This book on the history and works of art of the Centre William Rappard would not have been possible ten years ago. The reason for this is simple: despite the building’s rich past, illustrious occupants and proud appearance, it was a little antiquated and not particularly well known or even well liked. Located in a magnificent park on the shore of Lake Geneva, with a spectacular view of the Alps, it has a somewhat turbulent past.

As the first building in Geneva built to house an international organization, the Centre William Rappard, named after a leading Swiss diplomat, was originally the headquarters of the International Labour Office (ILO). The ILO left the building in 1940 during the Second World War, but later moved back in 1948, only to leave for good in 1975 when the Centre William Rappard was handed over to its new occupants, namely the GATT, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the library of the Graduate Institute of International Studies of Geneva. In 1995, when the WTO was established and decided, after some hesitation, to keep its headquarters in Geneva, the building became the subject of delicate negotiations between the Swiss Confederation and senior officials of this new international organization. All these comings and goings left their mark, and in 2005 began the lengthy task of restoring not only the building’s structure, but also its image and identity.

Today the WTO is very much attached to the Centre William Rappard and considers it to be of symbolic importance. The building is moving with the times, thanks to large-scale renovation and extension work, and yet the Organization also cherishes the building’s past, which can be seen in its architecture, decorative features and numerous works of art. The WTO itself began “discovering” these works of art in 2007, in what was, to all intents and purposes, a real-life treasure hunt. A number of the works, donated by countries and labour unions during the ILO era, had been either concealed or removed. In restoring these works, the WTO took on an identity that was not strictly speaking its own, but of which its staff and Members have become proud.

The works of art presented in this book, many of which have been given a new lease of life by the WTO, display a wide variety of styles and techniques. Many of them represent labour in its various forms – an allusion, of course, to the activities of the ILO, the building’s original occupant. Other works, such as Eduardo Chicharro’s “Pygmalion”, are more unusual. With no apparent link to the world of labour or international organizations, Chicharro’s work could be viewed as an allegory of the international community praying that its long-standing efforts to achieve peace and cooperation might become reality.

Continuity and coherence are the two words that give the Centre William Rappard and its works of art their full historical and political meaning. Created at a time when cooperation between nations was more of a dream than reality, the building is now the headquarters of an institution that regulates global trade, in a city that has become a centre of international governance. The message it conveys, with all these different occupants and numerous changes is a call for a greater coherence and coordination between all international organizations. The Centre William Rappard demonstrates the continued resolve of nations to cooperate in building a better and fairer world.

Pascal Lamy
Director-General
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Many individuals have contributed to the evolution of the Centre William Rappard, adding their own personality to the building’s rich history. Likewise, this book is the result of the valuable contributions of many people who have generously lent their time, skills and knowledge. We are very grateful to all of them.

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Edmundo Murray
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This book tells the story of a building that has been the home to international organizations since 1926. Over the past 85 years, the Centre William Rappard has seen the establishment of some of the first international organizations, such as the International Labour Office (ILO) and the League of Nations, and has witnessed an evolution in international relations from introspection to the globalized society that we live in today.

Built in 1926, the Centre William Rappard has housed at different times the ILO, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the library of the Graduate Institute of International Studies, the Secretariat of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and since 1995, the World Trade Organization. All of these occupants have shared the goal of striving for a better life for people across the world, defending basic rights and aiming to make the world a more equal, safe and prosperous place.

A fundamental fact about the Centre William Rappard is that it was designed for daily activity and is, above all, a workplace occupied by diplomats from around the world, international civil servants and local staff. The works of art presented in this book hint at the activities of the building’s occupants over the years and the passions of the member states that have generously donated its artistic wealth. Although very different in style, each work of art sends a message about society and the transfiguring power of art. As this book recounts, this latter quality has not always been fully understood by the building’s occupants, leading to the temporary removal of certain works of art over the years. Since the occupants have changed many times, this is perhaps not so surprising as tastes change and the enthusiasm for the symbolism of certain artworks wanes.

This book begins with an account of how the building was conceived, and how it has evolved during periods of conflict as well as peacetime. Over this time, it has become a cornerstone of the international development of Geneva, a city that has never shied away from asserting its independence and defending its values.

The book traces the stories of the diverse range of international civil servants who have made a significant contribution to the evolution of the building, achieving fame by dedicating their lives to the aspirations of the organization that employed them, or by being inspired by their surroundings to achieve artistic heights of their own.

The description of the individual artworks that decorate the building provides an insight into the changing cultural and social preoccupations of those inhabiting the building. From workers’ rights to the need for a better and more equal world, the major themes of the collection are conveyed in a multitude of ways, combining naturalistic detail with artistic whimsy. The result is an artistic legacy that continues to breathe life into the daily activities of this much-loved building.
LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

Centre William Rappard
Decidedly administrative in nature, with cell-like offices lined up and standing to attention in a simple and accessible layout, the building’s extreme economy clearly prevailed over any notion of extravagance. “If standardization is to give fresh impetus to labour, is it not up to the ILO to set the standard?” asked Budry. The architect, he added, had inscribed “political equality for all individuals, without which there can be no strong unity” in the very structure of the building – truly a quest set in stone. “No one will be able to contemplate the building and say: here stand the mighty, there go the weak. Everything blends into the mass; everything is on an equal footing. No architectural protrusions vie for attention. There is no sculptured ornamentation or entasis, no marks of arrogance or pomposity. The disciplined masses form a perfect spatial illustration of the idea of the single front, of action united by the selflessness of each and every individual…” 1

The inauguration took place on 6 June 1926 in a jubilant Geneva, in the presence of ministers and ambassadors from all over the world. Peace was not even ten years old. Whereas the League of Nations still lacked a home of its own, the International Labour Office, which was attached to it, was moving into its new abode. It owed this privilege to its Director, Albert Thomas. While the member states, seduced by the offer of Brussels, were wavering over the choice of location, the Frenchman had twisted a few arms in the ILO Governing Body and decided in favour of Geneva. He liked Geneva because it was outside the major powers without being too far removed, and Woodrow Wilson shared his preference. The Swiss Confederation had donated the site – a magnificent estate bordering Lake Geneva, with the Mont Blanc as a backdrop. On this land, the building was erected, stretching out lengthways, uniform and Protestant in style, soberly decorated with a cornice and crowned with a turret resembling a control tower.

The severity of the style set people talking. However Calvinistic it may be, Geneva is not averse to the occasional rounding off of angles. In the introductory brochure on the building, Budry swept aside the criticism: “The site, the park and its wooded surroundings, the lawn sloping down to the lake, opening out onto a distant and harmonious backdrop, this noble environment of tall trees and open spaces, of large areas of light and shade, might have charmed the architect-poet and something which never before existed has come into being”, wrote Paul Budry in 1926 at the time of the inauguration of the ILO building, “a place where peoples may at last be united as brothers through the only action which renders them equal and fraternal: labour”. The French-Swiss writer was not sparing in his praise: he saw the architectural work that had been unveiled to the public as the perfect representation of the great, albeit austere, mission of the 500 people who would be using it in the service of mankind at work.

The Centre William Rappard has a rich history. Born out of the Wilsonian dream to settle international disputes through negotiation and arbitration, it was the first building in Geneva designed to house an international organization. Built in 1926 by Swiss architect George Épitaux, it was intended to illustrate the core values of equality and unity promulgated by the International Labour Office (ILO). This chapter tells the story of the disputes and negotiations that took place during the initial years of construction and the subsequent phases of enlargement. It succintly illustrates how the relationship between the international organizations in Geneva and their host city and country has evolved into one of compromise, agreement and interdependence.

The Centre William Rappard just after completion in 1926.
conjured up thoughts of festivity and celebration. It might have been pleasant to see a palace in three sections, with pediments, balconies and statues, display its charms and its rhythms at the lakeside. I know that some will see this as a missed opportunity… But we are not here for the sake of enjoyment”, the writer adds sternly. The lofty ideal of peace through respect and the dignity of work deserved more than the “dreamy nostalgia” of the lovers of Watteau-style parks. Here, the order of the day was rigour, restraint and economy of style. The people of Geneva had to be aware that the ruined nations that were paying for the construction of a labour building were not looking for splendour, but for sobriety and efficiency. For its first architectural experiment with an international administrative building, on the site of a charming manor house that had belonged to the La Roche-fo-cauld family, Geneva had something to ponder. As an admirer of the completed work, Paul Budry set the official tone. Like a ballet lover who is aware of the suffering of the dancers but keeps silent, he saluted the architect who had overcome all the obstacles. Once a work had been completed, the pains of creation were part of history – though it was an interesting history for those who wished to understand the complicated web of relationships between Geneva, Switzerland and all the different countries that they were welcoming on that small plot of land.

How it all began

It all began in 1922 with the selection of a site in a city that was not used to building on a large scale. The Confederation was generous enough to make the land available, free of charge no less, though it reserved the right to take it back if it so happened that the League of Nations did not remain in Geneva. Straightaway, an architectural competition was launched. As time was short, it was
limited to Swiss nationals or Swiss residents. Only the jury was international. The criteria were strict: the building must be able to accommodate 500 employees, at a cost not exceeding 2.5 million francs, and ensure “the dignity befitting an international institution”. Sixty-nine projects were submitted, and the winner was George Épitaux. The architect from the canton of Vaud had already built the Galeries Saint-François in Lausanne and other art deco buildings. He was well known and respected.

Once his plan had been accepted, the only remaining hurdle for the ILO Governing Body was to stay within the budget fixed at 3 million francs in October 1923. For three years, this figure of 3 million would be an obsession for everyone involved — except perhaps for the State of Geneva which suddenly, in the summer of 1925, imposed on the ILO the construction of a drain to take the waste water to the main sewer on the Quai Wilson. That would be at a cost of 80,000 francs which had not been foreseen in the budget. There was consternation in the Governing Body. The Geneva authorities had previously agreed that sewage could be discharged into the lake once it had been sterilized in a septic tank that was in conformity with the public health regulations. Now, however, the Hygiene Committee of the Canton had decreed that the planned installations were not sufficient to protect the waters of the lake.

The issue was a sensitive one. Articles in the local press implied that the ILO would be running the risk of contaminating Geneva’s drinking water supply. The ILO objected, but the Council of State bowed to the opinion of the Hygiene Committee and denied the ILO permission to discharge its water into the lake. There followed an epic series of negotiations in which the internationals and the locals pitted against one another their cheque books, their vanity, and their determination to have the last word. The government had two sewage projects to choose from: one, estimated at 80,000 francs, dealt solely with the ILO waters; the other, a larger system, could handle the whole district, at a cost of 136,000 francs. As the government preferred the latter, it offered to contribute 56,000 francs, with the remaining 80,000 francs to be paid by the ILO. George Epitaux saw red: this was the first time that the authorities had charged an international organization for projects that they themselves had designed to serve other users as well. He challenged the method and protested against the estimates. To no avail. In the end, as it appeared impossible to prevent the sewage system from going ahead and as the larger of the two projects was the more appropriate, the ILO fell back on disputing the price...
tag: it would pay 50,000 francs and the State 80,000. The State made a counter-offer of 60,000/76,000 francs. The ILO refused: not a cent more than 50,000, and it stuck to that figure until December. Just before Christmas, agreement was reached: 55,000 francs for the ILO.

In the meantime the architect had had other worries: one of the cornices was poised to fall off because the building company had not done its work properly. It had to be replaced. The company refused. The issue was brought before the courts, which played for time. Épitaux insisted; he would not risk an accident. The cornice was redone, and the bill remained in the hands of lawyers and judges for years. There was also the matter of the widening of the Rue de Lausanne, which required the construction of a new wall and a new gateway. Who should pay? There were discussions, there was haggling, and deals were reached.

**Masonry and trees**

Such episodes were par for the course on construction sites, but this case involved something entirely new for Geneva: the decision pitted two very different public bodies against each other, each one accountable to an assembly that clung jealously to its rights: on one side, the Geneva Parliament and, on the other, the Assembly of the League of Nations. They had to learn to understand one another and to show restraint. At a time of general scarcity, the question of money enabled the parties to feel their way hesitantly as they sought to put what was inevitably an uncomfortable relationship on a lasting footing. George Épitaux paved the way for all those who would have to match the logic of local needs with international requirements and incorporate into a familiar setting that was loved by one set of people buildings that catered to the needs of another set of people, international this time, but extremely difficult to define.

Trees played a very special role in this saga from the outset. The competition specifications stipulated that the siting of the building...
“should, where possible, spare the main trees already there, in particular along the lakeshore”. The wording used was not binding, but a concern had been expressed, a concern that followed logically from the deed of transfer by the Confederation, which wanted to ensure public access to the park. Épitaux followed the recommendation to the letter. “That meant”, Budry wrote, “that the architect would have to forego some of the impact of his façade, the use of perspective, and the much awaited lake-front theatrical presentation. The trees along the lake would stay and the drama would, so to speak, be played out behind closed doors”. Natural greenery or gilded scenery? In this botanic city, the city of Rousseau and Calvin, the choice to be made had the self-evidence of a gospel. Eighty-three years later, when it came to enlarging and renovating the building once again, the sacrifice of a few clusters of trees was to give rise to opposition and a municipal referendum. I shall come back to that later.

The two enlargements of the central building, in 1937 and 1938, did not stir up any strong feelings on the Geneva side; the immense Palais des Nations had just been inaugurated and the times did not lend themselves to such trivial matters. The enlargement in 1951 was the occasion of an act of generosity on the part of the parliament of the Canton which voted a loan of 2.25 million francs at 3 per cent over 20 years, together with a gift of 500,000 francs. The next enlargement would have horrified the people of Geneva if, at the last moment, the authorities had not prudently shelved it. With the creation of the International Institute for Labour Studies in 1960, the ILO found itself cramped within its walls. It was 200 offices short, it needed more spacious meeting rooms, and so on. Plans for the extension were drawn up by an architect, who produced a proposal to attach three new buildings to the noble part of the existing building – one of them 13 stories high, with the option of adding four more floors if necessary. The project encroached on the lake front with a vast marina designed to house the Committee and Governing Body meeting rooms.

“The trees along the lake would stay and the drama would, so to speak, be played out behind closed doors.”

Paul Budry

Centre William Rappard
Laying the Foundations

Aerial view after the construction of the north and south-west wings in 1937.

“The trees along the lake would stay and the drama would, so to speak, be played out behind closed doors.”

Paul Budry

Albert Thomas (front row, centre) with ILO, League of Nations and Swiss dignitaries during a visit of the building.
The cantonal and municipal authorities did not reject the proposal out of hand, but the plot on which the extension was to be built belonged to the City of Geneva. The land itself was a park graced by a small botanical museum. Securing approval from this rather difficult owner would be no easy task. Attempts were made, but in vain. On 12 October 1964, the ILO Director-General was informed that the chances of the project ever being accepted were nil. The municipal authorities were unlikely to give their approval and even if they did, a referendum would undoubtedly ensue. So the project was shelved.

Instead, the ILO was given the option of moving lock, stock and barrel to a much bigger site where construction could begin fairly rapidly. Without a referendum? Not so sure.

Passing the baton

These were complicated times for relations between the international organizations, which were steadily growing and proliferating; for Geneva, which lacked space; and for the Confederation, faced with increasing demands in an overheated economy. At the ILO, Turin’s offer to accommodate not only the International Institute for Labour Studies, but the entire organization, and free of charge to boot, aroused a certain amount of interest. The Governing Body openly announced that “although at this stage, it is not seriously suggested that the Organization leave the city of Geneva, to which it is deeply attached... it is hoped that the local authorities will do whatever is necessary as a matter of urgency”. The pressure was on.

In Bern, the federal government gauged the challenges facing a city that represented the centrepiece of its foreign policy. Together, in 1964, they set up the Building Foundation for International Organizations (FIPOI), a private-law foundation that was to act as an interface between all the authorities involved in the development...
of Geneva as an international hub. Advocates of a small Geneva launched a referendum, but in the end FIPOI was accepted and began to ease the strained relations between the partners. In 1965, the Federal Council set up a “Swiss mission” to the international organizations – a sign of how times had changed. But with other cities aspiring to take over Geneva’s role, a sense of urgency prevailed.

A larger home was built for the ILO, which moved out in 1975. Three new tenants hastened to occupy the original Épitaux building and its subsequent additions: the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) moved into the main part of the premises; the High Commissioner for Refugees (HCR) occupied the offices; and the library of the Graduate Institute for International Studies (IHEID) took over the basement. The GATT renamed the building the “Centre William Rappard” and set out to remove all traces of the building’s labour background, which the Director-General considered unsuitable for its new occupants. FIPOI refused, however, to remove the fresco by Maurice Denis, donated in 1931 by the Christian trade unions: “The Dignity of Labour” would have to share the main staircase with trade representatives. And they all settled into this forced cohabitation while awaiting something better.

The creation of the World Trade Organization in 1995 and Geneva’s successful bid to host it marked a significant moment in relations between Bern, Geneva and the international organizations. The merciless battle led by Switzerland against other candidate cities showed just how tough the competition for hosting organizations had become. Bonn was a clear favourite. The former West German capital on the banks of the Rhine had been out of work since German reunification and the choice of Berlin as home to the Federal Republic’s institutions. It had buildings, housing, working conditions and a tax system that were difficult to beat. And yet Geneva had one thing Bonn did not: the professional environment, the accumulated know-how, the dense network of international cooperation activities that attracted what it needed. Switzerland was well aware of this fact, and accepted what were now the going rates in order to maintain and develop that advantage.

The Headquarters Agreement concluded with the WTO reveals the extent of the obligations that Switzerland was assuming, obligations which would inevitably soon be demanded by other organizations. It includes, in particular, an Infrastructure Contract under which the WTO acquired a 99-year surface right to the Centre William Rappard.
Cen tre W illiam Rappard: Home of the Wo rld Trad e O rga nization, Geneva

Laying the Foundations

The renewal of which was the responsibility of the Confederation. The State of Geneva undertook to build, by 1998, and at its own expense, a car park with 400 spaces, while FIPOI was entrusted with the construction of a large conference room by 1997. The choice went to Ugo Brunoni’s Greek-style amphitheatre, which was inaugurated in 1998. Future enlargements were evoked in article G, worded in the enigmatic style favoured by lawyers: the WTO “expects” the Confederation to find solutions, while the Federal Council “takes note of this expectation” and will respond to it in accordance with “Switzerland’s policy as a host country”.

The WTO moved into the offices vacated by the HCR. At the first signs of overcrowding, the Confederation took action: FIPOI would build an annexe 800 metres away, a ‘WTO II’, that would house a number of services. This dispersion, which the heads of the International Labour Office had feared and fought against tooth and nail since the 1930s, now appeared inevitable. Left-wing Geneva’s lack of sympathy for the WTO further sapped the Director-General’s power to do anything about it: in 1999, the cantonal parliament expressed its distrust of the WTO in a number of announcements published in the international press. That same year, an anti-globalization demonstration was disrupted by rioters.

**A new look**

In 2005, with the plans for the annexe almost ready and the construction work set to begin, a new Director-General, Pascal Lamy, was appointed. The WTO II project was not to his liking; he wanted a single building. He pointed out the time that would be wasted by splitting up the Organization. While he did not go as far as to say that the WTO could look elsewhere, everyone suspected that this was what he was thinking.

The Confederation, Geneva and FIPOI sprang into action. With someone from Geneva heading the Foreign Affairs Department in Bern, communication was easier, just as it had been in 1920 when Geneva-born Gustave Ador successfully explained to his Federal Council peers that it would be in Switzerland’s best interest to host the League of Nations in Geneva, and even to join. Personal relations played a role: without the affinity between William Rappard and Woodrow Wilson, Geneva might well be nothing more than a cantonal capital.

Ease of communication between Geneva, Bern and Rue de Lausanne led to the 2006 decision to extend the Centre William Rappard. Care was taken not to repeat the mistakes of the 1964 project: neither the lake nor the trees would be touched. This time, an international architectural competition was held, and the winner was an architect who was somewhat more subtle than his 1960s counterparts, German national Jens Wittfoht, who had clearly fallen in love with the site. A building permit was requested, the green light was given. Well,
almost. A far-left party of Geneva's Municipal Council claimed that the project jeopardized public access to the park along the lake and launched a referendum. It added to its recriminations the loss of half a dozen commonplace trees, which it described as valuable. Ultimately, it was the legitimacy of the WTO that was at stake; its right to encroach upon the hallowed territory of Geneva Sundays. The vote took place in September 2009. The WTO extension was approved.

When asked for their opinion, as they were in 1953 regarding CERN and in 1965 on the financing of FIPOI, the people of Geneva has always said yes to the international organizations, yes to the intellectual industry of cooperation which has settled in their city over the past century and which accounts for their prestige and their economic health.

The rest of Switzerland as well. The past decade alone would have been enough to convince the waverers: in the world of post-Cold War global governance, rules are of growing importance. Geneva, as the main platform for the development and negotiation of such rules, has seen its status grow. And Switzerland, which is uncomfortable with the Security Council part of the United Nations, too inegalitarian for its liking, is on the contrary very much at ease with this United Nations, which has embraced all forms of cooperation, in all areas of human activity. A Confederation built through negotiation, for which compromise and agreement are foremost among its political values, cannot fail to identify with the city of Geneva, which spends day after day negotiating the terms of global coexistence.

The current heads of the WTO not only believe that trade is at home in surroundings formerly dedicated to labour, they are also proud to display labour's history. The fake walls concealing numerous works of art were finally removed to reveal the Delft panel by Albert Hahn Jr. (a reproduction in four languages of the preamble of the ILO Constitution); the painted murals by Gustave-Louis Jaulmes (“In Universal Joy”, “Work in Abundance” and “The Benefits of Leisure”); the murals by Dean Cornwell, donated by the American Federation of Labor, which portray various professions in an optimistic and dignified light; and Spanish artist Eduardo Chicharro y Agüera’s “Pygmalion”.

Though they may not be masterpieces, all of these works stand as testimony to a particular programme; they bear witness to shared aspirations in forms specific to their times. It is fitting that the first building in Geneva dedicated to the realization of the Wilsonian utopia should have a Pygmalion to bring it to life.
LEADERS, ARTISTS AND SPIES
If it is true that “the artist is not a special kind of man, but every man is a special kind of artist”, then numerous people who have worked at the Centre William Rappard have greatly contributed to the building’s rich history. This chapter opens with short biographies of a selection of civil servants who have made a special contribution to the history of the building, including William Rappard, the ILO’s first Directors-General Albert Thomas and Harold Butler, and GATT Directors-General Eric Wyndham White, Olivier Long and Arthur Dunkel.

William Emmanuel Rappard (1883-1958), diplomat and professor of economic history, was born on 22 April 1883 in New York, the son of Genevan and Basler parents. After schooling in Geneva, Rappard studied law, history and economics in Berlin, Munich, Harvard, Paris and Vienna, and joined the International Labour Office in Basel. In 1911 William Rappard was appointed lecturer at Harvard University and became acquainted with the U.S. President Woodrow Wilson and his entourage. The Swiss Federal Council entrusted Rappard with the mission to represent Switzerland in discussions with the Allied powers during both World Wars and, particularly, in the 1919 peace negotiations that led to the Treaty of Versailles.

Using his knowledge of international law and Swiss neutrality, William Rappard convinced the “Big Four” leaders to favour Geneva over Brussels and other European cities as the seat of the League of Nations and the International Labour Office. He maintained that various international institutions and movements were enticed by the “splendor and charm of her [Geneva’s] natural surroundings, by her moral and intellectual traditions of freedom, and by the independence and the very insignificance of her political status”.

Rappard was appointed member of the Mandates Commission in the League of Nations (1920-1924), Swiss delegate to the International Labour Office, and later to the United Nations Organization. During World War II, Rappard took an active part in the work of the International Committee for the Placing of Refugee Intellectuals, set up in Geneva in 1933. As professor of economic history at the University of Geneva, Rappard taught public finance and international relations. He was twice Rector of the University of Geneva and, with Paul Mantoux, co-founder of the Graduate Institute of International Studies, where he taught from 1928 to 1955. William Rappard died on 29 April 1958 in Geneva. The Centre William Rappard and the Chemin William Rappardin Bellevue, a town near Geneva, were named after him.
Albert Thomas (1878-1932), politician and first Director of the International Labour Office, was born on 16 June 1878 in Champigny-sur-Marne, near Paris, the son of a baker and his artisan wife. While studying history in Paris, Thomas joined the Socialist Party and supported human rights and lay educational movements. During World War I, he assumed various strategic responsibilities in the French government. He was in charge of the National Railway Services where he had to mediate between the General Staff and the Ministry of Public Works. Subsequently he was asked to organise the production of ammunition and in 1916 was appointed Minister of Armaments. He travelled twice to Russia to coordinate the war efforts on the Western Front.

With a vast experience in negotiating and communicating with the workers and their unions, Thomas started the Association for Social Studies and Documentation in Paris, which published *L'information ouvrière et sociale*. From the end of the war, he represented the French workforce in the peace negotiations, and strongly contributed to international labour legislation and to the creation of the International Labour Organization in the Treaty of Versailles. Delegates from member states, workers and employers elected Albert Thomas as the first Director of the ILO which, after a short period in London, was established in Geneva in 1920.

Among staff members, he was a born leader and someone who “listened to complaints about rooms, about salaries, about the dull nature of the work or its unsuitability to the complainant’s capacities and ambitions, even about domestic problems or difficulties. He listened and he gave advice.” 6 After an intensive period creating the legal and organizational structure of the ILO, Albert Thomas, aged 54, died suddenly in Paris on 7 May 1932 and was buried in the cemetery of Champigny-sur-Marne. Streets in Paris, Lyon and other cities have been named after him.

The city of Geneva celebrated him in 1937 with a monumental statue by Paul M. Landowski in the Place Albert-Thomas in Rue de Lausanne, in front of the Centre William Rappard. It is decorated with representations of workers from different trades and continents, and quotes from Thomas’s speeches summarising his thinking: “Labour must transcend all competitive struggles, it is not a commodity.”

“One general complaint in the early days [when the ILO was housed in La Châtelaine, currently the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross] arose out of the position of the Office itself, some half mile or more uphill from the nearest tram-line on which there was an infrequent service. Albert Thomas decided to investigate for himself how far such complaints had a real justification. He abandoned his car and chauffeur one morning and a gratified staff watched him with discreet amusement as, perspiring profusely, he propelled himself up the long slope of the Route de Pregny on a borrowed bicycle. The experience was conclusive and led to the establishment of an autobus service which delivered the staff from that fatiguing climb.” 7
“Many roads lead to Geneva, and all are beautiful. Run along the edge of the lake from Lausanne and the east with the pine-clad ridge of the Jura on the right and the whole gorgeous panorama of the Mont Blanc chain on the left. Or come from the south down the valley of the gray, rushing Arve from Chamonix, or from the west through the narrow gap of Bellegarde, through which the Rhone sweeps its majestic torrent. Or better still take Napoleon’s route from the north over the Sickle Pass, which winds its way down in generous curves to the broad vale of Lac Léman. … The world affords many glorious spectacles, but none more glorious than the Geneva scene.”

Harold Beresford Butler (1883-1951), international civil servant and Director of the International Labour Office from 1932 to 1938, was educated at Eton and trained in the British Ministry of Labour. He was an important contributor to the creation of the International Labour Organization in 1919. Butler was the Secretary-General of the International Labour Conference in Washington, which thanks to his organisational skills and vision was a notable success. During the peace conference in Paris, Harold Butler prepared the first draft of the Preamble to the ILO Constitution, and Albert Thomas appointed him Deputy-Director of the ILO in 1920, going on to become Thomas’s successor in 1932.

Butler took over as Director in 1932 under the cloud of the Great Depression, mounting unemployment, and increasing social turmoil resulting from the financial and economic crisis. After lengthy and difficult negotiations, he reinforced the Organization by bringing the United States into the ILO in 1934, and took steps to intensify relations with other countries. He sent officials on mission to Latin America, Asia and the Middle East, and the first regional conference was held in Santiago, Chile, in January 1936. In 1937 he travelled to Asia and subsequently published a study on labour problems in the region. Under his guidance, the Governing Body was expanded to include seven non-European countries among the 16 governments represented in the ILO.

In 1938 Harold Butler resigned from the ILO under pressure from the French government, and was appointed first Warden of the recently created Nuffield College, a graduate school of Oxford University specialising in social sciences. During World War II, Butler became regional commissioner in England and British Minister in charge of
information services in Washington. He was appointed Chairman of the European League for Economic Cooperation and was a member of the ILO Fact-finding and Conciliation Commission on Freedom of Association. Harold Butler died on 26 March 1951 at the age of 67.

**Eric Wyndham White** (1913-1980), an economist, presided over the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) between 1948 and 1968. White was born on 26 January 1913 in England. He was educated in London and graduated as a lawyer in 1938. During World War II he started his career in the British Government where he was first active in the Ministry of Economic Warfare.

In 1942 White started a diplomatic career and was involved in preparing the way for the International Trade Organization and the UN Conference on Trade and Employment in Havana, Cuba, in 1947. The International Trade Organization never entered into force since its Charter was never approved by the United States Congress for fear that it would interfere in domestic economic affairs. Meanwhile, White got involved in forming a secretariat for the GATT, and on 4 April 1948 was appointed its first Executive Secretary. On 23 March 1965 he was elected the GATT Director-General, a post that he held until 30 April 1968. His tenure covered six rounds of multilateral negotiations, including the Kennedy Round, which cut tariffs on industrial goods sharply.

White’s most controversial achievement involved doubling the GATT’s membership during the 1960s with the addition of many newly independent countries. This transformed the GATT from a club of wealthy nations into a genuinely global organization. However, its critics pointed out that to undercut the appeal of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Eric Wyndham White

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Eric Wyndham White (centre), with David Owen of the GATT Secretariat (left) and UN General Counsel Abraham Feller (right) during the Havana Conference on the Charter of the International Trade Organization, March 1948.
allowed the new members to join without binding or liberalizing their tariffs, creating a situation that would plague the GATT system for years to come. However, the United States Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal considered White “a towering figure in the trade field. I don’t know what we would do without him during critical periods”.

For his service to international trade, White was appointed Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George in 1968, an honour bestowed on individuals who have served admirably the British Government. After the Kennedy Round, he resigned from the GATT. Eric Wyndham White died on 27 January 1980 in Ferney-Voltaire, France. He was aged 67.

**Olivier Long** (1915-2003), lawyer and diplomat, and Director-General of the GATT, was born on 11 October 1915 in Petit-Veyrier, Geneva. He studied law and political science and in 1943 joined the International Red Cross in Geneva and travelled across wartime Europe negotiating prisoner-of-war exchanges. After the war, Long joined the Swiss Federal Government in Bern, filling positions in the Political and Trade Departments and, in 1955, became Federal Council Delegate for Trade Agreements.

Long had close personalies with many leading French politicians, and as a result became a behind-the-scenes mediator between De Gaulle’s Government in Paris and the Algerian National Liberation Front. He subsequently returned to commercial diplomacy, playing a prominent role in negotiations that led to the creation of the European Free Trade Association, a trading bloc set up in 1959 by seven European countries that did not wish to join the six-nation European Community, or Common Market. His next appointment was as Swiss Ambassador to the United Kingdom and Malta in 1967-1968.

On 5 May 1968, Long became Director-General of the GATT, succeeding Eric Wyndham White. Long’s directorship in the GATT was marked by the largest reductions in tariffs since World War II. Representatives of the leading industrial nations met in Tokyo in 1973, setting off a six-year free-trade effort that became known as the Tokyo Round. These were difficult years for proponents of free trade. When oil prices quadrupled at the end of 1973 – the result of actions by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) – the twin shocks of recession and inflation rippled through the world economy. National currencies became exceptionally unstable, and industries everywhere pleaded with their governments for protection against foreign competitors. Olivier Long managed to hold the world’s democratic industrial powers, as well as some 20 developing countries, to the free trade commitments they had made at the start of negotiations. Not only did many tariffs drop, the Tokyo Round also represented the most comprehensive effort until then to eliminate other sorts of trade barriers, like quotas and export subsidies.

In 1975 Olivier Long decided to cover the Delft panel by Albert Hahn Jr. in the entrance hall of Centre William Rappard because he thought the text of the ILO Constitution was inappropriate for the trade organization’s headquarters. He remained in charge of the GATT until his retirement on 30 September 1980. Long taught international law at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva and published books and articles on economics and political science. Olivier Long died on 19 March 2003.

**Arthur Dunkel** (1932-2005), economist and Director-General of the GATT, was born on 26 August 1932 in Lisbon, the son of Walter Dunkel and his wife, Berthe Lerch. A Swiss citizen, Arthur Dunkel studied economics and graduated in 1956 from the University of Lausanne. That year he joined the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs. He was successively Head of the sections of OECD affairs in 1960, cooperation with developing countries in 1964, and world trade policy in 1971.

In 1973, Dunkel was appointed permanent representative to the GATT and delegate of the Federal Council for Trade Agreements. He was GATT Director-General from 1 October 1980 to 30 June 1993.
He presided over the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, which have been recognised as the most innovative phase in the history of multilateral trade. Dunkel strengthened the foundations of the GATT and paved the way for the creation of the World Trade Organization in 1995.

With a prophetic sense for the impending upheaval awaiting the world economy in the 1980s, Arthur Dunkel “pressed ahead with his Uruguay Round agenda to defuse the economic and political pressure points that were swelling the ranks of the protectionists. He also went a long way towards softening the antagonism between North and South by giving the silent majority a voice and the wherewithal to benefit from, but also to assume responsibilities within, the system. ... The Dunkel Draft, in the end, was what anchored the Contracting Parties down, providing the lifeline to an eventual [Uruguay Round] agreement.”

However, the Dunkel Draft was burnt in public in some parts of the world, presaging the demonstrations which would accompany future WTO conferences.

“His childhood abroad, and his upbringing and education in different cultures gave Arthur Dunkel a deep-rooted view of the international system. He strongly believed – and this is becoming a rare commodity today – that barriers are harmful, and that the best way to cross barriers is to work and live together, to develop rules based on the universal values of fairness and equity. Arthur Dunkel’s country was the world. ... [he] did not fear long meetings, even in the middle of the night, and understood the need for dialogue, for talking, and even more for listening…”

Dunkel taught at the universities of Geneva and Fribourg, where, for 25 years, he lectured on international negotiations. He held honorary titles from the universities of Fribourg (1980) and Basel (1992). Arthur Dunkel died on 8 June 2005 in Meyrin, Switzerland.
Emerging from the Shadows

Diplomats and international civil servants working in the offices and meeting rooms of the Centre William Rappard have occasionally become renowned in another field. A number of writers, musicians, painters, sculptors and others are among former and current staff members of international organizations that were housed in this building. Sometimes their works directly refer to the Centre William Rappard itself. Moreover, some years ago spies chose this location – whether for nationalist or less chivalric reasons – to develop equally creative careers in the field of undercover operations.

Alice Rivaz [born Alice Golay] (1901-1998), served at the ILO for more than 25 years as a shorthand-typist, documentalist and research assistant. She used her experiences at the ILO as the inspiration for her greatest literary work, *Nuages dans la main* (1940). The novel’s main character, Alain Saintagne, is an ILO staff member who works in one of the offices of the Centre William Rappard in the 1930s. Alain is a daydreamer who wishes to volunteer for the International Brigades of the Spanish Civil War but decides not to. Furthermore, he is a frustrated poet and, though he is married to Madelaine, Alain feels unrequited love for the beautiful pianist Christiane Auberson.

Alain approaches the building every day from the lakeside and describes his experience as follows: “That is how the office often appeared: a large park shaded by old trees, a grey façade hiding behind branches. But following the little pathway covered with dead leaves – spring squill and primroses crowding around the trunks in the springtime – one arrived at a car park, where suddenly, rather than the beautiful old bourgeois residence one might have expected, there emerged a massive and ugly factory-like construction... The vast
administrative quarters built on the scale of an industrial plant, with just as many employees, just as many people, just as many windows lined up along the façades and the corridors.”

The perception of his working place as a dull and depressing factory is made all the worse by Alain’s own disappointments. His life is far removed from what he had hoped for, and is marked by misfortune in love, the wrong professional career, and the desire to pursue an artistic career rather than work as an international civil servant. “He was averse to using the main entrance, flanked as it was by two statues representing justice and peace – one entered with justice on the right and exited with justice on the left, but it could easily have been the other way around: the two stone women looked so much alike that it was always difficult to know what they really stood for.”

The building is a metaphor for the character’s soul, with his sorrow and frustration being mirrored by the anonymous identity of the stern statues at the main entrance. In her preface for the 1987 edition, the author explains that in the 1930s “a bad conscience developed among those who wished to fight supporting the Spanish Republicans but did not have the moral courage to resign their posts at the ILO, the Organization to which they were tied through a permanent contract providing work security and a generous salary to support their families.” Alain’s wife Madelaine takes the decision to intervene to save her family. From a public telephone booth in the Cornavin railway station, she calls Alain’s supervisor Monsieur Barsac and implores him to give a more exciting assignment to her husband so that he will change his mind about giving up a stable and highly esteemed position. As a result, Alain feels obliged to remain with his employer and is unable to fulfil his dreams and change his life.

The daughter of a socialist schoolteacher and politician, Alice Rivaz studied piano at the Lausanne conservatory and in 1921...
took typing courses to prepare for office work. She was recruited to work for an ILO conference and joined the busy offices of the typing pool in 1925, under the strict command of Geneviève Lavergère, who we recognise as the authoritarian and beautiful Mrs Fontanier in Alice Rivaz’s *Comme le sable* and *Le creux de la vague*. She went on to become documentalist of newspapers in the Documents Service.

In 1946, when the ILO returned to Geneva from Canada following the end of World War II, Rivaz worked first as a registry clerk and then as a research assistant in the Employment Section. But Rivaz was longing to do her literary work, as she wrote in her diary: “At the Office: 8 hours; Working at home for the Office: 2 hours minimum; four journeys by tram of each ½ hour: 2 hours; three meals: 2¼ hours. Total 14 hours. Under these conditions, how can I dream of writing, even notes in my diary?”

Eventually, she was awarded a grant and dedicated her life to a successful literary and artistic career. Alice Rivaz died on 27 February 1998 in Genthod, Switzerland. A memorial plaque has been placed at Av. Théodore Weber, number 5, where she lived from 1932 until 1992.

Albert Cohen worked at the ILO from 1924 to 1931. He subsequently rejoined the ILO in the 1950s. His masterpiece *Belle du Seigneur* received an award from the French Academy in 1968. Since then, it has been one of the bestsellers of prestigious French publisher Gallimard.

Adrien Deume is an indolent international civil servant in Albert Cohen’s *Belle du Seigneur*. “Finally, he straightened up, reread the paragraph he had to rewrite, and groaned. Right. OK. He’d do it at once. ‘At once’, he yawned. He got to his feet, made for the safe haven of the gents, a legitimate procrastination. … He looked at himself in the tall mirror. With one hand on his hip, he admired himself. This suit, light brown with small checks, really looked a treat, and the jacket emphasized his waist neatly. ‘Adrien Deume, man of fashion’, he confided once again to the mirror, while he tenderly combed his hair which he lovingly and expensively washed every morning with eau-de-quinine … . ‘Well done, old man. And now, to work!’ But first, a glance at the *Tribune*, just to keep abreast of things.”

Cohen joined the ILO the same year that the Centre William Rappard was opened and, resumed his career in the United Nations after World War II. As with Alice Rivaz, Cohen’s working experience served as a source of inspiration to create his fictional universe of characters such as Adrien Deume, Solal des Solal, Ariane and several others. He started writing *Belle du Seigneur* in the 1930s, but left it unfinished. Augmented and corrected, it was published by Gallimard 30 years later in 1968.

“At peace with his conscience, he walked up and down in the corridor, checking from time to time that his flies were not undone. Suddenly he stopped in his tracks. If anyone saw him hanging about empty–handed, what would they make of him? He hurried back to his office, returned, breathing hard with a fat file under one arm which made him look earnest and busy. Fine, but even so, hanging around slowly still made him look idle. So he strode purposefully down the whole length of the corridor.”
Adrien Deume is always attentive to the possibilities of social progress. He is married to a member of the Geneva aristocracy, Ariane Corisande d’Auble, who is seen as a trophy by the young, ambitious and rather indolent official. “If you’d seen the offices they have in ministry buildings in Belgium, you’d realise how luxurious things are here. … Here the atmosphere is very different from the International Labour Office, where everybody has to go at it hammer and tongs, I say ‘has to’ but in fact they love it, it’s another world, you know, all those trade unionists and left wingers … League of Nation officials were much better paid than those in the ILO, who all had to be in on time and were kept hard at it all day. There was no comparison. You see, darling, we are on the same footing as the Diplomatic.” 19

The Deputy Secretary-General Solal gives Adrien Deume the much-desired promotion and sends him on an extended mission abroad. Taking advantage of the situation, Solal seduces the belle Ariane, and the couple starts a hectic life, which eventually becomes boring and self-destructive. Solal loses his post at the League of Nations and is rejected by his friends and former colleagues in

Albert Cohen (1895-1981) was born into a prominent Jewish family in Corfu, present-day Greece. At the age of five, he moved with his family to Marseille. He studied in France and Switzerland and graduated in law from the University of Geneva (1917). Cohen became a Swiss citizen and was the editor of the *Jewish Review*. In March 1924 he joined the ILO working *pro bono* in Albert Thomas’ office. From October 1926 to December 1931, Cohen worked in different positions at the ILO, including posts in the Diplomatic Division and the Native Labour Division, where he was in charge of analysing press articles on working conditions in African and Asian colonies. By the end of World War II, he was working in London as the legal counsel of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees.

He significantly contributed to the drafting of the “London Agreement” of 15 October 1946 regarding travel documents for refugees, displaced and stateless persons. This document served as the basis of the 1954 Convention Travel Document, the *laissez passer* passport, issued by the United Nations Organization, and still in force. Cohen later resumed his career at the ILO in the Section of Migration. In 1957 he turned down the post of Israeli Ambassador to Switzerland in order to pursue his literary career. Albert Cohen died on 17 October 1981 in Geneva, and was buried in the Jewish Cemetery of Veyrier, Switzerland.

Wilfred Benson was a colleague of Albert Cohen in the ILO’s Native Labour Division. The Englishman got into serious problems with the Organization after the publication of his *Dawn on Mont Blanc: being incidentally the tragedy of an aggravating young man*, published in 1930 by Leonard and Virginia Woolf. As Aamir Ali recounts in his interesting article about Benson’s book, the main character Roger Maiteland comes to Veagen (an anagram for Geneva) to join the staff of the International Institute of Racial Peace – a thin disguise for the League of Nations and the ILO.

The story goes on to relate the relationship between Roger and a young dancer whom he rescues, and then marries. It describes “the secretarial life of the Institute, composed of people of many nations, thrust together by their work, some of whom are trying hard to pretend that nationalism is dead in them, and others being far more cynically realist than normally they would be.”

In the book, the characters’ nationalistic tendencies feature prominently, especially when mentioning “Anglo-French rivalry and mutual suspicion.” The authorities of the ILO and the League of Nations reacted as soon as the book was published. Deputy-Director Harold Butler remarked: “the most objectionable feature of the book is its constant insistence on the bad blood which exists between the officials of the different nationalities – particularly between the British and the French.” Butler thought that ignoring Benson’s book “would suggest that members of the staff were entitled to write whatever they pleased about the Office or the Governing Body, provided that they draped it in a transparent veil of fiction.”

The book was considered a serious breach of discipline and a bad lack of judgement by its author; who on 30 June 1930 received a sanction signed by the Director, Albert Thomas. It stated: “The book portrays the League atmosphere in so damaging a light as to be calculated to bring it into serious discredit. I consider that your action in publishing such a book is most reprehensible, and in order to mark the reprobation which I feel for the gross disservice which you have rendered to the Office, I have decided to inflict upon you a severe reprimand.”

Nevertheless, the incident had little effect on Benson’s career. He moved to London in 1940 and four years later was appointed Chief of the ILO Dependent Territories Service. A promotion followed as he rose to the rank of Counsellor in 1946, when Benson was recruited by the United Nations. Other works include a few technical monographs such as *Social Policy in Dependent Territories* (1944) and *A People’s Peace in the Colonies* (1943), and earlier titles such as *The Foreigner in the Family* (1929) and *As you were* (1930).
The Red Three spy network. During more than 80 years of its existence, in both war and peace time, the Centre William Rappard has welcomed representatives of many nations and has been a meeting place for all kinds of people from different countries. It is not so surprising therefore to learn that the building was once referred to as "a spy centre." This shady past came to light when details were revealed of the Rote Drei (The Red Three) Soviet espionage network in Switzerland during World War II. The eventual victory of the Soviet forces on the Eastern Front owed much to the intelligence that Russia was able to gather about German intentions. A large part of that intelligence came from the Swiss-based Rote Drei spy ring.

According to the historian Jaci Eisenberg, the spy ring was established by the Hungarian cartographer Sandor Rado (1899-1981) upon his arrival in Geneva in 1936, to furnish the Soviet Union with information on German plans obtained through different informants and reliable sources in Germany. The Rote Drei was composed of three groups, including one operating from the ILO offices. This group was run by Rachel Dubendorfer (born Heppner, codenamed "Sissy"), a Polish-born stenographer in the German language section who joined the Office in 1935. Other members of this group were Christian Schneider (codenamed "Taylor"), a German translator who joined the Office in 1926, the Lithuanian lawyer Alexandre Abramson of the General Information Section, and his polyglot cousin Hermine Rabinovitch, who was able to work in ten languages and volunteered in the Cooperatives Section.

Sandor Rado made contact with Rudolf Rossler, a German political emigrant living in Lucerne who had reliable sources in Germany that provided valuable military intelligence. When the ILO was relocated to Canada in 1940, Rachel Dubendorfer moved to Bern to direct the undercover activities of the Sissy group. Christian Schneider and Alexander Abramson also remained in Switzerland. Hermine Rabinovitch went to Canada on her own, and was appointed on temporary contracts in the Cooperatives Section and later as a Research Assistant. She played a key role in the transmission of funds between Soviet contacts in Ottawa, New York and Geneva.

It was only in the last years of the war that the Germans could identify the sources and put pressure on the Swiss to pick up members of the Rote Drei. Rado went into hiding and later left Switzerland for Paris, and Cairo. He was deported to the Soviet Union, where he was sent to the Gulag until 1954. Rabinovitch voluntarily resigned from the ILO but was unable to enter the United States. She made her way to Paris, and was eventually deported to Israel in September 1950. Abramson resigned from the ILO in October 1947. The Swiss authorities arrested Rachel Dubendorfer and Christian Schneider on 19 April 1944, putting an end to the Red Three spy ring.
WORKS OF ART AND OTHER TREASURES

Centre William Rappard
A Crossroad between Diplomacy and the Arts

According to the architect of European unity Jean Monnet, “the spatial arrangement of the workplace influences the mind”. When George Épitaux worked on the planning and construction of the Centre William Rappard, governments, institutions and individuals in many countries were hoping to find a new way forward following the end of World War I. Many governments joined the League of Nations and the International Labour Office (ILO) in the hope of achieving better understanding among nations and a peaceful future. This chapter is an introduction to the architectural and artistic wealth of the Centre William Rappard, which derives largely from donations by governments and institutions. It describes in detail the main works of art, providing background information and insight into their origin, interpretation and reception.

The reworking of the Roman saying reflects the new period of hope when the Centre William Rappard was inaugurated. Albert Thomas and other officials in the League of Nations and the ILO voiced the need for Western countries to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, as well as to avoid social revolution within their own borders.

The Swiss government was one of the first to support these peace efforts with a concrete contribution. By donating the Villa Bloch, with its 3.4 hectares of breathtaking park on the Geneva lakeside in 1923, it marked the starting point for future gifts by other governments and institutions. Prominent Genevan and French families, including Pictet, Odier, Menet, Du Roux, La Rochefoucauld, Rouff and Bloch, had formerly owned the property. It was transferred to the Swiss Confederation in 1921 by the arms and ammunition manufacturer Jules Bloch, as a payment of his income tax debt on war revenue. The Swiss government donated the Villa Bloch and its land to the League of Nations on 18 June 1923. This extraordinary contribution was followed by many other Swiss gifts, in particular the building’s monumental statues “Justice” and “Peace” by Luc Jaggi. This marked the beginning of an ongoing tradition of international organizations receiving donations, which has continued ever since.

As the first headquarters built for an international organization in Geneva, it is not surprising that governments and institutions were willing to contribute to the decoration of the Centre William Rappard and commissioned works of art to represent their interests. They perfectly understood the importance of gift-giving as a hallmark of diplomacy.

Politics of gift-giving and concealment

The reasons for governments and institutions to present gifts and the nature of those gifts are closely linked to the ideological, political and cultural thinking prevalent at the time the donation was made. In the Centre William Rappard, some donations result from opposing views. The foremost example is the magnificent “Dignity of Labour” by Maurice Denis on the left side of the main staircase, presented by the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (ICTU) in 1931. This donation was made in reaction to Albert Hahn Jr.’s ceramic Delft Panel in the entrance hall, a gift of the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU, also known as the Amsterdam International) in 1926.
What prompted the Christian unionists to commission this new mural was the total absence of religious symbols in the Delft Panel. The dialogue between these two works of art reflects the debates at that time between the materialist view of the labour movement and the social values promulgated by the Roman Catholic and other Christian churches, which were very active in the first decades of the ILO.

The Delft panel was installed in January 1927 in the entrance hall of the Centre William Rappard. As the building expanded and with the arrival of other occupants, some works of art were relocated while others were covered, lost or even destroyed. In 1936, for example, the 2,000 tiles of the Delft Panel were carefully dismantled and reassembled in its current location. In 1975, the GATT Director-General Olivier Long requested that the panel be covered up. As it represents the ILO’s founding statement of peace and social justice, he felt that “the presence of this panel was inappropriate in a building which [is] now to be the headquarters of the GATT”. It was not until April 2007 that the wooden boards concealing the tiles were removed and the Delft Panel was once again put on public display. The alleged inappropriateness could have been due to his desire to build a unique institutional identity for the GATT. However, it may have also been the result of antagonistic ideological and political values in both organizations within the context of the Cold War.

Whether for ideological or practical reasons, when the ILO left the Centre William Rappard in 1975, several of the artworks were relocated to the newly constructed building in Grand Saconnex. However, ILO Director-General David Abner Morse and members of the Governing Body as well as Swiss and Geneva representatives considered that some of the works of art should remain in place to preserve the historical character of the building. For example, the Portuguese tiles by Jorge Coelho on the first floor and the murals by Maurice Denis and Seán Keating on the main staircase were not moved.
Even so, there were discussions between the GATT and Geneva city officials about covering up Denis’s “Dignity of Labour” which were ostensibly influenced by the GATT’s need to attract new members from the Middle East and among the OPEC member countries.

The “Pygmalion” painting by Eduardo Chicharro y Agüera, presently in the bar area of the Salle des Pas-Perdus (which was originally the Correspondents Room) was considered “inconvenient” by the GATT authorities and was panelled over, most likely to conceal the nudity of the painting. The dazzling murals by Dean Cornwell in the “Gompers Room” (Room A) were removed and stored in the gardeners’ villa in 1975. Already in ILO times, some officials thought that the Cornwell murals were “too monumental” and disproportionate to the dimensions of the room, and therefore rather intimidating to delegates working in it. The GATT authorities went ahead and took down the murals, probably wary of the reactions from trade delegates to the work’s overt message and to the nudes by Cornwell.

The mural series “The Triumphant Peace” by Gustave-Louis Jaulmes, commissioned by the ILO and installed in 1940, was also hidden and panelled over in the 1960s, supposedly to give the Salle des Pas-Perdus better acoustics and a more sober atmosphere than the one reflected by the joyful scenes in the mural. ILO and GATT officials interpreted literally the meaning of the old maxim, *ars est celare artem* (it is art to conceal art).

Forty years later, the search began to unearth the works of art that had been covered up. Fiona Rolián and Remo Beccio of the ILO, Victor Do Prado and Robert Luther of the WTO, together with other staff members and art experts, finally removed the wooden and linen panels used to hide various works of art that are now on display once more.

**Approaching the Centre William Rappard**

From the first view of the building at Avenue de la Paix, with its tower appearing above the trees, to the elegant statues “Peace” and “Justice” on the main entrance, to the corridors and halls soberly decorated with geometrical shapes and the rooms with colourful paintings, the initial impression for visitors may be a building displaying many disparate works. On closer inspection, the building captivates the visitor with its decorative detail. It is the subtlety of its decoration that gives the Centre William Rappard its unique appeal.

The buildings and artworks of the Centre William Rappard and its park date back to 1785, when the original Villa Rappard was built, and continue to evolve with the construction of a new annexe due for completion in 2012. Following the foundation of the present building on 6 June 1926, there has been a whole series of donations commissioned by institutions and governments (Brazil, Ireland, Portugal, Switzerland and Spain among other countries). Only in one case, Gustave-Louis Jaulmes’s murals, was the ILO the commissioning patron.
The artworks address their viewers, whether staff members, delegates or visitors, in different ways. In some cases, the viewer is kept at a distance, in other cases directly addressed. The works donated by labour unions are especially emphatic in conveying a clear message.

Most of the murals in the Centre William Rappard can be characterised as narrative and realist painting. Whether religious, mythical or historical, they tell a story about the relations between and within societies, the teaching of precepts and, especially, the attitudes and behaviours of workers, their families and their employers. Sometimes the artists used aspects of portraiture and landscape techniques but the emphasis is in the narrative structure that prompts the viewer to discover new ways of judging human activity. The method is realist, appealing to references that can be easily identified by most viewers. Analysing them in detail helps us to understand the ideological background of the donor of each work and the position of the artist as a worker within certain boundaries.

**Gender and personifications**

Through the artwork in the Centre William Rappard, the viewer can observe the evolution from a male-dominated world of politics and labour in the 1920s and 1930s to a greater equality between the sexes in the later paintings. Male artists created all the works of art in the building. The aesthetic tendencies of the period included the male figure standing for strength and the female for emotional values. At the same time, a greater balance was evident in government agencies, labour unions and international organizations, with increasing participation of women in professional, managerial and leadership positions.

Whether female or male, models of youth and health prevail in the human landscape of these works of art. While a few older characters may be identified, almost all are young adults, in good physical shape and generally handsome. In some cases, children and babies complete the circle of life visible in the paintings.

Most of the people depicted are representations of labour in its diverse forms. Typically, they symbolise different professions (Léon Perrin, Seán Keating), the fruits of labour (Luc Jaggi), unionism (Maurice Denis), or labour itself (Jorge Colaço, Albert Hahn Jr., Dean Cornwell).

However, not all of them play the same roles. This is apparent in the Cornwell and Keating murals and Colaço’s tiled panels, where we can identify manual and skilled workers, supervisors and foremen, and other indicators of the hierarchical organisation of labour and society.

However, a number of the people in the works of art are not related to labour. They derive from classical mythology, representing the unifying strength of common ideals such as peace, unity and progress.

So what is the main message from the artworks in the Centre William Rappard? Beyond the aim of decorating the building, what are the artists, commissioning agents, governments and institutions, and workforce of the international organizations telling us through these works of art? If there is a common answer to these questions, it concerns identity.

The works of art are a tribute to the values and attitudes of the period and the social sphere in which they were conceived and executed. A manifest desire represented in the artwork is the need for peace and social harmony following a period of war and social revolution, and the aspiration for justice. Several murals offer images of spiritual values, full employment, empowerment, health and women’s rights, which were more a wish than a reality for most working people when these artworks were created. The classical murals in the Salle des Pas-Perdus are perhaps the most striking example of identity narratives. Created at the time of the Second World War, in a country isolated and threatened by its powerful neighbours, the murals were installed in 1940, only months before the ILO left the building for its haven at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. Beyond the seemingly peaceful scenes in “The Triumph of Peace” and the other murals by Jaulmes, there is an underlying expression of frustration, fear and deprivation experienced in Geneva during this time.

The artwork of the Centre William Rappard provides multiple examples of hidden want and desire. From the sober architecture of the building, symbolising the restrained and solemn atmosphere that would mark international Geneva over the years, to the richest representations in paintings and sculptures, the issue of identity present in the works of art would provide the context for more than 80 years of international relations in labour and trade.
For most visitors to the Centre William Rappard, the first sight of the building is framed by the two imposing statues flanking the main entrance – “Peace” (on the left, facing the building) and “Justice” on the right. Seen against the wider framework of the bas-relief decorations on the door, above the windows and on the walls, they give the main entrance a solemn monumentality.

Offered by the Swiss Confederation on 28 November 1924, these statues were sculpted by the Geneva-born artist Luc Jaggi. “Justice” depicts a young woman with a serpent at her feet. She is sitting upright on a stone block, with a dove on her left hand. Robes cover the left arm and part of her body, and her hair is braided. She is looking northwards, approximately in the direction of another female figure, “Peace”, with a child at her feet who is offering her an olive branch. “Peace” is sitting on a bundle of wheat sheaves, and is looking at the olive branch.

Instead of representing “Justice” in the traditional way as a blind woman holding a scale and a sword – like most images of Themis, the classic Greek goddess of justice and law – the artist incorporated a dove and a serpent. In art, women have often been associated with a serpent or dragon. In Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the serpent symbolises lying and deceitfulness, while the main goal of justice is to reveal the truth. While the serpent stands for false allegations, the dove represents truth. The serpent and the dove can be found on ancient vase paintings as well as in sculpted stone reliefs from classical Greece.

“Peace” is seen receiving an olive branch, a traditional symbol of friendly and long-lasting relations between societies. Motherhood is seen as an important aspect of peace, since social harmony is based on family relations, of which the mother-child relationship is central. According to Virgil, the olive is placitam pacis, “agreeable to peace” – since its slow growth means that it can only be planted in times of peace or stability. Furthermore, peace is associated with nurturing growth and abundance symbolised by the wheat sheaves.

Positioning the statues on either side of the steps leading up to the entrance means that the viewer must pass in between them. The artist conceived the viewer as being tried by “Justice” and “Peace” to prove his or her commitment to these values. Therefore, entering the building becomes an initiation ritual by which the visitor dedicates his commitment to the ideals of justice and peace. It is in effect a rite of passage.

Luc Jaggi was also responsible for the decorative work on the door and above the window frames. This work includes an eclectic collection of symbols of the arts, trade, theatre, agriculture and industry. It also includes musical instruments, an anchor and a caduceus – a staff entwined by two serpents and surmounted by wings – that refer to the Greek god Hermes (or the Roman Mercury). Hermes is the protector of merchants, shepherds and gamblers. In Roman mythology, Mercury is the symbol of commerce and negotiation, fair exchange and reciprocity. Not surprisingly, the artist included a direct reference to commerce within the labour imagery, which pre-dates the arrival of the GATT in the building. In doing so, Jaggi and his patrons undoubtedly had in mind the historical relevance of labour in relation to trade, its social benefits and its abuses, such as the slave trade and the exchange of slave-produced goods and services.
Luc Jaggi was born on 28 October 1887 in Geneva, the son of Swiss and French parents. He studied architecture at the École d’arts et métiers in Geneva, and continued in Rome and Paris until his return in 1909 to open a workshop in the Servette area of Geneva. The city commissioned many of his works to embellish public spaces in the city. These include the “Taureau” executed in granite in the park of the Natural History Museum, and other sculptures in Geisendorf park, Golette park, the Botanical Gardens, Place Neuve and Place Cornavin (“Réverie”). In France, Jaggi’s impressive sculpture “La pleureuse”, in Termignon, Haute Maurienne, is widely praised as a memorial to those who died in the First World War.

The stone statue of “Peace” by Luc Jaggi (1924), 2.15 m high, 2.05 m wide.

Main entrance to the Centre William Rappard, “Peace” (left), “Justice” (right) and carved door and window frames by Luc Jaggi (1924).
Works of Art and Other Treasures

- The hammer-bearing Nereid by Léon Perrin (1925), one of the plaster ceiling panels in the Library, 1.45 m high, 1.7 m wide.

- A rural female worker by Léon Perrin (1925), 80 cm diameter, stone bas-relief on the west façade.
The ceiling panels in the library of the Centre William Rappard and the roundels on the façades of the original building depict both realist and stylised images of labour, family and mythology. The library panels are made of plaster and illustrate different trades (construction, agriculture, metalwork, carpentry), a mother and child accompanied by books, and classical allegories (a faun with goat, a hammer-bearing Nereid). The 18 stone roundels (seven on the west façade, eight on the east and three on the south courtyard) represent other professions (woodcutter, typesetter, joiner, miner, tractor driver, stoker, lathe operator, agricultural labourer, fisherman among others). The professions depicted cover the most common manual jobs and are representative of the most visible labour unions at the ILO during its first decades.

These decorative sculptures were directly commissioned by the architect George Épitaux. Léon Perrin (1886-1978) of La Chaux-de-Fonds, Neuchâtel, worked with Georges Aubert and Charles-Édouard Jeanneret (better known as Le Corbusier). The Léon Perrin Museum exhibits the artist’s work at Château Môtiers, Val-de-Travers in Neuchâtel.
The Director [Harold Butler] was startled with the view of the Spanish painting by Chicharro in the Correspondents Room.

He wishes that it be removed and placed in a less visible location. This internal communication of an ILO officer regarding Eduardo Chicharro y Agüera’s “Pygmalion” is just one example of a series of exchanges involving this artwork: between the myth and the work of art, between the models and their depiction, between the artist and the patron, between the painting and the viewer. In fact, Harold Butler’s “wish” was fulfilled in the most radical way: “Pygmalion” was covered with wood panels and thus hidden from view from at least 1951 to 2007, when the painting was displayed once again to the public. What kind of art would provoke such a reaction from the ILO and later the GATT authorities? Was it the nudity or the representation of the myth that offended their sense of morality?

In this narrative oil painting, Chicharro illustrates the well-known Ovidian story of Pygmalion, the sculptor who falls in love with his statue of a female figure. Pygmalion makes a wish to Venus that the ivory sculpture would change into a real woman. The goddess grants him this wish and sends Cupid to kiss the statue’s hand, so that it comes to life (later authors named the woman as the nymph Galatea). The sculptor and his creation married under Venus’s blessing and had a son, Paphos.

A few elements distinguish this symbolist painting by Chicharro from the mainstream depiction of the myth. Venus’s messenger Cupid takes the form of four birds that are kissing the statue’s body. The imploring statue-maker looks like a female Pygmalion, and the only masculine presence in the workshop is a half-carved sculpture of a man without head and missing one leg. The most remarkable aspect of the painting is its temporal quality. While most artists portray Galatea either as a silent figure (Paul Delvaux, 1939) or as a woman already human and loving her creator...
(René Magritte, 1928), in this case the painting depicts the exact instant of the awakening. This gives the painting a sense of eternity without past or future. It is the precise moment when the goddess provides the statue with a soul, evoking the experience of religious conversion. This moment is accentuated by the artist’s use of light, dividing the painting between the dark area in which Pygmalion is kneeling and praying and the glow surrounding the awakening body of his beloved statue.

On 14 May 1925 the Spanish government presented “Pygmalion” to the ILO as a gift to decorate the new building. It is unlikely that the painting was commissioned with the ILO in mind. There is no direct reference to labour, peace, politics, development or any other aspect of international relations. If there is any relevance to international rules in this work, it is perhaps in the form of human and divine agents bringing to reality the ideals of peaceful relations among persons and nations.

Eduardo Chicharro y Agüera (1873-1949)

Madrid-born Eduardo Chicharro y Agüera, a graduate from the School of San Fernando, was a disciple of Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida. An outstanding portraitist (including Alphonse XIII among his subjects) and landscape artist, Chicharro was influenced by Spanish Modernism. He was famous for his treatment of exotic subjects and his symbolist interest in light and colour. Founder of the Spanish Association of Painters and Sculptors, Eduardo Chicharro worked in Rome, where he was later appointed Director of the Royal Spanish Academy. It was in that city that he painted this version of “Pygmalion”. Later on in his life, he returned to Spain where he received numerous important awards, including gold medals for his famous paintings “Las uveras” and “Armida”. Among his followers were his son, the painter and poet Eduardo Chicharro Briones, and the Mexican muralist Diego Rivera.
The monumental “Genius” by Maurice Sarki on the north façade of the Centre William Rappard was sculpted in stone at the time of the building’s construction and placed on a platform on the external wall of the library. Measuring 4.3 metres high, it spans from the third to the fourth floor. The “Genius” is a nude figure of a winged human, with the face of a young man yet a female body. Unfortunately, during the construction of the fourth floor the thumb of its right hand and all the fingers of its left hand were detached. Sarki’s “Genius” is looking fiercely to the lakeside and seems to be ready to take flight and commence combat, as if perturbed by the dangers threatening the edifice.

Although the representation of genii can take various forms, not many are shown winged. In Roman religion, the genius is the deity of a person, institution or place. The genius loci is the pervading spirit of sacred places or public buildings. From a pantheist viewpoint, the genius can be seen as the divine nature in every person, place, object or event. In early Christian literature, and later also in Islam tradition, guardian angels were depicted after the proscription of the genius cult.34 However, the guardian angel is not a god but God’s messenger while the genius is the spirit of the protected person or place.

“Hear me, illustrious Graces, mighty nam’d, from Jove descended and Eunomia fam’d / Thalia, and Aglaia fair and bright, and blest Euphrosyne whom joys delight / Mothers of mirth, all lovely to the view, pleasure abundant pure belongs to you.” 35 Thalia, Aglaia and Euphrosyne are known collectively in Roman mythology as the Gratiae (Kharies in Greek mythology). Sometimes shown as two, sometimes many more, the Graces normally number three and are depicted as beautiful women. As goddesses of inspiration, festivity, charm and fertility they are the attendants of Venus. In art, the Graces are a classical representation of feminine beauty dating as far back as AD 115, and are usually depicted holding hands, embracing and dancing in a circle.

The “Three Graces”, sculpted by Maurice Sarki, embellish the west façade of the Centre William Rappard. They are located between the doors of the former Salle des Commissions, where they form an elegant backdrop to the steps leading down to the terrace and the lakeside park. In keeping with tradition, the “Three Graces” are depicted as nude young women and are decorated with stylised art deco patterns, with two of the sculptures raising an arm in a symmetrical fashion. Both “Genius” and the “Three Graces” were commissioned by the architect George Épitaux to decorate the original building.

Born in Tiflis, Georgia, Maurice Sarki [born Sarkissoff] (1882-1946) was a painter and sculptor and follower of Auguste de Niederhäusern in Paris. He taught in the École des arts industriels in Geneva, and died in France, a member of the Taizé religious community. 36
The ceramic panel behind the reception desk in the main entrance to the Centre William Rappard was designed by Albert Hahn Jr.

The text is written in four languages: French (upper-left), German (upper-right), English (lower-left), and Spanish (lower-right). It consists of an extract from the Preamble to Part XII of the Treaty of Versailles, which establishes the principle that universal peace is possible “only if it is based upon social justice”, and that the peace and harmony of the world require the improvement of working conditions. The signatories of the Treaty, “moved by sentiments of justice and humanity as well as by the desire to secure the permanent peace of the world” agreed to the establishment of the ILO. Additional text on the bottom of the panel expresses in Dutch that the panel was “offered by the International Federation of Trade Unions, Amsterdam, on behalf of approximately 14,000,000 organised workers”. All the text is solidly typeset in upper case, in an elegant art deco style.

Albert Hahn Jr. (1894-1953)

Albert Hahn Jr. [born Albert Pieter Dijkmans] was the stepson and disciple of the illustrator Albert Hahn, an outstanding cartoonist in the Netherlands. He graduated in 1916 from the Quellinus school of decorative arts in Amsterdam. From 1915, Albert Hahn Jr. contributed illustrations to De Amsterdammer and De Notenkraker (an anti-Nazi satirical magazine), to which he contributed more than 1,000 covers and political caricatures. He also designed posters and other materials – many of them for the Dutch Association of Trade Unions (NWW) and the Social Democratic Workers’ Party (SDAP). He also published his own books of illustrations. Albert Hahn Jr. died on 23 January 1953 in Amsterdam.
Preamble to Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles

Whereas the League of Nations has for its object the establishment of universal peace, and such a peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice;

And whereas conditions of labour exist involving such injustice, hardship, and privation to large numbers of people as to produce unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperilled; and an improvement of those conditions is urgently required: as, for example, by the regulation of the hours of work, including the establishment of a maximum working day and week, the regulation of the labour supply, the prevention of unemployment, the provision of an adequate living wage, the protection of the worker against sickness, disease and injury arising out of his employment, the protection of children, young persons and women, provision for old age and injury, protection of the interests of workers when employed in countries other than their own, recognition of the principle of freedom of association, the organisation of vocational and technical education and other measures;

Whereas also the failure of any nation to adopt humane conditions of labour is an obstacle in the way of other nations which desire to improve the conditions in their own countries;

The high contracting parties, moved by sentiments of justice and humanity as well as by the desire to secure the permanent peace of the world, agree to the following:

A permanent organisation is hereby established for the promotion of the objects set forth in the Preamble.

The powerful central image is of a male construction worker, dressed in red, laying down the foundation bricks of the building. The image combines elements of social realism, art deco and cubism and, when seen with the text, has a caricaturist quality. The unmistakably masculine figure personifies the power of the international unionist movement in the 1920s.

The panel consists of more than 2,000 individual tiles of approximately 10.5 x 8.5 cm (numbered on the back for ease of assembly). The tiles were manufactured by the Dutch factory De Porceleyne Fles (known as Joost Thooft & Labouchère from 1876 to 1940).

The artist was commissioned to create the panel by the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), also known as the Amsterdam International or the Yellow International. The International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres, which later became the IFTU, was established in 1901 by European trade union centres politically affiliated with the socialist Second International. By the time Hahn Jr.’s panel was installed at the Centre William Rappard in 1926, the IFTU had been ripped apart by nationalist and ideological feuds as well as by competition from Christian and Communist workers’ movements, and was in financial crisis. In Hahn Jr.’s tile panel, the text conveys a message beyond the meaning of the words. It can also be “read” through its qualities of shape, colour, and proportion relative to the figure of the manual worker. In fact, the artist succeeds in giving the text the dominant role in the work of art.

The selection of French, German, English and Spanish for the text is not without significance. English, French and Spanish were the official languages of the League of Nations, whereas the German language was added, as explained by IFTU General Secretary Jan Oudegeest, because Germany was on the verge of joining the League, and “the Germans have contributed much more than half of the gift’s value.”
A fountain with a statue named the “Blue Robed Bambino” by the British artist Gilbert Bayes was presented to the ILO by the National Sailors’ and Firemen’s Union (NSFU) of the United Kingdom in 1926. It was located in the inner courtyard of the Centre William Rappard until 2011, when it was moved due to renovation work. It is due to be repositioned in the surrounding park.

The statue, also known as “Child with Fish”, is of a boy wearing a blue tunic and holding tenderly a green fish with oversized fins and the leaves of a water lily. Water flows from the fish’s mouth into a circular fountain. The boy is looking down while standing on a square pedestal in the centre of the fountain.

On the base of the pedestal, two relief panels depict a sailing boat (on the front) and a steamship (on the back). Six additional water spouts in the shape of fish heads surround the fountain. The base is inscribed with “O stream of life run you slow or fast / all streams come to the sea at last” on the front, and “Presented by the National Sailors’ and Firemen’s Union – 1926” on the back. The name of the artist as well as the manufacturer Royal Doulton are carved on the side of the pedestal.

The boy is aged four or five and is affectionately holding the fish in the same way a small boy would hug his favourite pet. Probably influenced by Andrea della Robbia’s Renaissance ceramic work, Bayes’s “Blue Robed Bambino” is somewhat reminiscent of representations of the Madonna and Infant Jesus, albeit in a very different environment.

The verse inscribed on the base was written by the artist, although there may have been some religious inspiration. The implication is that all mankind, regardless of origin and deeds (“run you slow or fast”), are destined to “the sea at last”, that is eternal life. There is an obvious biblical reference to the role of Jesus as fisherman of souls as well as to the fraternity and common fate of the workers.

“Blue Robed Bambino” is part of the children series created by Gilbert Bayes. “The Water Baby” (1927) and “The Mermaid” (1938) follow a similar theme. The first “Blue Robed Bambino” fountain was exhibited several times following its success at the Paris Exhibition of 1925, where it was seen by ILO Deputy Director Harold Butler. Butler later wrote to the NSFU, which commissioned Bayes to create the fountain statue for the Centre William Rappard.
Gilbert Bayes (1872-1953)

Gilbert Bayes, a renowned member of the New Sculpture movement in early twentieth-century England, was born in North London into a family of artists. He taught at Camberwell School of Art and by 1911 received the first of a series of significant commissions, the Great Seal for King George V. He gained public acclaim with his work entitled “Peace”, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1917, followed by “War” one year later. He later joined the Art Workers Guild, of which he became Master in 1925. Bayes served as President of the Royal Society of British Sculptors during the 1930s. His best-known work is the ornate “Queen of Time” (1908), which supports the clock above the main entrance of Selfridge’s Department Store in Oxford Street, London. Bayes’s monumental frieze “Pottery through the Ages” (1939) is displayed at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. It is widely regarded as one of the best examples of British sculpture of the 20th century.

Gilbert Bayes died on 10 July 1953.
• “Fishing” by Jorge Colaço (1928), 2.52 m high, 2.05 m wide, glazed ceramic tiles.

• “Agriculture” by Jorge Colaço, 2.52 m high, 2.05 m wide, glazed ceramic tiles.
1928 • Jorge Colaço

Fishing, Grape Picking and Agriculture

Jorge Colaço’s azulejos (panels of glazed tiles) depict shared human effort within a work environment. Displayed at the top of the staircase on the first floor of the Centre William Rappard, “Fishing” (Pesca), “Grape Picking” (Vindima) and “Agriculture” (Lavoura) represent food production through typical scenes of Portuguese rural life. They were presented to the ILO by the Portuguese government in August 1928.

“Fishing” shows a fishermen’s boat breaking through the waves as it sets sail for the high sea. Against the backdrop of a cloudy horizon with a few seagulls overhead, the panel places at centre stage the boat and the men rowing hard. The metia lua (half-moon) rowing boat is the traditional fishing vessel from the Aveiro coastal region of Portugal, with a characteristically tall prow and stern. Eleven fishermen are visible in the boat, one of them sitting on the prow beside the fishing net (probably to offset the force of the waves) and the others rowing. They are young to middle-aged men, with all bar one wearing headgear. Four are wearing the traditional fisherman barrete or stocking cap.

The central panel, “Grape Picking” represents grape-picking and transport of the grapes as the first parts of the winemaking process. In the background is a village and wooded hills, while in the foreground a cart driven by a yoke of oxen is carrying a heavy load of grapes along a cobbled road. Three women and two men are making great efforts to ensure that the cart can progress along the road. On the right-hand section of the panel, villagers are busy picking grapes and loading another cart. Two women are picking grapes in the vineyard, while men and women (one of them with a baby) in the background are busy with other tasks.

In the right-hand panel, “Agriculture”, a young woman is giving a pitcher (containing wine or some other drink) to a thirsty shepherd while a dog oversees his flock of sheep. In the background, a labourer is ploughing the field with two oxen, while another sows seeds. As in the case of “Grape Picking”, the woman is wearing a headscarf and is barefooted while the men wear boots. All four wear hats for protection from the sun.

The drama of labour is the common feature in these three panels. The subjects look strained as their work demands great physical and mental effort. They are exploiting the fruits of the earth and the sea, but they must struggle against the forces of nature to obtain them. The religious references are evident in the choice of common biblical scenes of fishing, grape picking and agriculture. Men and women work closely together in equal numbers even if they play different roles. There is a good working relationship among the subjects and there are no visible hierarchies (apart from the absence of footwear in the case of the women).
Jorge Colaço (1868–1942)

Jorge Colaço was born in the Portuguese consulate in Tangier, Morocco, into a French-Portuguese family of musicians, playwrights, sculptors and painters. In 1879 he entered the Arts School of Lisbon and subsequently studied painting in Madrid. In 1903 he became interested in the ancient technique of azulejos (from the Arab al zulayj), a typical Moroccan style of mosaic based on painted and glazed ceramic tiles. The azulejo technique was originally introduced to the Iberian Peninsula in the fifteenth century. Jorge Colaço developed his craftsmanship with the support of his friend James Gilman, owner of Fabrica de Loíças in Sacavém, Portugal. Colaço created significant works designed for public buildings, churches, railway stations, private residences, marketplaces, and gardens. Through family and professional contacts, he received numerous commissions for public works in Portugal, France, England, the Vatican City, California, Cuba, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Goa and Mozambique. Among them are the breath-taking panels at São Bento railway station in Porto (about 20,000 tiles on 551 square metres) portraying famous scenes of Portuguese history. Jorge Colaço died on 23 August 1942 in Lisbon.
**The Dignity of Labour**

"The Dignity of Labour" depicts a Christian perspective of industrial relations. On the left side of the main staircase of the Centre William Rappard, the mural by Maurice Denis shows Jesus in his workshop in Nazareth talking to a group of workers. The painting was commissioned by the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (ICTU) and presented to the ILO on 9 June 1931, in the presence of the Director Albert Thomas and delegates from 40 countries who participated in the 15th session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva.

Some 3 metres high by 6 metres wide, Denis’s mural focuses on Christ preaching to his fellow workers. Against a background of vineyards and grape picking typical of rural France, the principal characters are Jesus and the workers and, to a lesser extent, Mary and Joseph. Jesus is situated in the centre, seated on the workshop’s low wall, surrounded by carpenter’s tools, a wheel and some work in progress. His somewhat feminine appearance is emphasised by his lightly-tanned skin and long hair. He is barefoot and wearing a long and loose-fitting pale red tunic. His fine hair frames his meek and compassionate expression as he addresses the audience, raising his right hand and crossing his feet as if pondering on something puzzling.

While Jesus is not directly addressing his parents, Joseph and Mary are looking attentively at their son. Joseph is depicted as a mature bearded man wearing a long tunic and the traditional keffiyeh scarf and agal. In the tradition of Christian art, the Virgin Mary looks significantly younger than Joseph. She is kneeling and is wearing a blue tunic, white shawl and dark blue headscarf, while her hands are busy knitting. Two other women in the foreground are sitting on a bench at Jesus’s feet and looking up at him. With the exception of four other women (with pitchers on their heads) and perhaps others in the vineyard and farm in the background, all the other people in the painting are male. Female labour appears to be limited to domestic service, in line with religious art in general.

Among the 16 men listening to Jesus (apart from Joseph), there is a mixture of manual and skilled workers, evident from their clothing: manual workers are wearing hats, open-collar shirts, vests and blue overalls or are bare chested, while the skilled workers are wearing neckwear and look pensive. Their ages vary from the teenager dressed in a long-sleeved white shirt to the mature worker standing in the middle, with hat and white moustache. Jesus appears to be addressing the workers at sunset — the ideal moment for them at the end of a long day to listen to the sacred word, and to reflect on what they are hearing. In this peaceful setting only the people in the background are active, busy picking grapes, while those in the foreground are absorbed by the spiritual message.

"The Dignity of Labour" can be seen as a juxtaposition of elements from different times and places. The most obvious anachronism is the clothing, with some people dressed as they would have been in Jesus’s time while others are wearing clothes from the period when the mural was painted. The carpentry tools are also anachronistic. The pliers, hammer, saw, plane and axe do not resemble those that Jesus would have used during his lifetime as a carpenter and are more in keeping with the contemporary clothing. The third juggling of time concerns Jesus’s ministry. It is generally accepted that this started when he left his home and workshop in Nazareth to follow John the Baptist. However, in this mural Jesus is already depicted as the Messiah preaching to the crowds, even though he is still accompanied by his parents and seemingly in Nazareth. There is also spatial interplay in the mural, with the carpentry workshop evoking Palestine while in the background there is a vineyard that...
could be in the region of Bordeaux, where the artist was living. The architectural features of the workshop and the farm are also reminiscent of the French rural style of the first decades of the twentieth century rather than Palestine during Jesus’s life.

The elements (dress, tools) from two different periods separated by nineteen centuries, as well as the mixed landscapes of Nazareth and Europe, combine to represent the timeless nature of Christ’s words and to emphasise their enduring and universal qualities. At the time following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and other Marxist and atheistic movements, the ICTU and the artist proposed Christian values as a means of resolving labour conflicts and of achieving harmony in social relations.

In 1928, ICTU executive members decided to make a donation to the ILO “capable of emulating the large panel (the Preamble) presented by the IFTU [Albert Hahn Jr’s Delft Panel] and installed two years before, and to assert ‘highly and fully’ the Christian message.” The Dutch-born schoolteacher and Catholic politician Petrus Serrarens, first Secretary-General of the ICTU, consulted with French unionist Gaston Tessier and contacted Maurice Denis in February 1929. Well-known for his religious realist paintings, Maurice Denis met in Paris with his friend Arthur Fontaine, Chairman of the ILO Governing Body, and proposed to work on “Christ in his Nazareth workshop with a ‘Palestinian’ décor.”

The idea was initially opposed by members of the ICTU executive committee who favoured a less evidently Christian subject so as to accommodate the religious neutrality of German trade unions. However, inspired and supported by Arthur Fontaine, the artist’s concept prevailed and was approved by ILO Director Albert Thomas. Maurice Denis showed his appreciation to Thomas for his “involvement in this affair and I thank you for having persuaded the Christian unions.”

To appease the ICTU committee, he used photos of their leaders as models, including the above-mentioned Tessier and Serrarens (sitting
on the far side of the mural and dressed in brown suits). Others shown include Bernhard Otte (president of the German Federation of Christian Trade Unions, standing in the background with arms crossed, and in a dark suit), Herman Amelink (ICTU treasurer and Dutch trade unionist, standing with his hands behind his back, in the foreground) and Jules Zirnheld (ICTU vice-president, standing near Jesus with his left hand on his lapel, p. 56). Christian unionists Heinrich Fahrenbrach and Adam Stegerwald were probably also the models for other people in the painting. The figure of Christ was based on Denis’s wife Marthe Meurier, and the teenager standing at the front of the left-hand group could be the artist’s son.

Depicting well-known people in the contemporary labour movement in Europe, who were at the same time the patrons of the work of art, creates the effect of realism while emphasizing the anachronisms and juxtapositions of disparate elements displayed in the painting. Moreover, Maurice Denis had wanted to entitle the mural “Christ talking to the workers”. Other possible titles were “The Carpenter of Nazareth” or “Christ in Nazareth”, but Fontaine and Serrarens insisted on the title “The Dignity of Labour”. Their aim was to almost sanctify industrial relations, seeing Christ as “the only one capable of giving labour its dignity … the only one inspiring Christian unionism.”

Other works by Maurice Denis in Geneva are “The Life of Saint Paul” mural (1916) in St. Paul’s parish church in Cologny, the sketches for “The Loneliness of Christ” stained-glass windows (1918) and for “The Baptism of Christ” mosaic (1923) in the same church, and the “Fiat pax in virtute tua” mural (1938) painted in the Assembly Hall of the Palais des Nations. In Thonon-les-Bains, Denis painted the “Marie Médiatrice” mural (1940) in the chapel of the Institute du Sacré-Cœur de Crète, and “The Way of the Cross” murals in the St François de Sales basilica (1943).
In June 1939 the ILO commissioned Gustave-Louis Jaulmes to decorate the walls of the newly constructed Salle des Pas-Perdus. The artist submitted a proposal to paint four murals representing “the Triumphant Peace in Universal Joy [that] produces Abundance and the Joy of Living.” The description became the individual titles for the murals. Jaulmes completed his work in early 1940, about four months before the ILO left the building for its wartime haven at McGill University in Montreal, Canada.

The panel entitled “In Universal Joy” (“Dans la joie universelle”) portrays a group of young women and children holding palm branches and walking towards the viewer. Two girls in the foreground are clutching a palm branch and holding hands while doves flutter at their feet. In the background are fruit trees decorated with leafy garlands that also cover a pergola on the left. Behind the procession of women and children are old-fashioned sailboats moored in a quiet harbour. Mountains are also depicted along with a radiant sky. The second panel, “Work in Abundance” (“Le travail dans l’abondance”), depicts grape picking. Men and women carry baskets of grapes accompanied by a horse-driven two-wheeled cart laden with grapes. Meanwhile a scantily clad young woman taking a break from her work talks with a cheerful boy, while other women carry agricultural produce. In the background are trees silhouetted against a golden sky.

In the right-hand mural, “The Benefits of Leisure” (“Le bienfait des loisirs”), the scene is of men, women and children talking, playing and gathering fruit in a terraced garden with a pergola. On the right, a low wooden gate leads to countryside in the background, including farmland, trees and a country village in a landscape typical of northern Italy or French Gascony. A couple holding a baby are standing on some stone steps and looking contentedly at their child. The fourth mural, “The Triumphant Peace” (“La paix triomphante”), was originally placed on the right of the main entrance to the Correspondents Room. No longer on display, it was possibly removed and stored away somewhere when the cafeteria’s bar was extended in the early 1960s. It depicted a woman driving a classic four-horse carriage. A cheerful crowd is greeting her with garlands and banners.

Most of the subjects are barefoot and dressed in classical sleeveless tunics. They look young, healthy and happy. The pastoral scenes in Jaulmes’ allegorical murals perpetuate a particular style of 1940.
Centre William Rappard

Works of Art and Other Treasures
representation common to late neoclassical art. Conceived during the period between the wars, the ideals of peace, friendship, family, abundant nature and celebration are all apparent in the paintings. Symbols such as the doves and palm fronds, as well as the relaxed facial expressions of the people depicted, are reminders of the need for peace in Europe at that critical time, during which the horrors of war were a constant, looming threat. Likewise, peaceful relations within society, which is only too vulnerable to the upheavals of war and social revolution, are portrayed through the harmonious rapport between the subjects.

Alongside the general atmosphere of celebration, a return to traditional family values is symbolized through the presence of children living in harmony with their parents. Nature, rather than industry or man-made products and machinery, is ever-present in these murals. The aim of the people depicted is not only to harvest the fruits of nature, but also to celebrate harmony with the environment. Whether they are at work or relaxing, the people in the murals display general contentment. Priority is given to the enjoyment of life, in which work has its place as a rewarding activity, and to harmonious family relationships. There is a total absence of social or labour conflict.

The sense of harmony, the return to nature, and the prospect of new horizons evoked by elements such as the sailing ships ready to depart for new locations suggest values that would become prevalent in the 1960s. At the same time, the murals are a reminder of the idealism among upper- and middle-class circles in the late 1930s in Europe, that believed that social and nationalistic conflict would be overcome through better understanding within and among societies.

Other than a few specific tasks in “Work in Abundance” performed by men (e.g. the man leading the horses), gender roles are defined solely in terms of family and friendship. Likewise, there are no visible social or professional hierarchies in the murals, implying the achievement of égalité.
through economic and social cooperation. This may be considered as a reaction against the Marxist notion of class struggle. Moreover, everybody in the paintings seems to share in the ownership of the means of production: the land and crops, the cart, horses and baskets. People are certainly not shown as being divided into proletarians and bourgeois — labour and capital — in revolutionary conflict.

In the four panels, the title plays an intrinsic role in the work of art. Having already decided on the titles at the time of developing the sketches, Jaulmes wanted the viewer to interpret his murals in a specific way. This may reflect the uncertainty and lack of security predominant at this time in Geneva and at the ILO.

In these paintings, labour is not conceived as a dynamic activity, as it is in the murals by Dean Cornwell, Seán Keating or Jorge Colaço, let alone as a source of conflict, as it is in the scenes of Diego Rivera’s “Detroit Industry” (1933) for example. For the artist, labour is associated with a relatively static and peaceful activity, or at least with enjoying the fruits of nature and social harmony. Harvesting the land and enjoying the sensual rapport with nature are shown as the ideals of labour. Work is depicted as being inextricably entwined with leisure.

Even though Jaulmes’s decorative panels were a direct commission from the ILO, they were covered up in the early 1960s, ostensibly to improve the acoustics within the room. They were briefly uncovered and then recovered at the time of the building’s hand-over to GATT in 1975. The double layer of canvas was finally removed on 31 March 2007 and the murals have now been restored to their former glory.

Among Jaulmes’s best-known works are decorations in the Villa Kérylos in Beaulieu-sur-Mer, Palais de Chaillot in Paris, the Municipality of Arras, the “Kiss” room at the Rodin museum in Paris, the Theatre of Carcassonne, the Synagogue of Boulogne Billancourt, the Evian Royal Palace and Casino, and the Town Hall of Paris Fifth Arrondissement.
On a bright springtime afternoon of 1 April 2007, Dominique Plaza and Jukka Pitulainen, staff from the administrative division of the WTO, and Pierre Joubert of FIPO I45 noticed five rolls of large canvas in the recesses of the old gardeners’ villa in the grounds of the Centre William Rappard. The rolls of canvas were not in good shape, and extensive cleaning and restoration was needed to reveal what was hidden underneath.

After examining the canvas, WTO officials and ILO archivists realised that they were the spectacular murals painted by Dean Cornwell that had been put on display in June 1956 in the Samuel Gompers Room, previously known as the Workers’ Room (Room A). The dazzling colourful nature of the scenes of labour and human activity portrayed by the artist is the reason why they were so admired after their installation, and probably why they were taken down some twenty years later as they were considered to be too much of a distraction. They subsequently remained hidden away from view for three decades.

The American Federation of Labor (AFL) commissioned Cornwell to paint the murals as a gift to the ILO in 1938. Due to the Second World War and his commitment to other projects, Cornwell did not finish these paintings until 1955. When the ILO left the building 20 years later, the Cornwell murals were removed. Five of the seven sections were reinstalled in 2008, while two sections still remain missing today.

The original idea for the commission came from ILO Director-General Harold Butler, who contacted trade union leaders in the United States to explore the possibility of a donation of furniture and decorations for the Workers’ Room, which he specified would be decorated “on American lines.” 46 The AFL took a leading role in the donation and its execution, and informed President Franklin D. Roosevelt who conceived the decoration as “an interpretation of our American civilization in the Workers’ Room at the ILO.” 47

In September 1938 Cornwell submitted his sketches covering the subjects of commerce, industry, office work and the arts. The AFL and the ILO approved the sketches and sent photographs of workers and labour groupings to be used as models. Officials in both organizations pressed to have the murals ready by June 1939. Meanwhile, Cornwell was busy with other commissions and the war intervened. However, the AFL agreed to pay the amount requested (initially USD 15,000) for the murals and for the furniture of Room A.

It was not until June 1953 that Dean Cornwell could “go ahead full steam on the murals for the Gompers Room.” 48 During the following year and up to October 1955 he painted them in his workshop in New York, and in November sailed to Europe with the murals to assist in the installation and final re-touching in Geneva. “I am delighted with Mr. Cornwell’s paintings”, wrote the ILO Director-General David Morse, “they are works of art of which both the ILO and the American Federation of Labor may well be proud.” 49 The murals were solemnly dedicated on 29 June 1956 with the presence of the ILO Governing Body and the president of the AFL-CIO George Meany, the press and public.

The large central section (over 10 metres wide and 3 metres high) of the mural is irregularly shaped to fit around the entrance door and bookshelf in Room A. In the centre of this section (p. 65), two women are shown descending from heaven carrying a torch, and flanked by a worker. A shower of stars is raining down on the worker, as if to liberate him. He is dressed in a leather apron and sturdy shoes, and has an oversized hammer at his feet. Broken chains hang from his wrists and lie beside his left foot. The women, one with blond hair and the other dark haired, are young, healthy, and bare-breasted.
Bearing shields and with long cloaks trailing behind them in the wind, they are portrayed as goddesses. The dark-haired woman appears to be passing the torch to her blond counterpart. The power generated by the two goddesses appears to unleash the energy needed by mankind for work and procreation. At their feet can be seen a globe showing the North Atlantic Ocean, North America and Europe (with Ireland erased or joined to England). Also shown are pliers, set squares, a compass and a miniature caravel.

The references to the “discovery” of America point to the encounter between the Old World and the New World. The positioning of the continents and the women suggest that the dark-haired woman represents Europe, seen as the Old World, and that the fair-haired woman is America, perceived as the New World. In the artist’s view, Europe brought to America the instruments of modernization and progress, and now the Old World is literally passing the torch to the New World.

Working in the “old” (European) way is associated with constraints or even slavery, like the ancient builders of Egypt’s pyramids whereas in America workers are free from social hierarchies and limitations. Labour, personified by the worker, looks towards America and turns his back on Europe. By looking to his right, he indicates the flow of energy across these murals from right to left (in contrast to the conventional practice of moving from left to right). This is emphasised...
Workers or slaves appear at the bottom of the mural and are shown pulling something very heavy towards the centre. In contrast, the fertility suggested by the goddesses’ bare breasts and by their youth and vigour indicate the sexual energy of those in the New World in which future generations will live thanks to the efforts of the current generation of workers.

Several other scenes are shown in the murals, all of them depicting realistic and contemporary work situations. Among them are workers constructing a dam (including the only persons of darker skin in the mural) and various forms of transport, such as airplanes, ships, trains, trucks, and cars, symbolising the modernisation of transportation. Safety at work is a recurrent theme, illustrated by the gloves worn by many of the manual workers as well as their headgear and by the inscription “Safety First” on a cement mixer.

Other trades shown include construction workers, painters, skilled workers such as a surveyor using a theodolite and an engineer talking to a supervisor with the aid of a plan, as well as workers on a construction site, in a foundry, and in a car workshop. Other workers include miners, brick-layers, manual workers, women using sewing machines, and secretaries. Also shown in the mural are boys helping their parents, a schoolgirl, supervisors and their workforce, a stern teacher, glamorous dancers, musicians and the artist himself who appears as a customer in a barber’s shop (depicted in one of the missing sections). In all, a total of 195 people appear in these murals. They are predominantly male but women are also shown playing roles in offices, workshops, schools and in the arts.

Dean Cornwell’s murals on labour are an important contribution to the representation of industrial life and society in the post-war period in the United States. Full of vigour, this mural firmly conveys the attitudes and values deeply rooted in the capitalist mentality of industry leaders in the United States in the 1950s. The implicit parable of the liberating power of labour symbolises the Fordist formula, in which mass production and product standardization lead to higher wages and an increase in consumption, thus allowing a better way of life for the working class. This message comes across through the contented nature of the workers, their physical health, youth (with few exceptions) and robustness, as well as through their clothes — none of the people are shabbily dressed — their jewellery (watches, earrings) and the women’s make-up and manicured nails.

In these murals, Cornwell used the multiple-scene narrative technique of cartoons, representing simultaneously activities taking place at different times or locations. He illustrated the ancient slaves at the bottom of the central section, along with the caravel and sailboat, which are the only elements of historical evolution.

The “symphony” of work, machinery, industry and progress can almost be heard, celebrating the harmonious nature of industrial and labour rules. Human energy is an integral part of the painting, depicted through the vigorous, lively attitudes of the people at work.
Centre William Rappard

Works of Art and Other Treasures
Recognized in the early Cold War period as the “Dean of Illustrators” among artistic circles in the United States, Dean Cornwell was born in Louisville, Kentucky. He studied at the Chicago Art Institute in 1911 while already taking small commissions as commercial illustrator to draw window displays and cartoons for the press. During the 1920s and 1930s, he regularly published illustrations for advertisements, articles and serialised stories in high-circulation magazines and newspapers. His illustrations reflected the hopes, attitudes and principles of the US middle-class men and women, such as the readers of Cosmopolitan, Heart’s and Harper’s Bazaar. From the early 1930s, Dean Cornwell sought to develop his decorative techniques and was trained in mural painting. Cornwell’s best-known murals can be seen in the central rotunda at the Los Angeles Public Library, the Lincoln Memorial Shrine in Redlands, California, the Tennessee State Office Building in Nashville, Tennessee, the Eastern Airlines Building in Rockefeller Plaza, the US Post Office in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and the Raleigh Room at Hotel Warwick in New York City. Cornwell signed the murals at the Centre William Rappard and other works with the suffix “N.A.”. This stands for National Academy, an honorary association of artists and a leading school of fine arts in New York, where he studied and taught, and of which he was elected Academician in 1940. Since Cornwell was too old to serve in the Second World War, he created many patriotic posters and propaganda pieces during that period. After the war, he continued illustrating commercial pieces for General Motors, Seagram’s, Coca Cola, Goodyear and other companies that funded his more ambitious mural projects. Dean Cornwell died on 4 December 1960 in his studio apartment on West 67th street, New York.
Movement is conveyed through the multiplicity of scenes and the individual actions of each person. This movement symbolises progress towards a better future, where there are better working conditions for workers and their families and thus for society as a whole.

Many people are depicted in the murals but they share some common features. Most are white and Western (only two African-Americans can be identified and there appear to be no indigenous, Hispanic or Asian people). They all have clearly differentiated roles, which fit together seamlessly; it would appear that the ideal society is made up of this effortless jigsaw of work. They are predominantly young to middle-aged adults. The exceptions are a baby and two boys. Older people are hardly represented at all. They belong ostensibly to working and urban middle classes.

The people in the murals are healthy and capable of strenuous activity. In fact, everyone in the mural is active. They look satisfied and generally happy, or at least show a self-confidence and sense of fulfilment in carrying out their work. Even those in the most demanding trades, such as the workers using pneumatic drills, have a focused and self-assured manner. Universally, they appear to be happy with their lot. It is important to note that none of them rebel against the social order. In fact, they are positively contributing to society by fulfilling their roles in life.

All of the subjects perform their jobs to the best of their ability and in the safest possible way. Their progress in life depends on the long chain of actions in which they are involved. Their roles in society correspond to their places on the assembly line, and they appear to be determined to play these roles successfully. Skilled workers, teachers, musicians and artists are seamlessly integrated into a larger social and labour network. Hierarchies are not determined by birth but by the workers’ role in labour, in offices or in artistic and educational occupations.
On 19 June 1961, Jack Lynch, at that time Minister of Industry and Commerce, formally presented on behalf of the Irish government the mural “Irish Industrial Development”. It is located in the main stairway of the Centre William Rappard, on the wall facing Maurice Denis’s “The Dignity of Labour”.

Ireland has been a member of the ILO since its admittance to the League of Nations in September 1923, less than two years after the Irish Free State was founded and with the wounds of the subsequent Civil War still open. An ILO invitation in 1926 to contribute to the decoration of its new premises was well received by the young Irish government, whose delegates proposed a stained-glass window, known as the “Geneva Window”, by the artist Harry Clarke.

For three years, Clarke worked on creating this window, inspired by the Irish Literary Renaissance of the early twentieth century, in particular by the images of Irish folklore portrayed by William B. Yeats and other writers. The “Celtic Twilight” was depicted with references to legends and the inclusion of texts from famous Irish revivalist writers, but the patrons at the Irish Ministry of Industry and Commerce objected to the finished work and ruled that the government was not disposed to accept it for its original purpose. In particular, there were complaints about one of the characters depicted, Liam O’Flaherty’s “Mr. Gilhooley”, who “equipped with glass of malt, has a bleary eye levelled on a lightly clad female.”

In another window panel, a bottle of Guinness was apparent and in general they interpreted the work as displaying “liberal ideas” and a lack of religious elements. The sudden death of the artist on 6 January 1931 in Switzerland after returning from medical treatment in Davos resulted in the end of the project. The “Geneva Window” was retained by the Ministry in Dublin, and was never sent to Geneva because of the alleged implications of “sex, drunkenness and sin”.

Many years later, in April 1957, new contacts between the Irish government and the ILO (represented by Michael O’Callaghan) resulted in the idea of an institutional gift being revived. Thirty years after Clarke’s ignominious rejection, his friend Seán Keating was commissioned in 1959 to undertake a new work. In May 1960, Keating travelled to Geneva to inspect the hanging space and returned again in 1961 to install the mural panels before it was officially unveiled during the 45th session of the International Labour Conference.

With flamboyant flair, “Irish Industrial Development” presents a traditional view of Ireland and, at the same time, a positive perspective of the country’s development. The artist continued in the same vein for his work for the Irish Pavilion at the New York World Fair, which depicted in a highly realistic manner the country’s building prowess.

Art historian Joseph McBrinn remarked that placing “Irish Industrial Development” in front of “The Dignity of Labour” “would fit perfectly into the larger scheme of the ‘néo-traditionniste’ Catholic mural painting espoused by Denis.” He points to the striking
visual and ideological affinities between Denis’s and Keating’s religious-political murals, particularly those in the Centre William Rappard. “Irish Industrial Development” also has close connections with Dean Cornwell’s murals regarding the depiction of social hierarchies between workers and employers.

Seán Keating’s mural depicts various scenes of industrial and agricultural development in Ireland using the multiple-scene approach of simultaneously showing events that are taking place at different times or locations.

On the left, a group of four workers are working with electricity cables. Also on the left, shown under a construction ladder, the artist includes a portrait of himself looking directly at the viewer with a portrait of Jack Lynch looking upwards. In the foreground a group of three scientists in laboratory coats are working, with a toolbox at their feet. In the centre of the mural, a construction worker is shown in front of what appears to be a red water tank with a tall grain storage tower in the background. The right-hand section of the mural shows a ship moored to a dock, a large crane, a car and a tractor. These objects are being observed by someone in casual dress. Separated from the vessel by a grove of birch trees, a traditional village and a country road are the backdrop for a jockey on horseback flanked by cattle.

Various references are included in this mural, with the aim of showing Ireland’s economic development. The ship in the dock to the right is a reference to Irish Shipping Ltd., a company majority owned by the state and formed in March 1941 to ensure the supply of food and other cargo during wartime. On the ship’s hull the name Arch is visible, which may refer to the Irish Larch dry cargo vessel owned by Irish Shipping from 1956 to 1968.

The jockey on the thoroughbred horse is a reference to Ireland’s horse racing industry, and in particular the Irish Hospitals’ Sweepstake,
which ran a lottery linked to major horse races. Winners were determined according to the results of various races, including the Derby, the Cambridgeshire and the Grand National. The “Sweep” in Ireland became an important source of financial revenue, providing funding to build many of the country’s hospitals between 1930 and 1986. A significant amount of the funding was raised from Irish immigrants in the United Kingdom and the United States, where lotteries were generally illegal.

The group of four men working with cables relates to Keating’s interest in electricity. His artistic work regarding the Ardnacrusha hydroelectric power station, originally referred to as the Shannon Scheme, is an evocative and colourful record of the most significant industrial development of the early years in the history of the Irish Free State.

The three scientists with white laboratory coats in the foreground of the mural are, according to Eimear O’Connor, working on a computer. It is unlikely that the artist or his patrons could have guessed that 50 years later Ireland would become one of the most important exporters of computers and software in the world. Nonetheless, the scene may be viewed as a farsighted vision of the country’s economic development in the twenty-first century.

Seán Keating (1889-1977)

Seán Keating was born in Limerick, the eldest son of 11 children of a middle-class ledger clerk and his wife. After secondary school, he left Limerick: “We were very poor. I left because I hated it. … I knew I wanted to be a painter.” Keating was awarded a scholarship to the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art and trained as an artist and art teacher. He was an advocate of nationalism, which was reflected in his paintings during the First World War. Keating produced idealistic images of the West of Ireland, which would gradually evolve into allegorical and realistic representations of the landscape and people of that region. He documented iconic images of the Irish War of Independence and the Civil War. In the late 1930s and 1940s, his disenchantment with political and economic conditions was evident in his work. He was accepted at the Royal Hibernian Academy, which would elect him as its president from 1949 to 1962. He was very active in lobbying support from the government for the artistic community. He published numerous articles and was involved in broadcasting. Seán Keating died on 21 December 1977, aged 88.
RITUALS AND INNOVATIONS

Centre William Rappard
Most weekdays from early morning the Centre William Rappard becomes a flurry of activity, with various events taking place within its walls. From international delegates hurrying to a meeting to WTO Secretariat staff striving to meet the latest deadline, everyone is contributing to the work of the organization with their own particular brand of skills and expertise.

The history and traditions of the organization play an important part in shaping how these activities are played out today. At the same time, the building is transforming itself for the challenges of the future.

To find out more, come and take a look inside as the Centre William Rappard is open to the public for guided tours on selected days throughout the year.
Protocol and Etiquette

Preparing for a breakfast meeting in the "Green Room" of the Director-General’s office.

Ali Said Mchumo, Ambassador of Tanzania and Chairperson of the WTO General Council (centre), closing the meeting on 8 February 2000.

Anumugamangalam Venkatachalam Ganesan of India (right) at his swearing-in as member of the WTO Appellate Body in Room X, 3 July 2000.
At the WTO – as was previously the case in the GATT Secretariat – representatives sit opposite each other in boardroom style, with delegates occupying both sides of parallel long tables. This reflects the fact that at WTO meetings, authority rests with the members, not with the appointed or elected chairperson.
Protocol and Etiquette

Karen Chashmanian, Armenia’s Minister of Trade and Economic Development (left), receives a gift from WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy in his office, 22 September 2005.

Informal meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee in the Council Room, 30 June 2006.

Preparations for a TV interview with the WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy in the studio at the Centre William Rappard, 21 March 2007.
VIP Visits

Prince and Princess Hitachi of Japan (centre) arriving at the Centre William Rappard (headquarters of the ILO at that time), 18 November 1965.

Seán Thomas O’Kelly, President of Ireland, 1945-1959 (right), with ILO Deputy Director-General Jaf Renv (left), 1956.

Abbé Pierre, founder of the Emmaus movement (left), with ILO Deputy Director-General Abbas Ammar (right), 1959.

Abdallah Bey Khalil, Prime Minister of Sudan (left), signing the ILO guestbook, circa 1957.
VIP Visits


- President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela (left), and President of Brazil, Fernando Henrique Cardoso (right), chatting informally at a conference to mark the 50th anniversary of the GATT/WTO, 18 May 1998.

- Pope Paul VI (centre) and ILO Director-General David A. Morse (left) during the papal visit to the Centre William Rappard, 10 June 1969.

- Diana, Princess of Wales (centre right), and other dignitaries leaving a conference of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, at that time housed in the south wing of the Centre William Rappard, 1 October 1991.
Heads of state and other important visitors typically receive a red carpet welcome and are met at the foot of the main staircase, by the principal host, frequently the Director-General. An informal meeting usually takes place in the Director-General’s conference room. After the meeting, the visitor is asked to sign the guest book.
Centre William Rappard: Home of the World Trade Organization, Geneva
Group Visits

- Visit of Korean delegates to WTO Deputy Director-General Chulsu Kim (front row, centre), 26 October 1996.
- Workers’ representatives at a meeting of the ILO Chemical Industries Committee during a coffee break in the Salle des Pas-Percus, circa 1990.
- A group of nurses from German-speaking countries visiting the Centre William Rappard (ILO) in 1927.
Occasionally, situations arise that provoke industrial action from international civil servants. Important meetings such as the WTO Ministerial Conference sometimes attract another form of protest, with demonstrators seeking to draw attention to their particular grievances.
Protests

▲ Members of Confédération Paysanne protesting about agricultural products with hormones being imported into Europe, 15 April 1996.

▲ Greenpeace draping the building with a banner in 1990 to protest against the patenting of plants, animals and DNA.

<< WTO staff members rejecting changes to the pension rights, 1 November 1997.

<<< Silent protest at the Centre William Rappard in 1972 by ILO staff demanding better working conditions for general service staff members.
Public Events

Members of the public enjoying the lake-side activities during WTO Open Day, 19 September 2010.

Local specialities prepared by the mission of Korea for sale to the public at the Open Day, 19 September 2010. All proceeds raised during the Open Day were donated to a local charity.

A WTO staff member explaining the finer points of “The Dignity of Labour” by Maurice Denis during one of the guided tours of the 2009 Open Day.
First held in 2009, the WTO Open Day provides the people of Geneva and other Swiss and French neighbouring cities with the opportunity to visit the Centre William Rappard and its grounds, and to enjoy a guided tour of the building. Another important annual event is the WTO Public Forum, which brings together non-governmental organizations, academics, businesses and students to discuss issues regarding the multilateral trading system.
Centre William Rappard: Home of the World Trade Organization, Geneva
Innovative solutions are needed not only to conduct international negotiations among nations but also to provide the best possible environment for those negotiations and for the daily activity of the WTO. Once the construction work has been completed, the Centre William Rappard will house 1,100 workstations and eight large and medium-sized conference rooms.
1 Citations from Busby 1926.
2 See William Rappard's biography in chapter 2, page 16.

4 Coomaraswamy 1956: 173.
5 Rappard 1930: 232.
6 Phelan 1949: 117.
7 Phelan 1949: 117.
8 Butler 1941: 20.


12 Lamy 2005.
15 Rivaz 2001: 11.
18 Cohen 1968: 71.

20 Furthermore, Wilfred Benson translated Albert Cohen's Soloal into English in 1933.
22 Ali 2010: 5.

26 Most of the information about the Rote Drei has been taken from the intriguing article by Jaci Eisenberg in the ILO Friends publication (Eisenberg 2010: 23-28).

27 Petschen 2010: 45 (“La disposición de los locales puede facilitar la del espíritu”).
28 Olivier Long to FIPCO, 16 May 1975 (ILO Historical Archives, Adm. New Building, 102-01).
29 Snowden T. Henrick (ILO New York) to Marjorie Luchen, 28 October 1955 (ILO Historical Archives ADM 102-61-5).
32 Metamorphoses, X.
33 We are not sure what Galatea’s reaction will be when she realises who is her creator and that he is in love with her, but as viewers we are conditioned by the mythical tradition and we tend to believe that she will be equally amorous of the sculptor.
34 Although guardian angels are present in the Old Testament from the book of Genesis onwards.
35 Taylor 1987: 123.
36 Aangeboeden doo rhet Internationaal Verbond van Volkveereiningen, Amsterdam namens circa 14.000.000 georganiseerde arbeiders, Januari 1926.
37 Jan Oudegeest (Fédération Syndicale Internationale - IFTU) to ILO, 23 December 1925.
38 Ecclesiastes 1, 7. Another fountain, in the Seely Wintersmith Mudd Hall of Philosophy at University of Southern California, Los Angeles (USA), is carved with approximately the same inscription.
39 For instance, Leviticus 26:5, John 21:3, Exodus 22:1-31 for grape picking, fishing and agriculture, respectively.

42 Maurice Denis to Albert Thomas, 2 March 1930, cited in Delpal 2002: 156.
44 The original sketches were lent by the ILO Historical Archives and are currently exhibited in the access to the Office of the Director-General in the Centre William Rappard.
45 The Building Foundation for International Organizations (FIPCO, Fondation des Immeubles pour les Organisations Internationales) is the owner of the Centre William Rappard. The Swiss Confederation and the Canton of Geneva created FIPCO in 1964 to provide and maintain buildings and facilities to intergovernmental organizations headquartered in Geneva. The gardeners’ villa, located south of the Centre William Rappard to the Rue de lausanne, has been demolished to build a new annexe.
46 Harold Butler to Spencer Miller (Workers’ Education Bureau of America), 14 April 1936 (this and the following documents in the ILO Historical Archives, ADM 102-61-5).
47 Spencer Miller to Harold Butler, 4 May 1936.
48 David Cornwell to David Morse (ILO), 18 June 1953.
49 David Morse to Matthew Wolf (APL), 30 November 1955.
50 Finn 1993: 15.
51 The “Geneva Window” was bought back by the artist’s family and remained in his Dublin house for nearly three decades. It was exhibited in the Municipal Gallery in Dublin and in 1988 in the Fine Arts Society in London. That year the window was purchased by the businessman and collector Mitchell “Micky” Wolfson, Jr. for his Wolfsonian Museum in Miami Beach, United States.
52 McBinn 2007: 280.
53 Although there is a resemblance with contemporary pictures of Patrick Hillery (1923-2008), who succeeded Jack Lynch as minister of industry and commerce, this model appears on a number of Keating works. He often used old photographs or images from magazines. Some of the material for “Irish Industrial Development” was taken from cutouts from National Geographic magazine (correspondence with Éimíar O’Connor, 8 July, 2009. I am thankful to Dr. O’Connor for this and other useful references about Sean Keating’s mural.
54 Irish Shipping vessels were usually named after trees.
55 Digital computers have been developed in the U.S. since the 1940s. In 1955, the MIT’s Whirlwind machine was the first digital computer with magnetic random access memory and in the UK, the EDSAC computer was the first stored programme electronic computer. In 2003-2009, Ireland has consistently been in the top 15 world exporters of Office and Automatic Data Processing Equipment.
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*Bookshelves in the Library carved out of cherry wood.*