committed to scientific management, industrial efficiency, and international standards. All of these, he believed benefited “international understanding and co-operation and do [their] share towards vanquishing the forces of destruction that threaten the peace and progress of the world” (Donker Duyvis, 1954, p. 426).

Although sharing these beliefs in scientific liberalism and internationalism, the leading members of the British affiliate of the FID, S. C. Bradford
and A. F. Pollard, came from an earlier generation of documentalists who tended to focus on bibliographical concerns. Bradford, recently retired as Keeper of London’s Science Museum Library, was a strong advocate of UDC and one of the founders of bibliometrics. He operated as conference chair but did not present a paper. In contrast, Pollard’s “The Mobilization of Knowledge and the ‘Permanent World Encyclopaedia’ of Mr H. G. Wells” was to become the centerpiece of the proceedings. Pollard was not a practicing librarian like Bradford (he was professor of optics at Imperial College), but he had long held an interest in international bibliographical cooperation, beginning in the public arena with a letter to The Times in 1919 (Pollard, 1940, p. 27). He had been IIB president between 1927 and 1931, and although a strong advocate (and author of parts) of UDC, he had facilitated the beginnings of the FID’s decentralization from Brussels taken forward by Donker Duyvis (Rayward, 1975, pp. 304–320). As the 1930s progressed, Pollard had become especially interested in the idea of an international bibliographical network, with UDC as a kind of common language and currency. As we shall see, from 1936 on, he began to link these plans with H. G. Wells’s campaign for a “World Encyclopaedia,” arguing that bibliography and documentation would form the practical element of a “World Brain” (Wells, 1994; Muddiman, 1998; Rayward, 2008).

Indeed, as already noted, in the run up to the conference, Bradford and Pollard corresponded and met with Wells in an attempt to persuade him to attend and deliver a keynote address. Wells proved difficult to woo: by the spring of 1938, after a mixed reception on the United States lecture circuit, he was becoming disillusioned with the world encyclopaedia campaign and the practical and financial difficulties it entailed. Most seriously of all, he had begun to doubt his own propaganda: perhaps the Wellesian “utopian–liberal–socialist” world view was becoming increasingly passé in the light of the realpolitik of European events? Ever the chameleon, Wells eventually responded with public pronouncements that revived the scepticism and pessimism of his early scientific romances—“What have my books been,” he would write in 1939, “but the clearest insistence on the insecurity of progress and the possibility of human degeneration and extinction.” Nevertheless, world cooperation was arguably more “urgently necessary” than ever, and eventually Wells agreed to Pollard’s suggestion that he (Pollard) deliver a paper on “the practical realisation of the [world] encyclopaedia and its permanent upkeep.” After further vacillation and arm-twisting, Wells agreed to attend the conference and contribute to the ensuing discussion and debate.

Of course Wells was not the only conference attendee who had doubts about the liberal internationalist orthodoxies of the FID. Plenty of the other delegates had always been more concerned with the national, commercial, and technical dimensions of the new information work, together with its professional politics and organization. Aslib founder J. G. Pearce,
for example (who registered but was unable to attend the conference), had always been sceptical about “centralized international schemes of the Brussels type,” urging instead that Britain develop systems of “co-operative action” that would create a “national [my emphasis] intelligence service” (Pearce, 1926, p. 118). The French, too, in spite of their sponsorship of the 1937 Paris Congress, were in many ways half-hearted internationalists. Delegates such as Julien Cain and Suzanne Briet of the Bibliothèque Nationale and Jean Gerard of the Paris Maison du Chimie were in large part preoccupied with the domestic organization of documentation in France and its relationship to, on the one hand, the traditions of bibliography and librarianship and, on the other, the rising information needs of science and industry (Maack, 2004, p. 743). Also deviating from the FID mainstream, but in rather different directions, were a number of attendees from the United States (USA). No American organization was formally affiliated to the FID: indeed its primary professional organization for specialist information provision—the Special Libraries Association—was still, perhaps unusually for the 1930s, conceptualized around librarianship. This did not prevent it from sending delegates: indeed, Rose Vormelker, one of its leading members, contributed an important paper on “American Practice in Information Work” that emphasized the large number of commercial, industrial, and private-sector information services in the USA (see the next section for further discussion). However, American “big science”—gathering pace as it was with the New Deal and rearmament—also had its representatives. Kodak, sensing sales opportunities, contributed papers and an exhibition on microphotography and reprographics. G. Watson Davis, head of the Washington Science Service, gave a paper on “Documentation Objectives.” Davis was perhaps the FID’s most enthusiastic American supporter. In 1937, he had founded the American Documentation Institute, whose membership was open to scientists, engineers, educators, archivists, as well as librarians, with the aim of inculcating the FID’s approach to information matters in the USA (Farkas-Conn, 1990). He was also something of a visionary: in 1935 he had presented a “Project for Scientific Publication and Bibliography” to the IID conference in Copenhagen: this envisaged the adoption of an international production and dissemination system for scientific papers based on a network of central agencies utilizing microfilm. By 1938, these proposals had caught the eye of the British Marxist scientist—and amateur documentalist—J. D. Bernal, who incorporated them in his Social Function of Science (1939), whence they gained widespread currency in the immediate aftermath of World War II (Davis, 1939; Muddiman, 2003, pp. 391–392).

Undoubtedly of more immediate interest to the 1938 Oxford conference goers, however—given especially the escalating Sudetenland crisis—was the composition and contribution of the large German contingent,
numbering around fifteen delegates. Superficially, German documentalists came over as strong supporters of the FID, and they were arguably at the forefront of a number of recent advances in documentation, such as microphotography and the development of international technical standards (Richards, 1994, pp. 61–66). In 1935, with Reich approval, the library arm of the Deutsche Normenausschuss (German Standards Association) had affiliated with the then IID, and by 1938, Otto Frank, its representative, had become FID treasurer. Other prominent German documentalists were billed to give papers at Oxford, including Albert Predeek, head of the library at Berlin Charlottenburg Technical University, and Fritz Prinzhorn, his equivalent in Danzig. The next major FID conference—in 1940—had already been planned to be held in Frankfurt, where it would coincide with the 500th anniversary Gutenberg celebrations. All of this activity synchronized well with National Socialist (NS) policies that sought to rationalize and modernize German technical library and information provision: international contacts, the Nazis accepted, served the purpose of providing industry with access to scientific and technical information worldwide. In the “cultural” sphere, however, there were obvious tensions: NS policies on racial matters and freedom of information sat uneasily with the professed liberalism of the FID. Like all Germans, documentalists and librarians were expected to toe the party line on the Jewish question and on matters of censorship. Some, who did not, were dismissed, demoted, or (if they were Jewish) arrested and deported. Heinrich Ulendhal, director of the Deutsche Bucherei (an important National Deposit library in Leipzig), who was at the conference, had already been arrested but was later freed after professional pressure (Richards, 1984, p. 234). Others, either willingly or under duress, eventually joined the NS party; a few were openly enthusiastic supporters of Hitler. One of the latter, Rudolf Kummer, who had risen to be libraries consultant to education minister Bernhard Rust, was present at Oxford, where he doubtless ensured that delegates did not veer away too far from the NS party line (Richards, 1984, pp. 243–245).

At the center of these stresses and disjunctions was the head of the German delegation, Hugo Andres Krüss, director of the Preussiche Staatsbibliothek (Prussian State Library), who would play a very public role at the Oxford conference. A founder member of IFLA, Krüss had an American wife, and in 1931 he had been made an honorary vice-president of the British Library Association (Deutsche Biographie, n.d.). At the same time, however, as a conservative nationalist, he had played along with the Nazi regime: he was one of a group of scientists who in 1934 had signed a public declaration of support for Hitler when he assumed dictatorial powers. By 1938, Krüss was therefore arguably already a “compromised internationalist,” who was treading the “fine line between nationalist and internationalist perspectives.” In 1940 he would finally join the NS party.
Subsequently, throughout the war he seems to have attempted the impossible: reconciling loyalty to the Nazi regime with loyalty to the information profession and its ethics—on the one hand colluding in the looting of Jewish, Masonic, and Polish libraries in the occupied East, on the other attempting to minimize the damage to state libraries and archives in occupied France and protecting prisoners of war working in the Prussian State Library from poor treatment and arrest (Sutter, 2008). Eventually, these accommodations (and no doubt many more) would take their toll. Krüss committed suicide on April 27, 1945, three days before Hitler, in the cellar of the ruined Preussiche Staatsbibliothek, with the Red Army at the gates of Berlin (Dosa, 1974, pp. 100–101).

The “Mobilization of Knowledge” and Its Critics: Conference Themes, Papers, and Debates

Reflecting, perhaps, its international cast of characters, the themes and content of the Oxford conference were keenly anticipated as “universal” in their scope. In his letter of invitation to delegates, Bradford proposed that “the object of the meeting is to provide a platform for the discussion of the many problems involved in the task of collecting and organizing the records of every branch of intellectual, technical and commercial activity” (International Federation for Documentation, 1938a, p. 39). To this end, the conference organizers grouped its 106 accepted papers into thirteen sessions with (mainly) functional themes (in their running order): The Making of Abstracts from Periodical Literature; Applications of Indexing Systems; The Practical Application and Use of Bibliographies; The State of Bibliography in Various Countries and Various Subjects; Photographic and Other Technical Methods; The Teaching of Documentation; Theories of Cataloguing and Indexing Systems; The Mobilization of Knowledge and the “Permanent World Encyclopaedia” of Mr. H. G. Wells; Problems of International Documentation; The Organization of Information Services; Evaluation of Scientific Periodicals; Tools for Library Cooperation; Apparatus for the Photographic Reproduction of Documents (International Federation for Documentation, 1938a). Running through these sessions, according to Bradford, was a deliberate attempt to include contributions on the application of documentation to areas outside the “scientific domain,” such as “archaeology, archive work, economics, finance, history, law and painting” (Bradford and Tooth, 1938, p. 560). This especially, it was hoped, would legitimize documentation as a technique applicable to all forms and formats of knowledge, in a multiplicity of contexts. It would thus be seen to have progressed “beyond bibliography” and be of universal scope.

The extent to which such ambitions were achieved—or indeed were consistently pursued at such a large gathering—is of course quite difficult to gauge amid the detail of papers and debates, which often focused upon
the practical and technical minutiae of information provision. However, two underpinning discourses do emerge from the conference records. The first of these, “technological modernism”—defined by Buckland (2008, p. 46) as “the belief that technology plus standards plus systems would induce progress”—was clearly linked to the orthodox FID conceptualizations of documentation already highlighted in the previous section of this paper. For many of the conference delegates, especially those supportive of the FID and its values, such technological modernism represented their professional, and in some cases personal, raison d’être. Not surprisingly, therefore, many of the conference papers detailed its elements: technological advance, rationalization, standardization, and internationalism. Microphotography and reprography, as the cutting edge technology of the time, naturally occupied an important place, being allocated two of the thirteen conference sessions plus an exhibition at London’s Science Museum on the final day (Monday, September 26). As well as reviewing its mechanics (papers by Tate; Binkley), delegates also speculated on its future applications. Davis (1938, p. C235), for example, envisaged a time when “all intellectual material may be published and issued on demand on microfilm,” while Rottenburg and Donker Duyvis, in discussions, highlighted its potential for mechanized information retrieval via light-sensitive cells: the future “rapid selector” then under development in both Germany and the USA (International Federation for Documentation, 1938b, pp. 139–140).

By general agreement, however, such new systems required what the future founder of the British Institute of Information Scientists, Jason Lewkowitsch (later Jason Farradane), described as “co-ordination and rationalization of endeavour” (Lewkowitsch, 1938, p. C253). By 1938 perhaps the key component of such documentary rationalization was standardization, which would encourage, it was hoped, an expansion of the transfer and interchange of information worldwide. Several German papers especially (for example those by Frank; Prinzhorn; Rust) applied the standardization concept to fields such as abstracting, abbreviation of titles, alphabetical indexes, and the physical format of publications, highlighting especially the work of the German Standards Institute (Deutsche Normenausschuss). Other delegates, such as N. Osterloo of Baatafsche Petroleum in the Netherlands, examined standardization in more specific settings, presenting in his case a system for the “filing of technical documents” in corporate information centers (Osterloo, 1938, p. C75–80). For delegates like Osterloo, the indexing system developed by the FID—Universal Decimal Classification (UDC)—was a fundamental component of the standardization/rationalization process. He recommended its adoption not only for the management of published material (bibliography) but also for the indexing and filing of “grey” literature and internal working documents in organizations. This would undoubtedly have pleased the
hierarchy of the FID, who saw the scheme that they had developed and promoted from the early 1920s onwards as a basis for standardization in the indexing of all documents: a process they regarded as fundamental to the encouragement of the global interchange of knowledge (Davis, 1938, p. C235; see also papers by Pollard, Prins, and Chapman).

For some conference speakers, the rationalization process could itself be elevated to form the basis of a new, coordinated, international information system and order. Effectively using the conference as a vehicle to launch his career, Jason Lewkowitsch proposed “a complete scheme for the rationalization of the publication, compilation and abstracting of scientific literature” involving the establishment of a network of “central organizations” in each nation to coordinate publication and distribution (Lewkowitsch, 1938, pp. C253–254). For FID Secretary Frits Donker Duyvis, however, it was important to stress, more pragmatically, that “although standardization [is] in vogue, we should refrain from exaggeration in that direction” (Donker Duyvis, 1938, p. C193). In his paper “Directories of Documentation Centres,” Donker Duyvis instead proposed, as a feasible objective, a kind of standardization light: a international network of independent national documentation centers, linked by a common “universal documentation directory” published in serial format by the FID. International documentary standardization, in this scheme, would be an incremental process made possible by increasing communication and coordination via the directory. The directory itself, he hoped, could be managed by a small “staff of experts and specialists in various sciences,” enlisting the “moral and material help” of FID members and national associations (Donker Duyvis, 1938, pp. C196–197).

As Donker Duyvis’s realism perhaps suggests, the international harmonization of knowledge—the end goal of many of these projects of rationalization and standardization—was in many respects a distant prospect in the late 1930s. Several papers on the agenda at Oxford reflected this state of affairs, portraying a complex and untidy picture of shoestring systems and services. Some of the short papers given in the Aslib part of the conference (for example those by Herbert, Winsor, Orde) unveiled a makeshift world of current awareness bulletins, homemade indexes, and ad hoc enquiry services far removed from universal schemes. Rose Vormelker’s “American Practice in Information Service,” however, constitutes a rather more significant survey of informational diversity. For Vormelker, the United States was an expanding capitalist economy that was generating an expanding array of information sources, formats, systems, and institutions: “facts accumulating with such bewildering confusion give impetus to an increasing number of services which aim to sift, sort and interpret information” (Vormelker, 1938, p. C244). Sources and services thus multiplied to meet demand—Vormelker enumerated 743 of these in the American market research field alone. Crucially, they also
offered *competing* modes and systems of organization and access. This resulted in “a great deal of duplication,” but ultimately, such abundance promoted access, user choice, and innovation through the mechanisms of the market. Explicitly, the role of the special librarian was to guide the user through this maze and produce the relevant “fact or facts needed” (p. C240).

Arguably, such positive American portrayals of abundance contrasted sharply with European fears of “documentary chaos,” and they were therefore symptomatic of what was an important, albeit minority undercurrent at the conference: that of scepticism about the quest for universal order. For some delegates, at least, knowledge was far too diverse and complex a commodity to be parcelled and packaged, and besides, talk of standardization and rationalization conjured dark, totalitarian connotations. Hence, in the end, Bradford’s stated ambition that the conference would demonstrate the applications of documentation beyond science largely backfired. Most of the humanities scholars called upon to contribute largely ignored the new techniques of documentation and described their traditional bibliographies and libraries (see, for example, papers by Blunt, Waterhouse, Milne, and Parsloe). Moreover, archivist Hilary Jenkinson, who does seem to have taken the trouble to examine what documentation implied, issued a fairly trenchant rebuttal. He argued that “special peculiarities of nature or circumstance which make methods very suitable in one branch of learning [are] inapplicable in another” (Jenkinson, 1938, pp. C11–12). Archive science was one such branch, a key principle of it being the preservation of the original arrangement and classification of manuscripts (“the importance of position”), a matter that in itself constituted historical evidence. Novel systems of indexing and arrangement (such as UDC) were hence to be treated with the utmost caution, as were plans to microfilm or reproduce archives in other formats, a process that might transform their meaning by divorcing them from their context (Jenkinson and Sayce, 1938). Even UDC itself, the cornerstone of the FID’s program for the international organization of knowledge, was not immune from dissent and critique. American scholar Henry E. Bliss presented his own “Theoretic Principles of Bibliographic Classification” (Bliss, 1938), many of these being at variance with the tenets of UDC. Jason Lewkowitsch, although in theory an advocate of rationalization, nevertheless opted for a full-frontal attack on UDC, highlighting its “illogicalities,” “errors,” and “difficulties.” It was, he claimed, a system that could be operated only by a “few experts.” Arguing for the use of simpler alphabetically based indexing systems to improve access to knowledge, he concluded that “no satisfactory universal system [of classification] yet exists, and we are not able at present to propose any new system” (Lewkowitsch, 1938, pp. C257).

In terms of ideas, then, the conference proved to be much more di-
verse than many expected. The opposition between, on the one hand, the technological modernism and internationalism of the mainstream FID and, on the other, a set of more diverse and multifaceted perspectives on the new phenomenon of information is evident throughout the papers and debates. At the “climax” of the conference, Alan Pollard’s keynote paper on “The Mobilization of Knowledge and the ‘Permanent World Encyclopaedia’ of Mr H.G. Wells,” such divisions became even more apparent. As already noted, Pollard had agreed to present a paper on the “practical realisation” of the world encyclopaedia scheme in lieu of Wells himself agreeing to speak. His paper in the event proposed two basic levels of “knowledge mobilization”: publication of digests, reports, and summaries of knowledge (traditionally encyclopaedias) and directories of “ordered reference” to a range of approved sources and documents (traditionally subject bibliographies) (Pollard, 1938, p. C161). In Pollard’s plan, publication of each of these “levels” would be coordinated by a “world bibliographic repertory,” a central controlling body (the FID?) that would allocate responsibility for authorship, updating, and dissemination in specific subject fields to a series of “sectional members” (Pollard gave the example of the Science Museum in London as a potential repertory and sectional coordinator for Natural Science) (p. C163). Pollard also predictably recommended the adoption of UDC as a common indexing system for the scheme: UDC’s numeric notation would allow all of its various components to revolve around a common subject focus, and it would surmount the problems posed by publication in multiple languages and alphabetical indexing (pp. C162–165). Beyond these technical and organizational matters, however, Pollard’s paper begged numerous questions. Perhaps deliberately (since Wells was present), he avoided any serious discussion of the overall rationale of the world encyclopaedia project, taking the desirability of a universal systematization of knowledge as read; more specifically, he brushed aside the question of how, and with whose approval, the “groups of authorities” who would edit and control the project would be formed (p. C163). Crucially also, seemingly blind to contemporary events, he simply failed to engage with a range of highly pressing issues that would impinge on the plan: questions of censorship; racism (a hot topic in view of the ongoing persecution of the Jews); and the fear of political interference and manipulation.

If these matters were not on Pollard’s mind, they undoubtedly animated many of the conference delegates. In the debates that followed the paper, it seems that Pollard’s practical plans were, according to an account by university librarian A. E. Tooth, “rather cold-shouldered” (Bradford and Tooth, 1938, p. 562). Indeed, the only motion put upon them (proposed by minor poet and journalist W. D. Scudamore) stated that “in the opinion of this conference the idea of the World Encyclopaedia is beyond the scope and action of the FID, and would be, more-
over, a grave peril to the further advancement of knowledge” (International Federation for Documentation, 1938b, p. C144). The motion was not put to the vote, but it evidently riled Pollard, who complained that his paper was not concerned with the content of any encyclopaedia but with matters of “lay-out” and “structure,” and lamented the lack of “useful and constructive criticism” in the debate (International Federation for Documentation, 1938b, p. C145). Wells himself, it seems, did not help Pollard’s cause. Although his words are not recorded in the conference minutes, he apparently spoke briefly at the beginning of the session and raised the political temperature by arguing that “unless some such steps as he had suggested were taken to guide and control humanity and its gigantic powers along the right lines, the outlook was very sad, very pitiful indeed” (Bradford and Tooth, 1938, p. 562). A fractious debate ensued, with Scudamore warning of the dangers of “utopian ideas” and the possibilities of “religious, philosophical or political propaganda” inherent in the world encyclopaedia scheme. “The immediate result of any mobilization,” he declared “is that troops resign their own free will and choice of action” (International Federation for Documentation, 1938b, pp. C143–144).16 Lewkowitsch, toward the end of the session, perhaps summarized matters more pointedly, declaring that “the fundamental difficulty of the world encyclopaedia is not a practical difficulty, but the difficulty of the will of humanity to co-operate” (International Federation for Documentation, 1938b, pp. C143–144). Cooperation was not, at root, a technical and organizational problem as Pollard would have wished it; it was a moral one.

**Two Impressions? The Legacy and Significance of the 1938 Conference**

Despite a worsening turn of events in the Munich crisis,17 the FID conference closed in London on Monday, September 26, amid polite sentiments of international cooperation, progress, and goodwill. Hugo Andres Krüss proposed the closing vote of thanks, urging delegates to continue to further “human knowledge, culture and civilization,” although at the same time, in rather elegiac terms, he lamented that “the memorable days of our happy community of common interests, of old and new friendships, have come to an end (International Federation for Documentation, 1939a, p. 7). As it turned out, however, his hints of pessimism were, at least in the short term, premature: by the end of the week, war had been (temporarily) averted and Chamberlain would declare “peace in our time.” This stay of execution allowed Bradford in November to report on the conference in upbeat terms, noting “the remarkable feeling of international friendship and goodwill which pervaded the atmosphere” and the conference’s demonstration of the “desire of librarians and documentalists throughout the world to cooperate [in] . . . promoting the happiness of mankind” (Bradford and Tooth, 1938, p. 561). The FID was also
able to continue its business as usual, staging another slightly smaller conference in Zurich (August 10–13, 1939) on the eve of the final outbreak of war. Even Paul Otlet managed to attend this time, as guest of honor (International Federation for Documentation, 1939d, p. 84).

Not all observers of the Oxford conference, however, shared Bradford’s recollections of professional harmony. A. E. Tooth, as already noted, reported upon the fractious debate that had followed Pollard’s “Mobilization . . .” paper, and he also drew attention to an uneasy undercurrent of feeling about the Nazi “burning” of Jewish and dissident books (Bradford and Tooth, 1938, p. 561). His reflections on the mood of the conference were much gloomier than those of Bradford, concluding with the observation that “men will have to grow morally, somehow, before they are fitted for world encyclopaedias, and they may then discover they no longer need them” (p. 562). Similarly, Edith Ditmas, in a memoir written many years later, also recalled uncomfortable events not recorded in the conference minutes: “great tension between national delegates, especially the contingent representing Nazi Germany. Their delegates walked out, and many delegates jumped to the conclusion that war had been declared.” Ditmas does not say when this walkout occurred: possibly during the Wells/Pollard debate, or perhaps at some time over the weekend September 24/25, when it is known that official German representatives in Britain in other walks of life were receiving phone calls instructing return to Germany. In the end, however, any boycott was not complete or permanent, since Krüss, at least, was present at the conference closing session, and Fritz Prinzhorn and Otto Frank, chairman and secretary, respectively, of the ISA Standards Committee on Documentation, are recorded as having attended its meeting at the London Science Museum on September 27, the day following the FID conference (International Federation for Documentation, 1939b, pp. 8–10).

Taking a longer view of the 1938 Oxford conference, it is, perhaps, instructive to consider which one of these “two impressions” of it endures more convincingly in the light of subsequent events. Bradford’s optimistic rhetoric was, no doubt, an understandable attempt to defend the values of scientific liberalism and internationalism in the face of the twin threats of totalitarianism and war. These values were, in effect, the ideological and moral underpinning of interwar international organizations like the FID: they encapsulated the belief, widespread among early twentieth-century intellectuals, that it would “fall to men of science and learning to protect the peace of the world.” Incorporating the notion of “cultural lag” (Zaidi, 2011, p. 24)—the gap between “the brilliant development of scientific knowledge, on the one hand, and the almost stationary knowledge of man on the other” (Fosdick, 1928, quoted in Zaidi, 2011, p. 26)—such ideas had a particular attraction for scientists turned documentalists like Bradford, Pollard, Donker Duyvis, et al., who sought
to propagate a gospel of peace and progress through technocracy and rationalization. H. G. Wells, of course, was in Britain the most popular exponent of such a gospel: hence his appearance at the 1938 conference, although, as we have seen, and perhaps to Bradford and Pollard’s consternation, his faith in the “world brain” had by then begun to waver.

Despite this, and the descent into war that began in 1938, scientific liberalism and internationalism were to have a lasting legacy in the subsequent history of information and documentation. After the disruptions of World War II, the FID was revived with goals and structures that remained, initially at least, largely unchanged. Although Otlet and Lafontaine had passed away during the war, the Federation resumed “business as usual” with a council meeting in London in 1945 and a conference in Paris in 1946 (International Federation for Documentation, 1946a, pp. 13–14; 1946b, pp. C20–C21). Except for its German members, its hierarchy initially remained largely unchanged. Encouraged by sympathetic UNESCO head of libraries Edward Carter, the FID in 1947 signed a contract with the United Nations in which it became recognized as the major international body responsible for documentation (Rayward, 1993, p. 386). Its aims and values, it was hoped, would resurface in the postwar world. Writing in the introduction to *Documentation*, published in 1948, S. C. Bradford forecast that “the period of stress, in which we are involved, should pass. The time should come again when we shall live in plenty. This plenty will have been produced by the efficient application of scientific knowledge. Documentation is the key to this” (Bradford, 1948, p. 9). In 1948, too, Alan Pollard, shortly before his death, was moved to re-present a “Proposed Plan for the Mobilization of Bibliographical References” to the London Royal Society Scientific Information Conference, advising the creation of an “International Information Council” and “National Information Committees” to standardize and rationalize the publication and documentation of nonfiction throughout the world. To veterans of the FID 1938 Oxford conference, hearing his paper ten years on must have seemed like Groundhog Day.

In reality, however, the impact of World War II on the FID, and on the documentation movement more generally, was both more fundamental and significant than these aspirations of progress and revival suggest. By the Oxford conference of 1938, as earlier sections of this paper have demonstrated, the limitations and contradictions of interwar scientific liberalism and internationalism were plain to see. Pacifism, since Otlet and Lafontaine’s time the ethical underpinning of the FID, was in retreat in the face of Japanese, Italian, and German aggression: “between 1936 and 1939 . . . the balance between saving civilization by peace and saving civilization by war swung decisively in favour of the latter” (Overy, 2009, p. 360). The resulting moral confusion about how to respond to the threat of fascism left the FID and organizations like it bereft of their ethi-
cal core; international cooperation had seemingly become, as speakers such as Lewkowitsch and Scudamore inferred at the Oxford conference, a mainly “institutional” or “techno-administrative” strategy dedicated to solving “problems” of international communication (Sylvest, 2005; Zaidi, 2011, pp. 18–20). Because of this, regimes that preached the antithesis of liberalism, such as Nazi Germany, had little difficulty in subscribing to the rhetoric of coordination and rationalization promoted by the FID and reconceptualizing it in terms of their own doctrine of hegemony in a new world order (Mazower, 2012, pp. 184, 192). As we have already noted, in 1935, two years after Hitler’s accession to power, the Deutsche Normenausschuss had affiliated with the FID with Reich encouragement and approval. At the outbreak of war, perhaps hoping that its extent and duration would be more limited than it turned out to be, and supported financially by the American Rockefeller Foundation, the FID at first adopted a policy of “neutrality,” accepting “new communications only from authors in non-belligerent countries” (International Federation for Documentation, 1940, p. 2). However, complications immediately arose when in late 1939 the (still formally nonbelligerent) Italian Consiglio Nationale delle Ricerche (National Research Council) applied for affiliation. Bizarrely, in January 1940, a few months before their entry into the war, the fascist Italians also were welcomed into FID membership (International Federation for Documentation, 1939c, p. 83).

Eventually, these illusions of neutrality collapsed following (first) the German invasion of Western Europe (May 1940) and (finally) American entry into the war (December 1941). Gradually, in 1941–1942, now in control of the center of FID operations in Holland, the Germans appear to have tried to reinvent the Federation as a German puppet. At first the journal *FID Comunicationes* had to abandon its neutral stance, becoming an organ of publication for documentalists from the German Reich’s satellites and allies: Bohemia Moravia; Hungary; Denmark; Italy; Rumania; Belgium; and France. Then in 1942 the new Reich-sponsored Deutsche Gesellschaft für Dokumentation (DGD, German Society for Documentation, formed in May 1941) began to Germanize the journal’s pages. In 1942/43, *Comunicationes* was used to publish DGD membership lists and articles by German documentalists such as Frank and Joachim. In late 1942, it printed summaries of papers presented at a DGD organized conference of documentalists from across Nazi-dominated Europe held in Salzburg in September 1942 (International Federation for Documentation, 1942, pp. 55–60). Bravely, however, in mid-1943, Frits Donker Duyvis, still formally editor of *Comunicationes* in the Hague, included in the journal an obituary of the recently deceased Henri Lafontaine that praised his socialist and humanitarian achievements (Donker Duyvis, 1943). This, together with the changing course of the war and increasing difficulties of communication in Europe, seems to have signalled the end of the Ger-
manization of the FID. Publication of the Hague version of the journal ceased, and by 1944 the secretariat was effectively closed down. The Federation’s administration was transferred to Bern, Switzerland, and Ernst Mathys, of the Swiss National Federation for Documentation, became Acting Editor of *Communicationes*. Neutrality (although much diminished) was therefore restored. The FID, rather like its “parent” organization, the League of Nations, remained in “exile” in Switzerland until 1946.23

World War II, therefore, strikingly demonstrated the vulnerability of international organizations like the FID and their susceptibility to manipulation by the realpolitik of state power. Concurrently, it also marked the rising interest and involvement of nation states in (especially) scientific and technical documentation, where it related to matters of economic production and especially military innovation. The cold war, which set in in earnest in 1948, perceptibly accelerated this trend: its participants prioritized the development of their own national information systems and services rather than the goal of universal knowledge. In France, the Soviet Union, and even in the United States, programs of state investment in documentation and the new systems, services, and techniques they engendered became the defining feature of the midcentury information scene (Richards, 1992, pp. 303–304; 1994, pp. 126–127). In Britain, this new informational nationalism was strikingly symbolized by the contrasting fortunes of the two institutions that had organized the 1938 Oxford conference. Beginning in 1944, Aslib, following the success of its microfilm operation during the war, became increasingly state funded. By 1965 it was effectively the hub of a national network of nearly three thousand industrial and commercial affiliates; it also ran a world leading research department in documentation and information science. The internationalist BSIB, on the other hand, barely survived the war. In 1948, short of cash and members, it was dissolved and absorbed by Aslib, which replaced it as British affiliate to the FID. In the same year, its leading protagonists, A. F. Pollard and S. C. Bradford, both passed away (Muddiman, 2007, pp. 91–102).

As these developments suggest, it was clear that a very different world information order to that of the 1920s and 1930s was emerging after World War II. In 1948, in a retrospective paper in the *Journal of Documentation*, Edith Ditmas noted that the war had inaugurated a new era of realism in the field of information work. It was, she wrote, a time when the realization dawned that “knowledge was power and information a munition of war,” where “even scientific truth may be distorted by political pressure,” and when it became clear “how far we [were] from securing the international collaboration necessary to the fulfilment of Mr Wells’s dream” (Ditmas, 1948, pp. 215–216). As Ditmas perceived, from the 1950s onwards, the project of universal bibliographic and documentary control would become a complex administrative and increasingly technical mat-
ter, subsumed within the envelope of a multifaceted “information” science. Despite the ever more marginal survival of the FID until 2002, this new information science would reflect only sporadically a concern with international peace and progress. Instead, (at first) the cold war imperatives of superpowers and their satellites would drive its development; more latterly, the competitive globalism of markets, moguls, and multinationals.

Considered, then, in retrospect, the 1938 FID/Aslib Oxford Conference was, I would contend, an important historical moment when many of these mid–twentieth-century realities began to dawn. The conference, for certain, would always have been an occasion at which the practical difficulties and philosophical complexities of the new science of documentation came to the fore. More dramatically, however, because of the Munich crisis, the political and ethical limitations of the project of early documentation—the international “mobilization of knowledge”—assumed center stage. Under the shadow of Nazi aggression, the dreams and schemes of Otlet, Wells, Pollard, and their followers—what Boyd Rayward (1994a) once termed their “Visions of Xanadu”—began to be recognized as the mirage that perhaps they always were.

Notes
1. Most historians characterize 1936 and 1937 as years when the pace of Nazi radicalization in Germany superficially slackened. Economic and military restructuring combining with the Winter and Summer Olympics in 1936 resulted in an apparent “normalization” and a pause in racial persecution. Europe’s conservative elites began to hope that they might eventually integrate Germany into the international community: the visit to Hitler of the former British king Edward Duke of Windsor and his American wife Wallis Simpson (October 22, 1937) symbolized such “appeasement.” Hitler’s purging of the Wermacht high command (January/February 1938) and the subsequent annexation of Austria is generally held to have ended this period and opened the road to war. See Evans (2006, pp. 570–573); Kershaw (2001, pp. 3–60).
2. The literature of the “Munich crisis” is, of course, vast. For a recent day-by-day account, see Reynolds (2007, pp. 37–95).
3. A tally of the delegate list (Association of Special libraries and Information Bureaux, 1938b, pp. 5–13) reveals that a total of forty-three women in such positions attended. The conference was deliberately held at Lady Margaret Hall since it was the one Oxford college where, according to the Library Association Record, “men and women may take up residence together” (Library Association, 1938, p. 353).
4. It is generally thought that Blunt was recruited to the NKVD at Cambridge in Spring 1937. By 1938 he had moved to work at the Warburg Art History Institute, London. By 1940 he had joined MI5. See Kitson and Carter (2004).
5. Jenkinson was author of the Manual of Archive Administration (1922; rev. ed., 1937), a classic text. For an overview of his career, see Johnson (2004).
7. See Wells’s correspondence items 2321–2323 collected in Smith (1998).
10. See Dosa (1974, pp. 35–36) for a list of Nazi laws and regulations introduced in the 1930s that affected library and information services.
11. For the text of the declaration and the list of signatories, which includes Krüss, see Klee (2005, p. 587).

12. The assessment is that of Sem C. Sutter in his “H. A. Krüss: National Socialist Kommissar and Compromised Internationalist” (p. 4), a paper given at the conference *Livre et Bibliothèques Scientifiques dans les Territoires Occupés et Annexés par l’Allemagne Nationale-Socialiste*, Strasbourg, November 2008. My grateful thanks to Sem for letting me see a copy of this paper. See also his published article on Krüss’s wartime career in Sutter (2008).

13. Papers were published in the conference *Transactions* (International Federation for Documentation, 1938c). Unless conference papers are discussed in detail, they are not listed separately here. Their specific location in *Transactions* can be found by consulting the index at the reference given above.

14. Jason Lewkowitsch (who later anglicized his surname to Jason Farradane) first came to prominence at the 1938 Oxford conference. As well as his later work for the British Institute of Information Scientists, he also founded in 1963 the first UK course in information science at what is now City University, London, and pioneered a large body of research in the field of relational indexing. See Bottle, Brookes, & Yates-Mercer (1986) for a “biobibliography.”

15. The phrase is taken from S. C. Bradford’s *Documentation* (1948, p. 106), although it was in common use in the 1930s.

16. Scudamore’s comment was prescient, since rumors of the mobilization of the British military were rife throughout the period of the conference. Pollard’s choice of title for his paper, borrowed from a lecture entitled “The Mobilization of Knowledge” given earlier that year by economist and industrialist Josiah Stamp, was perhaps unfortunate (Pollard, 1938, p. C161).

17. Sunday, September 25—Tuesday, September 27 was arguably the period in which the Sudetenland crisis almost exploded into war, before the final diplomacy in Munich later in the week where the parties drew back. Hitler gave a “vitriolic” speech in the Berlin Sportpalast on the evening of September 26 (Reynolds 2007, pp. 70–85).


19. For example the Mercedes and Auto Union motor racing teams, practicing in preparation for a Grand Prix at Donington circuit, near Derby, were given orders to return to Germany. They did this on September 27, only to return three weeks later for a rescheduled Grand Prix, October 22. See Hilton (1999).


21. The words are those of Arthur Schuster, cited in Mazower (2012, p. 94). Schuster, an eminent Manchester physicist of German Jewish descent, was the father-in-law of R. S. Hutton, joint founder of Aslib, who was present at the conference.

22. According to Pamela Spence Richards, the foundation of the DGD “marked the beginning of the National Socialist government’s direct involvement with documentation matters.” Its government-appointed chairman was Fritz Prinzhorn, by then director of Leipzig University Library, who had attended the 1938 Oxford Conference (Richards, 1994, pp. 102–103).

23. This outline of the wartime history of the FID is based on material in the pages of *FID Communications* and is of necessity tentative. The subject would, of course, make a fascinating topic for detailed research.

24. The FID was sadly finally dissolved in the years 2000–2002. For an account see Keenan (2003). For a sketch of the Federation’s gradual decline in the later twentieth century, see Rayward (1994b).

References


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Correction:
The title of this article was printed with an error. "International Federation for Information (FID)" was corrected to read "International Federation for Documentation (FID)" in the online version.