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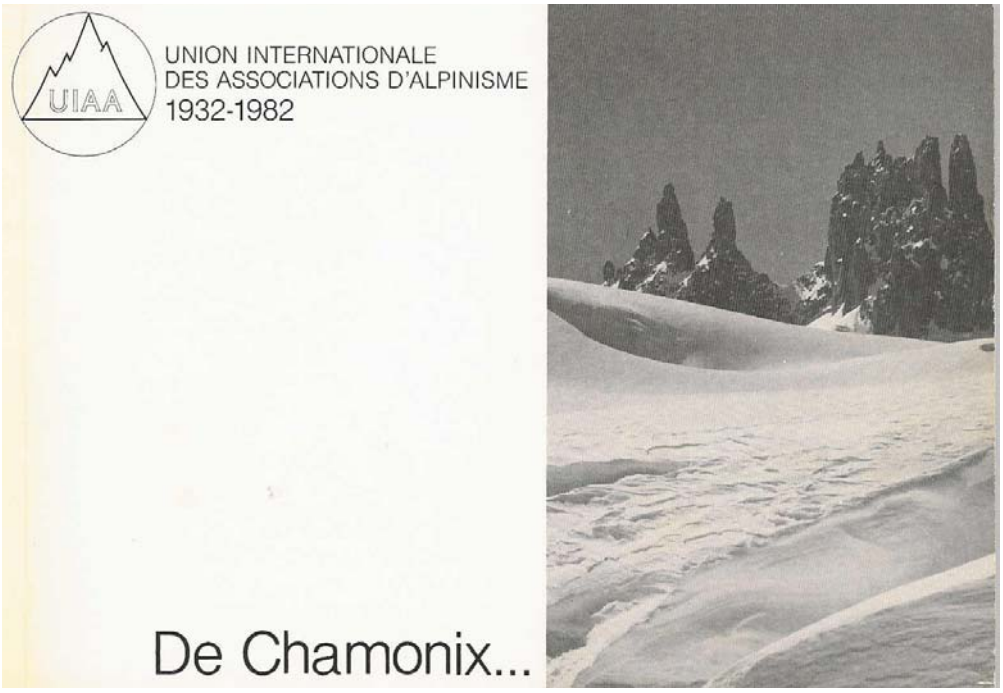
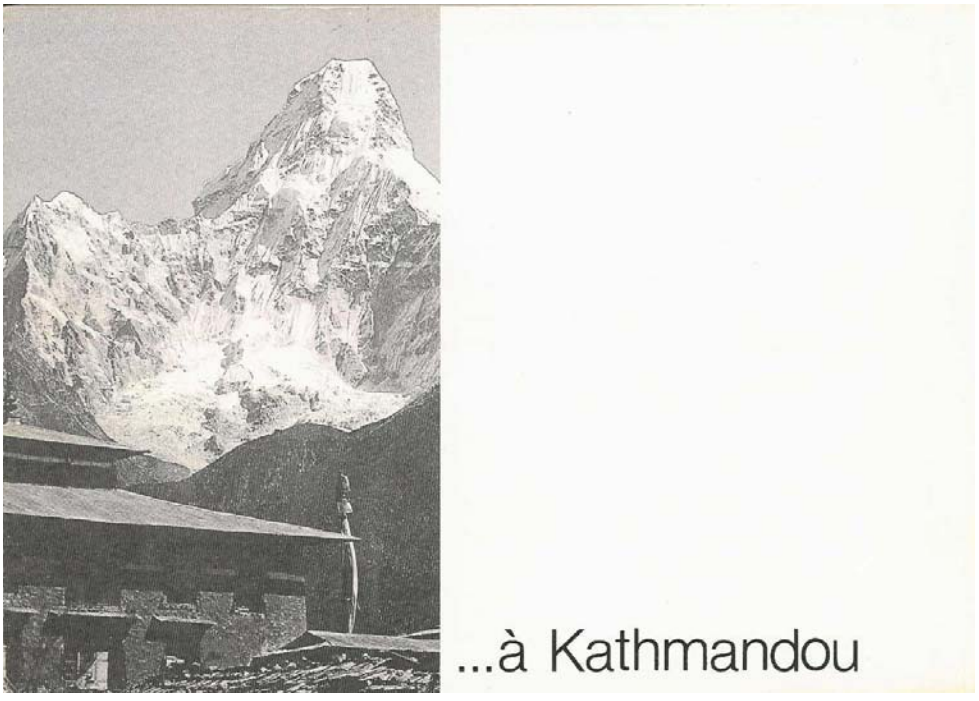
- the first 50 years of the International Union of Mountaineering Associations

By Pierre Bossus, translated from original French by Andrew John Kaufman





Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme 1932-1982
- the first 50 years of the International Union of Mountaineering Associations

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1. Introduction

Half a century has passed since the UIAA was founded. This is both a short and a long time; short because only continuity of action can prove constructive in a world of constant change; long when one reflects that at the outset the Union was no more than a meeting place for men who shared the same ideals.

Still, mountain sports play a role whose importance is constantly growing in the world; and it therefore seems useful to observe this anniversary by issuing a modest booklet. It will remind us of the main events in the UIAA's history and outline its projects for the future, thereby demonstrating that the torch which was raised in 1932 still brightens the mountain trail.

It is a truism to say that mountaineering is an activity related to the nature of the terrain on which it takes place: the art of rock-climbing cannot in fact be practiced without a particular configuration of the ground. Ever since the dawn of mountaineering history, climbers have been attracted to mountain research and exploration out of respect for fundamental values and without regard for geographic or political considerations. It is self-evident that, since its beginnings, mountaineering has been an international vocation. The world's earliest climbing club, the prestigious British Alpine Club, had as its statutory objective the task of assembling sportsmen who were engaged in the exploration of foreign mountains, notably the Alps.

Although started in the Alps and practiced at first by Europeans, it was only natural that alpinism should have been exported to all countries endowed with rocky or glaciated massifs: mountaineering organizations have been created on every continent, from Alaska to the Andes, from Scandinavia to New Zealand. The universality of mountaineering as a sport at once mirrors the condition of its existence and the fulfilment of a human need for intercourse and friendship.

Nevertheless this booklet cannot describe the history of mountain exploration - nor is it intended to. It will only have achieved its purpose if it bears witness to the efforts made to group together men whose eyes are turned toward the world's high places.

I would like to close with a definition of terms. Because the exploration of mountains was first developed in the Alps, the term alpinism was rapidly adopted to describe the new occupation. When climbers began to take on the Andes and the Himalayas, there arose the neologisms andinism and himalayanism despite the fact that the occupation remained unchanged. But it was soon recognized that the original word was more practical. We shall therefore use the term alpinism or (in the English translation) mountaineering to describe our sport without in any way intending to impose on others the thought that climbers in the Alps are in any way entitled to supremacy!

2. Historical Development of International Mountaineering

Even in the sports-oriented UIAA mountaineering persists as an activity favourable to meetings and discussions among men of all backgrounds. Nil novi sub sole (there is nothing new under the sun): we all know of many examples of mountaineering solidarity that go back to the beginnings of civilization in the Alps, some twenty-five centuries before the UIAA started to preach understanding among climbers.

The fact is that the mountain code requires that those who live in high places must band together if they are to survive in a hostile environment. On both sides of the Alps, and in very early times, high altitude peasant communities got together to build trails to improve communications over high passes, to maintain irrigation systems, to perpetuate the existence of protective forests, etc. But despite the fine example of this mutual assistance, it must be conceded that the affected people acted above all out of practical considerations and for utilitarian reasons often related to financial resources that became available whenever commercial caravans crossed the ranges.

The climbing solidarity heralded in the last century by the pioneers of alpine exploitation stems rather from forces of basically spiritual origins whose objective is to achieve that brotherhood which is a peculiarity of international mountaineering. It is by studying the development of this ideal that one finds the true framework out of which the UIAA was born.

After the establishment of the Alpine Club in 1857 there followed that of the Oesterreichischer Alpenverein (Austrian Alpine Association) in 1862; the Club Alpin Suisse (Swiss Alpine Club) and the Club Alpino Italiano (Italian Alpine Club) were created in 1863; then in 1869 came the Deutscher Alpenverein (German Alpine Association) and the Club Alpin Francais (French Alpine Club) in 1874. International get-togethers took place almost immediately after these events. In the pursuit of common goals it was natural for these associations to increase the number of friendly meetings in the course of which each participant could recognize in his neighbour an eager fellow man urged forward by identical passions.

In the course of these meetings the clubs traded experiences and undertook to improve their ties the better to defend their common interests. In an effort to establish unity in the climbing world, they felt the need for closer links. While multilateral relations were, in time, to supersede - though not to exclude - those of a bilateral nature, many years were nevertheless to pass before the need for co-operation among associations affirmed itself and before that co-operation was to become a reality. Still, the first meetings constituted a sort of UIAA prehistory, and it is all the more proper that their memory be evoked in view of men's all too frequent belief that all good things in the world had their beginnings during their own lifetimes.

It is accordingly interesting to recall that it was in 1864 that the Alpine Club took note of its rope, axe and alpenstock committee's first report; and it is even more interesting to observe that technicians had at that time concluded that a satisfactory rope should resist a single shock resulting from a fall of 76 kilograms over a height of 3.5 meters. Today's safety commission sets a standard of 80 kilos, 5 meters and 5 shocks!

It was for the youngest, but at the same time the most active, of the great European clubs to initiate the first of two international congresses held respectively in Annecy and Aix-les-Bains in 1876 and in Grenoble and Uriage in 1877. At that time the president of the French Alpine Club was A. Joanne who, in his speech on the benefits of global mountaineering, described its promotion as an activity permitting climbers of various nationalities to get to know one another, to be of service to one another, and, above all,

to appreciate and love one another. Do not these words in part reflect UIAA objectives as we see them in our day?

During the Gressonay congress in 1877, Q. Sella, president of the Italian Alpine Club, gave a memorable speech before some one hundred foreign climbers, and went into questions of general interest such as guide certification, hut construction, reduced rail fares for climbers, the study of glacier movements, etc... It was at this point that all present recognized that the substance of these matters was supra-national and should be handled by a joint organization; for it was clear that mountains are the heritage of the entire alpine community, which includes its inhabitants, its valleys and its visitors.

The third meeting was the International Conference of Alpine Clubs, which took place in Geneva in 1879 under the chairmanship of A. Freundler, president of the Swiss Alpine Club. In the course of the meetings, the assembly unanimously voted a proposal by E. Talbert of France intended to establish a confederation of all alpine clubs whose purpose would be to organize periodic conferences on matters of general interest. This decision, which contained the germ of the UIAA, unfortunately was not followed up at the time.

It should be noted that, in addition to the German, British, Austrian, Spanish, French and Swiss representatives, an American delegate, Mr. R. Cross, participated in the Geneva session. This would appear to have been the first formal connection between the associations of the Old and New Worlds. But we should not forget the important contribution of certain major American personalities to relations among various clubs: one should note, among others, W.A.B. Coolidge, an American expatriate who became an alpine historian, and Professor Charles Fay in whose home the first American club, the Appalachian Mountain Club, was founded in 1876, and who was later to be president of the American Alpine Club. When it is recalled that the Alpine Club of New Zealand was founded at the end of the last century, it becomes clear that mountaineering had by then grown into a global activity, and that the holding of one another’s hands had finally become the natural thing for climbers to do.

Other alpine congresses took place in 1879 in Paris (at the time of the World Fair), in 1882 in Salzburg, at Ivrea at the close of the century, and again, in 1900, in Paris. Still, these meetings remained informal and took place at the invitation of a club president. The First World War temporarily suspended international relations, and it was not until the Monaco conference that international ties were renewed. The idea proposed in Geneva forty years earlier ripened slowly.

Mountaineering symbolism may be found in several speeches given before the League of Nations, whose headquarters were in Geneva. Among them are the official observations of H. Young (brother of the great mountaineer, Geoffrey Winthrop Young), who was a British delegate to the Disarmament Conference: Those among you who have climbed in the mountains will have observed that, in the Alps, one does not always go to the top by the most direct route; the summit which we seek to reach is that of peace, and the fastest way of reaching it will not necessarily be the one that goes straight up.

At the Congresses of Zakopane in 1930 and Budapest in 1931 the delegates considered speeding up the movement and specifically expressed their wish that there be at last created a permanent agency destined to serve as a link among climbing clubs and to assist in the exchange of ideas, information and documents. All those present recognized that, if there indeed exists any field of activity in which international collaboration has a place, then mountaineering is assuredly the one.

The first circular announcing the Chamonix congress specified that the key point of discussion was to be the idea of an international organization of mountaineering clubs whose creation had, in principle, been decided upon in Poland and Hungary. The president of the French Alpine Club, M. Jean Escarra, invited all associations on this occasion to give their approval at the earliest to the preliminary ad hoc committee; but this appeal went higher, for he added: The common sentiment which unites us must act as a counterweight to the political and economic differences that can divide our peoples; such is the task of reconciliation in which we invite you to participate.

3. The Founding and First Assembly of the UIAA

The third international alpine congress was held in Chamonix from August 21 to September 3, 1932; the date and venue were accidentally symbolic because the conquest of Mont Blanc by the Genevese H.E. de Saussure had taken place exactly 150 years earlier. Any meeting of climbers evokes ascents, and those of Mont Blanc and the Aiguilles du Tour and Moine were on the agenda (perhaps because someone wanted to shorten the debates)!

There were eighteen countries represented at this historic meeting through their national or proxy delegates: Germany, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Spain, the United States, France, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Italy, New Zealand, Netherlands, Poland, Rumania, Sweden, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. In fact, the assembly was even more representative, for almost all the delegations included members provided by small regional clubs, ski clubs and tourist associations, etc.; moreover the congress was in no way male-chauvinist since women were present in the British group (Ladies Alpine Club of London and Scottish Ladies Alpine Club), as well as in the Swiss delegation (Swiss Club of Women Mountaineers). But all countries represented at Chamonix were still not immediately to become members of the Union, this largely because of their geographical remoteness from the organization's headquarters.

It was at the August 27 plenum, held at the Majestic Hotel, that the delegates conclusively became aware of the opportunity to create a federation which would include all climbing clubs; and, immediately giving action to their thoughts, they unanimously and with general enthusiasm established a permanent organization. Then, without hesitation, they entrusted the new organization with a) the study and solution (no less) of all problems regarding mountaineering in general; and, b) the preparation of future climbing congresses.

The first elected Executive Committee consisted of Mrs. J. Escarra (president of the French Alpine Club), J. Withers (president of the Alpine Club), J. Vigyazo (president of the Hungarian Tourist Association), G. Bobba (Italian Alpine Club), W. Goetel (Polish Tatra Society), O. Sjorgren (president of the Swedish Alpine Club), and F. Guggler (president of the Swiss Alpine Club). Its president was not formally designated, but the delegates stipulated that he be appointed by the Swiss Alpine Club: accordingly he was to be a Swiss.

At its last meeting, the Chamonix congress decided to supply the new organization with more specific tasks, notably the following:

- The encouragement of mountaineering education for the young;
- The development and standardization of trail markers;
- The posting of avalanche warnings on classic routes;
- The protection of shelters from vandalism;
- The establishment of a system for rating climbing difficulties that would not overlook the importance of meteorological and psychological factors;
- The siting of shelters in such fashion that they be erected at low enough an altitude to prevent any degradation of the routes they serve as points of departure.

On October 4 the executive committee of the Swiss Alpine Club offered the presidency of the UIAA to Count Egmont d'Arcis, whose nomination was approved on November 24 by the Swiss Alpine Club's general assembly. Who was d'Arcis? Born in Italy of a British

father and Swiss mother, he spoke four languages fluently; a climbing enthusiast, he was from his earliest years in the habit of travelling around the Alps without much concern for national boundaries, much in the manner things had been done before the first World War; as a writer, as well as a journalist assigned to the League of Nations, he was subjected to the influence of Geneva, a city which has traditionally had an international calling; added to mountaineering, his cultural background predisposed him to grapple with the themes of international brotherhood and peace without which it is hardly possible to conceive of the existence of frontier-free mountaineering.

Egmont d'Arcis immediately established the first permanent office (a better term would have been committee), which consisted of L.J. Fatio, J.F. Michel, E.A. Robert and A. Roussy. All these men were Genevese, and the UIAA had its official headquarters in the home of its president and in the city of John Calvin. Just as in the case of d'Arcis' appointment so the selection of headquarters may be explained by the fact that Geneva, situated on the northern foot of the Alpine crescent 80 kilometres from Mont Blanc and at Europe's geographical centre, was also dedicated by its history as a neutral city to become the cradle of international mountaineering.

The first mention of the full term International Union of Mountaineering Associations (Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme) was made at the end of November 1932 in an exchange of letters. Paradoxically, it should be noted that not one delegate at Chamonix took the trouble to concern himself with the designation of the new organization and, in the end, it would appear that the title UIAA was adopted by Egmont d'Arcis himself.

The initials UIAA were occasionally challenged, especially in the first post-war years, by those who observed that a succession of four vowels was euphonically unfortunate; and some delegates proposed the simpler and perfectly accurate title International Mountaineering Union (Union Internationale d'Alpinisme), but the president was so committed to his term that he refused to support any change. A new effort was made in 1967 under the impetus of the Latin-American Clubs which proposed International Union of Mountain Associations (Union Internationale des Associations de Montagne) in an effort to avoid giving extra weight to the Alps as related to the Andes (Andinism) and the Himalayas (Himalayism) but the tradition prevailed and, today, the establishment of the seal of approval prohibits further discussion of this question.

It should be noted moreover that because it was adopted in 1965 the UIAA emblem is relatively new. In 1933 the Swiss topographer, Jacot-Guillermod suggested an emblem for the UIAA in the shape of an oval shield representing a mountain; but the delegates rejected it, for at that time they feared the Union might liken itself to an international superclub.

The first UIAA assembly took place in 1933 at Cortina d'Ampezzo at the invitation of the Italian Alpine Club and in the shape of a fourth international mountaineering congress. Thirty-three organizations were present, emanating from eighteen countries which were the real founders of the Union: Germany, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Spain, the United States, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Rumania, Sweden, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia; but in the end the UIAA was to consist of no more than ten member organizations and fourteen affiliates. Worthy of a comic footnote is the case of the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club which resigned after having joined without knowing what the matter was all about!

The meeting was very short, something that, unfortunately, future sessions would fail to imitate. In less than two hours the delegates approved the Union’s by-laws which were based on the political formula of the League of Nations. Egmont d'Arcis obtained

agreement on three essential points: a) the UIAA was to be immediately considered as a global entity; b) each country was to have one vote irrespective of the country's political importance; c) the agencies of the new federation were to be the General Assembly, the Executive Committee (which played the role of a counsel and was about to hold its first meeting), and the Permanent Bureau or Standing Office. The assembly recognized four official languages: French, English, German and Italian. In addition, it created the first standing commissions whose tasks were to study mountaineering, alpine tourism, mountain science, and mountain art and literature.

Filled with enthusiasm, the delegates approved a budget of 6,000 gold francs to be raised by means of a progressive dues system going from twenty-five to seventy-five francs depending on the size of the member clubs. But the total actually collected came to only a third this amount and the treasurer was forced to perform prodigious balancing acts to enable the Unions' administration to function.

The assembly decided that the member organizations would be liable for emergency cost unpaid by the membership: a pious wish and even today a controversial one. It also requested the Bureau to take steps to assist the movements of climbers in frontier regions. Every discussion indicated that member organizations were all equally concerned with the development of mountain sports. As the guardians of the experience and mores that have distinguished mountaineering history, the clubs expressed it as their wish that they henceforth be the beneficiaries of an evolutionary process that would eventually eliminate the problems of national frontiers.

As President d'Arcis declared, it was a good start. The Bureau was now meeting in Geneva once a fortnight. One of its members, J.F. Michel delivered before the assembly a detailed report on winter mountaineering, skiing, topographic maps and route-marking. During the UIAA's early years many studies, which, however, did not always result in concrete action, were similarly submitted for approval by the delegates.

Before adjourning to climb the Tofana die Mezzo (Dolomites) the delegates found time to approve a motion supporting opposition to cable-car construction on the Meije and in the rock-climbing areas of the Saléve. This was the Unions' first step to protect the mountain environment. During the closing ceremony Egmont d'Arcis was awarded honorary membership in the Italian Alpine Club and in the Czechoslovakian organization. Lastly, in honour of Switzerland, which was the headquarters of the UIAA, Pontresina was selected as the next meeting's site.

Worthy of mention, finally, are the observations of A. Manaresi, president of the Italian Alpine Club: The UIAA must bring together the aristocracy of mountaineering, in other words all those who do not view mountaineering as an agreeable and munificent sport alone, but who are able to find in it an unsullied ideal of loyalty and kindness which enriches life and makes men better. President d'Arcis replied that mountaineering is an art with high moral significance.

4. The Pre-War Years

Despite the fact that UIAA was to have trouble in converting its members' wishes to realities, the first seven years (1932-1939) were to be a period of creativity. Chi va piano va sano e va lontano (he who goes softly goes safely and far): Egmont d'Arcis paraphrased this saying by asserting that he who hurries at the start of a climb runs much risk of never reaching the top. It was his opinion that one should not rush the Union's development, but move forward prudently while leaving to time the trouble of keeping good intentions out of blind alleys. As a practical matter, the snail's pace may be explained as much by the need for frequent consultation as by the aversion of member clubs to share their prerogatives.

The president tolerated rather than approved the first standing commissions created at Cortina. Mandated with overly vague objectives, these groups were, moreover, hardly to be heard from thereafter. D'Arcis suggested as a set-off that the UIAA create an information centre for everything having to do with mountaineering. The date would be intended both for clubs and climbers. This liberal idea was not implemented because of lack of funds. Nevertheless, it answered a need, because, in our era, institutions such as the High Mountain Office (Office de Haute Montagne) in Chamonix and the Mountain House (Maison de la Montagne) in Munich have achieved the ambitious notions of 1933.

The Bureau was obliged to draw a clear line between the administrative tasks needed to insure smooth functioning of the UIAA and the study of the program of action, namely the topics to be discussed at the congresses. Inadequate preparation for meetings at that time represented a major snag in their orderly progression. At certain times delegates had to listen to endless talks on unrelated and improbable subjects, from mountain fishing to the connection between bicycling and mountaineering (possibly an allusion to the Schmid brothers' exploit on the Matterhorn's north face).

As early as 1934 the purpose of many debates was the question of reciprocal rights. The problem was to determine whether discounts granted by hut-landlord organizations to their national members should be extended to members of foreign organizations. Since the end of the nineteenth century, to be sure, discounts had been offered to members of foreign organizations that owned alpine shelters, but this rule did not apply to persons belonging to clubs that owned no huts, such as the Benelux associations. In the name of mountaineering brotherhood, the UIAA took a stab at a general resolution of the problems that barred the way to reciprocal privileges: it placed on sale special cards which guaranteed financial advantages throughout the Alpine crescent. Later, groups belonging to a UIAA member-club, and which gave advance notice of their arrival at huts, were offered a special rate. But these two patchwork solutions, being both inadequate and unsatisfactory, did not achieve the success anticipated.

Under the Executive Committee's impetus, the Bureau undertook studies of matters of interest to all mountain people. Its first written reports covered the following topics:

1. The recovery of expenses resulting from mountain rescue activities (1933 and 1934);
2. International mutual aid funds for indigent victims of climbing accidents (1935, 1936 and 1937);
3. Standardization of maps intended for winter journeys (1933 and 1934);
4. Weather forecasting and warnings regarding winter dangers in the mountains (1933 and 1934);
5. Protection of shelters against acts of vandalism (1934 and 1935);

6. Preventive and defensive measures against the construction of cable cars and railroads in the high mountains (1934);
7. National parks in adjacent mountain ranges (1934);
8. The creation of scientific and literary sections (1935);
9. The outlining and marking of mountain trails (1936 and 1937);
10. Mountaineering education for youth (1936);
11. International code of distress signals (1936, 1937 and 1938);
12. Tourist traffic in national borderlands (1935 and 1937);
13. Air support and rescue activity (1937);
14. Insurance for members of mountaineering Club, as well as for guides, porters and hut-keepers (1935);
15. Rescue equipment in the mountains (1935);
16. The free-of-charge supplying of skis to children (1933);
17. New materials for hut construction (1935);
18. Composition of a first-aid kit for use at huts (1935);
19. Harmful effects and dangers of sunlight on the human body (1936);
20. Training, obligations and duties of guides (1937 and 1938);
21. New methods for the illumination of huts (1938);
22. Civil responsibilities of skiers and legal questions thereto related (1936 and 1939);
23. International Commission for avalanche studies (1934, 1935, 1936, 1937 and 1938);
24. The protection of the mountain environment (1936, 1937, 1938 and 1939);
25. Alpine museums.

The variety of studies undertaken bears witness to the broadmindedness of the UIAA's first executives and especially pointed to the need to disseminate data hitherto held up at national frontiers. While few of the topics entered upon

achieved fruition, it is nonetheless evident that collectively these reports were a forecast of future post-war orientations. Such was the seed that was to germinate twenty years later!

In addition the UIAA organized three shows:

a. a display of mountain rescue equipment in Geneva in 1936;
b. a demonstration of the use of ropes on the Zermatt glaciers in 1939;
c. an attempt to make radio contact between the Gornergrat and the Monte Rosa cabin, also at Zermatt in 1939.

In addition the Union edited a table of cartographic symbols used in ski touring. These symbols were to be adopted in Spain, France, Norway, Poland, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia. The Bureau published a handbill reproducing conventional distress signals. Let it be added that, following the UIAA's proposal, seconded by the Swiss Ski

Federation, it now became possible in Switzerland to organize an avalanche-risk warning service.

All these activities proved expensive, despite the fact that volunteer work was the rule both within the Bureau and among the members of the Executive Committee. A better financial foundation was assured by amending the dues scales on the upside (an example which was frequently to be repeated!), and with the new categories going progressively from fifty to two hundred and fifty francs. Yet starting in 1935, one already finds traces of many treasurers' reminders to organizations that had failed to meet their obligations.

In 1935 the UIAA consisted of twenty-three ordinary or affiliated members representing fourteen countries. The reason for the decline in membership stemmed from the international political situation, and it was noted moreover that the times were not yet ripe to permit all clubs in any one country to merge into a single association.

The UIAA opened its doors to art and, in 1936, Egmont d'Arcis published in a local newspaper a study regarding some musical compositions with mountain-inspired themes: Schumann's Manfred (featuring the Alpine horn), Strauss's Alpine Symphony, Rossini's William Tell, J. Dalcroze's Alpine Poem, Charpentier's On the Crests, etc.

During the same year the delegates turned down a proposal for an international UIAA medal which was to have been awarded in exceptional circumstances. This decision was reached following the remarks of M. Baranek of France who expressed the hope that clubs would never again grant testimonials and medals to the authors of mountaineering exploits, because the spirit of competition poisons mountaineering ideals.

Be it noted that at the beginning of December, 1937, A. Sommer (Switzerland) turned over his original register to the UIAA. This volume, which featured the signatures of several UIAA founders, has unfortunately disappeared. It was to be replaced in 1948 by the current register.

The UIAA's principal field of activity continued to be Europe, but there was a rising problem about its expansion on other continents. A letter from G. Bobba, delegate of the Italian Alpine Club, emphasized the timeliness for the Union, in keeping with its international character, to take to heart the development of mountaineering in the Caucasus and Himalayas and open its doors to organizations which were sure to be created among those distant ranges. In this connection it might be noted that the adherence of the USSR was to take place in 1966 and that of Nepal in 1975.

Despite political instability, a general assembly was to bring together eleven organizations in Zermatt nine days before the outbreak of World War Two. The discussion centred on short-wave radio-telephone communication with high Alpine shelters, on the newly-invented twelve-point crampons, as well as on the tragedy that ensued after the first winter ascent of the Devil's Needles (Aiguilles du Diable) in France. A discussion also took place regarding the rubber soles invented a year earlier by Vitale Bramani (whence the name Vibram). Combined with rigid footwear, they were to lead to a transition from friction-based rock-climbing to a more static variety emphasizing the search for hold. Oddly enough, forty years later a reverse evolution took place with recourse to flexible climbing shoes on extremely difficult routes. The protection of nature provided the theme for a brilliant statement by the Pole, W. Goetel, following which a few delegates found time to climb the Matterhorn and the Dent Blanche, thereby demonstrating that the UIAA is not exclusively composed of bureaucrats!

During the difficult war years, the Bureau's members made an effort to maintain what was often to be personal touch with the largest possible number of clubs: but these links were slender and the UIAA had to turn on its night-lights. It was to the president's credit that he saved the archives by refusing to transfer them to a new mountaineering federation established in 1942 in Germany. Unfortunately a noteworthy portion of these historic documents was to vanish in the course of successive relocations of Union headquarters. In 1943 relations by mail were still being maintained with the Belgian, French, Greek, Italian, Dutch, Swedish, Czech and, of course, Swiss organizations. At this time Egmont d'Arcis conceived of getting together a rump assembly, but the meeting could not take place. The clubs had to content themselves with informing the president that it was his job to assume general leadership during hostilities.

5. Regeneration and Impetus

In 1945 president d'Arcis issued an appeal which represented a vibrant act of faith in the UIAA and in which he asked climbers to bring their support to the moral reconstruction of the world.,. for climbers can help nations resume relations and start acting. All the president's collaborators (consisting at that time of J. P. Michel, C. Perret, E. Robert and M. Trottet) immediately and persistently took steps to re-establish administrative co-ordination. Nevertheless times were hard, and an attempt to publish a house bulletin was unfortunately not followed up.

Zermatt was the site of a semi-official meeting in 1946 which again brought together the members of twelve associations from Belgium, France, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia. All participants decided to carry forward the work of the UIAA. Six additional clubs announced their adherence. In the course of a friendly discussion, d'Arcis appointed A. Roussy honorary secretary of the Union.

1947 was the year for the official resumption of regular UIAA assemblies. Meeting in Geneva fourteen delegates listened with emotion to the reading of the minutes of the 1939 session. On the agenda was the matter of reconstructing shelters destroyed by war: it was estimated that close to 115 cabins had been destroyed in France, Greece and Poland. The delegates decided to abolish the avalanche commission (which was to be replaced by government-operated bodies), and agreed moreover to dispense with the examination of financial accounts for the years 1940 to 1946. With regard to these, the Bureau paid tribute to the Belgian, French, Italian and Dutch clubs which, despite enormous difficulties, had made it a point of honour to pay their debts to the UIAA. Although present in Chamonix at its foundation, the British Alpine Club had always refused to join the UIAA because it did not consider itself qualified to represent Great Britain. By now admitting the British Mountaineering Council, the place normally reserved for the British was now occupied.

Beginning the following year, the Bureau regularly published a pamphlet listing mountaineering work published in European countries. A dozen issues and supplements (which unfortunately have vanished from UIAA archives) were to appear in all, and today we must regret that this international bibliographic index should have been dropped through lack of reader interest. The Bureau also edited a list of topographic maps of interest to climbers and hikers. It was also to concern itself with mountain trail-marking and the re-examination of topographic symbols on maps intended for skiers.

Then came a lax period during which some clubs temporarily lost interest in the UIAA. Granted, of course, that in 1948 the Union was the creature of the European associations: overseas members supplied the Union only with dues! In addition there was criticism about the failure (often resulting from fund shortages) to act on ideas submitted by the assemblies: an Alpine equipment fair could not be staged because of lack of support.

In spite of the gloom President d'Arcis was re-elected for a fourth term. New activities were considered: avalanche courses at the Weissfluhjoch (Switzerland), participation in the construction of a trail around Mont Blanc, etc. E. Franco staged an interesting demonstration of modern ice techniques on the Bossons glacier (Chamonix) in the delegates' presence. On this occasion, L. Devies (France) demanded with some passion that the experience of the few be made available to all.

In 1950 the UIAA nonetheless consisted of twenty-four associations representing twenty countries with a total of about 500,000 climbers. These countries were: Germany,

Argentina, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Spain, France, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Composed of five permanent and three non-permanent members, the Executive Committee was now in charge of carrying out the measures adopted by the General Assembly, of taking satisfactory action during the periods between assembly meetings, and of determining the amount of the dues. Egmont d'Arcis met once a month in his home with his collaborators and prepared executive orders. One of his concerns at this time was the cost of Bureau travel expenses which hitherto had been funded by the Swiss Alpine Club.

This was also the year when all major European associations rallied round the UIAA to oppose an Italian project for a cable car to the summit of the Matterhorn, that common heritage of all climbers. Supported by hundreds of thousands of adverse signatures, the steps which were undertaken were to be crowned with success.

Around 1951 the Swiss Ski Federation (formerly a Union member) agreed to invite a few UIAA representatives regularly to attend the tour-leader courses which it was organizing at Engstigenalp. Thanks to measures taken by the Bureau, the Swiss police were to assist foreign participants to enter Switzerland. These one week ski programs, which contributed to the tightening of association ties, were to bring together about ten persons a year until about 1967.

In Geneva the Bureau created an international mountain rescue call centre: CISALP. This centre had the addresses of the nearest stations, and, in case of accident or disappearance, it supplied information to those who were willing to undertake searches. Several rescue actions took place through its services before it was superseded by other international alarm systems.

The ropes commission - ancestor of the present Safety Commission - was founded in Bled at the foot of Triglav. This group, whose importance was to keep expanding, was created at the suggestion of F. Avcin (Yugoslavia), whose remarks on the subject were the following: I believe that one of our principal tasks must be to disseminate as actively as possible everything we know about modern climbing equipment... The UIAA should create a technical commission, consisting of the greatest possible number of experts on any pertinent matter, whose activity is to be synthesized in reputable publications. The first nylon ropes had just appeared on the market and the new standing commission immediately decided to measure the new rope’s resistance to shock rather than to traction as had hitherto been done. It also forecast the establishment of quality standards.

Once again at Bled, and, this time, in the financial field, the French Mountain Federation (Fédération Francaise de la Montagne) once more took up the matter of unpaid accident costs. While the associations in principle approved mutual informational assistance leading to the discovery from one country to the next of persons responsible for such costs, the problem of intervening legally seemed difficult. In 1962 a committee headed by D. Kaltenegger (Austria) submitted a report which failed to reach any practical conclusions. But this problem was to be revived periodically on the floor of the assembly.

It was at this time that Egmont d'Arcis was invited to participate in the beginnings of the Trento film festival. Certain associations asked the UIAA to display its interest in films by extending its moral bond to a representative film on mountain sports. The delegates expressed their desire that the film so honoured be made by an amateur, be technically satisfying, and express the sense of solidarity which is one of the reasons for the UIAA's existence. This desire was first rewarded in 1955 by the Union's conferring of a semi-

official award; and again in 1956, a year which marked the beginning of regular UIAA awards and which was to signal the first appearance of a bureau member as one of several international judges. Also to be noted was an interesting request by N. Tzartzanos (Greece) favouring the publication of a mountain film catalogue. M. Plojoux tried to draw up such a catalogue, but lack of support from the clubs caused the Bureau to cut short his efforts: a pity, for today we feel the absence of a catalogue of mountain films.

In 1953 the assembly took a big step by travelling to Delphi for its annual meeting. On this occasion the intellectual leader of the Greek Alpine Club, B. Leondopoulos, invited the spirit of Apollo to inspire the participants who had gathered together in the ancient theatre. This was the year of the conquest of Everest, an epic which in a sense marks the end of historical mountain exploration. Egmont d'Arcis commented on this achievement by asking the delegates to go courageously forward, for the motto of every climber is quo non ascendam?!

Without exhausting all UIAA activities, a few achievements of the following years may be noted: the Bureau issued a handbill in four languages listing distress signals for use in case of accident. The information office handled a score of requests per year; the UIAA participated in the International Mountain Exposition at Annemasse (France); the International Ski Federation adopted the UIAA sign system for ski trails; the Swiss Federal Snow and Avalanche Federation established a course for foreign experts belonging to member clubs of the UIAA; Egmont d'Arcis gave a series of lectures about the Matterhorn and published several articles in British, Italian and Swiss newspapers. Cartographic symbols to outline mountain trails were perfected. The above summary demonstrates the extent to which the UIAA, despite its limited means, touched upon every facet of the climber's and hiker's domain.

As to the protection of the mountain environment, it should be noted that the UIAA now became a member of the International Commission for the Protection of Alpine Regions. Nevertheless, two protests against the construction of cable cars in France (Aiguille du Midi to Col du Géant connection) and Switzerland (Mount Pilatus) failed. Egmont d'Arcis then made the prediction that this practice will cause the Alps to vanish under a spider's web of cable cars.

Envisaged by the Bureau in 1948, the creation of a mountain rescue commission was studied in 1952 by the Executive Committee, which wanted to turn over the matter of improving and cataloguing rescue methods to a commission. Although interest in rescue problems was demonstrated by consideration of the first efforts to recover avalanche victims through electronic procedures, the delegates found it very difficult to appoint representatives to the future body. It was necessary to wait until 1955 before the group, recently named the International Alpine Rescue Committee, could meet under the chairmanship of W. Mariner (Austria). From the first meeting the committee members expressed an independence of those who had given them their tasks. Commercial interest entered the picture and, through lack of firmness on the Executive Committee's part, the group unfortunately decided to sever the legal ties which connected it with the UIAA.

A plan for the Union's reorganization was submitted in 1955 by the French Mountain Federation (Fédération Fransaise de la Montagne) and discussed by the Executive Committee. The proposals were aimed at providing the organization with greater flexibility and efficiency: establishment of a moveable Bureau with an administrative secretariat, rotating presidency, appointment of non-Swiss officers, creation of a Himalayan Commission, designation of active associations to form the Executive Committee, etc. Nevertheless President d'Arcis opposed too profound a change in the

UIAA for he feared that the new mechanisms might no longer be based primarily on friendship and collaboration. The discussion proved that the UIAA was suffering from growing pains and that the old tie spirit which had heretofore controlled it was being challenged by those who desired the establishment of a service organization. Moreover the Cartesian and realistic viewpoint of L. Devies clashed with the idealistic orientation of Egmont d'Arcis.

The following year D. Scheffenegger (Austria) revived the discussion by asserting that the UIAA was not sufficiently active and that it should take a more positive interest in ascents and expeditions. Moreover he lamented the Union's loss of control over CISA, which had been created in Munich, and he proposed major changes in working methods. In the Bureau's name, M. Trottet countered that the Union has less need to reform its structure than its spirit and observed that the present situation stemmed from the fact that several clubs were collaborating only sporadically with the UIAA, thereby depriving it of the means which would allow it fully to attain its objectives. The president closed by saying: We have built the UIAA with prudence and also in a somewhat dilatory manner, but we believe we have avoided perilous adventures. By once again re-electing Egmont d'Arcis as head of the Union, the assembly decided in favour of the Bureau and reiterated its will that the organization's headquarters remain in Geneva.

The Unions' first jubilee was celebrated in 1957, at which three founding members, J. Wigyazo (Hungary), W. Getel (Poland), and O. Sjoegren (Sweden) sent messages of friendship and congratulations to the General Assembly. President d'Arcis delivered an important speech from which the following passages are excerpted: The UIAA has not always reached definitive conclusions, for everything human is imperfect; our labours have consisted in reaching agreement on the possible... The UIAA must not restrict its studies to problems dealing with mountaineering, but must give the associations the feeling that they are joined together like the members of a roped team; ... The UIAA must act as the caretaker of mountaineering's unblemished ideals which make of it the heir of ancient chivalry.

The Union's field of interest was steadily expanding. In view of the number of matters needing attention, the delegates agreed that the Executive Committee would hereafter hold two meetings annually. Following up on A. Heizers remarks (Germany), the clubs created the Youth Commission which, however, was to remain dormant until 1961. Finally, at the request of the Yugoslav Alpine Federation, the Bureau was given the task of publishing a mimeographed quarterly bulletin to supply information on the UIAA's activity.

And thus it was that in December 1957 there appeared the first issue of the present UIAA Bulletin. At the beginning each number was devoted to one of the questions with which the commissions and the Bureau were dealing. Soon, however, the Bulletin was to become the Union's official source of information, communicating all matters dealing with meetings, courses, decisions, motions adopted, etc. Its contents were to be regularly cited by various mountaineering publications.

At the end of the fifties Egmont d'Arcis established a weather service which involved the publication in Swiss and British newspapers of weather conditions prevailing in six regions: the Dauphiné, Mont Blanc, the Valais, the Bernese Oberland the Penine Alps and the Graic Alps. Data on the weather, snow and other conditions, such as on rock mountains, were supplied by a team of local guides. This data proved trustworthy and the success resulting there from caused the Bureau to extend its service to include winter.

CISA's autonomy (it was soon to be known as CISA-IKAR) was once again brought before the floor. Despite good personal relations between its president R. Campell and Egmont d'Arcis, CISA's relations with the UIAA proved embarrassing to outline and the ratification of a protocol specifying the respective tasks of each body was long deferred. The situation was to make little progress over the years despite a succession of several agreements (the last of which was signed in 1979 by Pierre Bossus for the UIAA and E. Friedli for CISA-IKAR). Even today many people wonder whether an independent rescue commission is justified.

Egmont d'Arcis remained in office seconded by the standing Bureau he had appointed and which was composed in 1959 of J. Charpie, M. Trottet and E. Wyss-Dunant, all Genevese. The editor of the Bulletin, G. Tonella, also represented the UIAA on the judge's panel at the Trento Festival. At this time the membership roster showed that the UIAA consisted of thirty-one associations representing twenty-two countries: the rule specifying that a country should generally be represented by only one federation was still not being closely respected!

In Vienna in 1960 the concept of establishing a UIAA seal of approval was adopted. This important step demonstrated that the ropes commission had done an efficient and persevering job in carrying out its task. The leadership of the group had now passed from M. Dodero (France), who provided his name for the first rope-testing machine, to P. Henry (France). The latter's strict logical mind gave the commission a boost, and, on the spot, it created test methods, definitions, standards, etc. Thanks to the UIAA climbers would now be able to benefit from a seal of approval independent of all commercial or national pressures.

There was likewise encouragement for protection of the Alpine environment. In 1962 the UIAA blocked the construction of a railroad to the top of the Jungfrau (Switzerland), but as a set-off supported the erection of a new hut at the foot of the Matterhorn. In Corfu the delegates unanimously approved the following motion: The UIAA expresses concern about excessive mechanization in the mountains and about offences against the beauty of famous spots that have hitherto been venerated. It was decided to give thought to a handbill project, while F. Hiess (Austria) demanded that mountain environmental protection be given priority in the UIAA.

In the same year the recurrent matter of altering the Union's by-laws was temporarily settled by the appointment of an ad hoc committee. Nevertheless the president issued a warning: We have neglected the mountains and mountaineering and we have devoted too much time to idle academic discussions whose core was of political substance... mountaineering must preserve its spirit of sacrifice, its love of liberty, and surrender neither to commercialism nor to politics.

The associations met again in 1963 at Interlaken at the time of the Swiss Alpine Club's centennial. At this meeting G. Als (Luxembourg) proposed the publication of a dictionary of mountaineering terms. This request was indeed to be acted upon by the Bureau, but not until 1981! The delegates also heard the report of the commission on Alpine films whose activity was almost entirely devoted to the Trento Festival. Nevertheless the commission encouraged the free circulation of reels in an effort to lighten customs charges. Note also that, thanks to S. Garilleti (Spain) an issue of the Bulletin was translated into Spanish. The Mountain Federation of Spain (Federación Espanola de Montanismo) was repeatedly to demonstrate its support in this manner and, even today, it makes many gratuitous translations for the UIAA.

Noteworthy in 1964 was the success of a course organized by the youth commission at the Britannia hut (Switzerland): thirty participants from eleven countries met to practice

spring skiing techniques on the glacier. New courses were at once arranged in Austria and Yugoslavia, while the Deutscher Alpenverein, under the aegis of the UIAA, edited a tri-lingual pamphlet intended for young climbers. Defending the principle of freedom of the hills this publication contained a veritable honour code from which the following themes are excerpted: be more than you seem, no overuse of direct aid, protect nature, be tolerant.

Administrative questions remained to be settled. Throughout Egmont d'Arcis' presidency the UIAA had faced financial problems. One after another every treasurer declared that inadequate dues impeded the achievement of the association's objectives. These complaints were well justified when considered on the basis of past budgets: 2,500 francs in 1935; 3,500 francs in 1939; once more 2,500 francs in 1947; 3,800 francs in 1954 (resulting from an increase in membership), and, finally, S,100 francs in 1964 (increase in dues). The early standing bureaus merit praise for their sense of thrift, but it must be remembered that for many years the UIAA lacked the means to execute its policies, and this shortage explains why many projects were abandoned after being adopted by the assembly.

From the outset the UIAA's structural framework was the object of zealous attention by some legally specialized delegates. The by-laws were now energetically amended, new rules were drawn up and the interpretation of existing articles was scrutinized. It is clear today that the legal effort exerted to compress UIAA by-laws through eight changes to date has in no way harmed the Union's momentum. Without dwelling on all academic arguments during numerous sessions, it is worth citing here the revised version which, begun in 1961, was completed in 1964. Initiated by the French Mountain Federation president's remarks, this revision was carried out by a working group headed by D. Dedekin (Yugoslavia). Two conflicting concepts were at the root of the question of basic UIAA policies: the first would have turned the Union into a mere communications medium for the associations; the second sought to strengthen the UIAA's role by entrusting it with specific tasks. After many discussions it was this latter concept which was to prevail.

Thus one comes to the close of the UIAA's long era of adolescence. Its founding president refused a new term and left his place for E. Wyss-Dunant, a former Swiss Alpine Club leader and a well-known global mountain explorer. In the name of the assembly, H. von Bomhard (Germany) expressed the Union's gratitude to Egmont d'Arcis, who replied: The UIAA must move ahead along its road without deviating from its principal goal which is the development of mountaineering in all fields, and without abandoning any of the ideals which have hitherto served as its guide. Appointed honorary president, Egmont d'Arcis was to retain close ties with the Union until his death in 1971. A page turned in our history: henceforth recognized and adopted by all mountaineers, the UIAA attained cruising speed. The great period of achievement was about to begin.

6. The Contemporary Years

The second UIAA president appointed the following to this committee: H. von Bohmard (vice-president), P. Pidoux (treasurer), L. A. Gailland (liaison with CISA), J. Juge (belaying and safety), G. Tonella (bulletin editor). For the first time, the Bureau hired a salaried employee: Mme. E. Muhlstein, who was to handle the secretariat's office matters and also to translate documents.

A very significant event took place in September, 1964 when the UIAA seal of approval was officially approved in Switzerland (and, in 1965, internationally). It was imperative that a special symbol be designed for the seal, and it was suggested to refer to the original UIAA symbol. Pressed for time and unable to engage in graphics' research, J. Juge asked his son to draw a sketch suggestive of a mountain. Using the combined and slightly distorted letters U, I, A, A, O. Juge designed the mountain profile which today appears on our insignia and whose encompassing circle stands for the unity of the associations. The job was done in less than an hour!

For some strange reason the assembly set up a programs' commission to suggest subjects for study by the Executive Committee, this perhaps because certain delegates may have believed the UIAA didn't have enough to do. Headed by the Pole, P. Czartoryski, this group also busied itself with organizing the work of other commissions until its dissolution in 1969. Yet there was no lack of achievement or decision. The delegates, by a show of hands, ratified the ground-air alarm signals. In response to grass-roots demands W. Brandel (Germany) published a short article in the bulletin dealing with acclimatization. For his part E. Wyss-Dunant drew up a bibliographical list of medical studies on high altitude physiology (a job that was to be continued by Z. Franc until 1970). The UIAA was represented at the first Andinist Latin-American congress. The following year the assembly approved a request by A. Janik (Poland) to draw up an encyclopaedia of mountaineering clubs. Finally, the environmental protection commission (soon to become the commission for mountain protection) was re-established. R. Roubal (Czechoslovakia) succeeded W. Goetal and was to promote the UIAA's adherence to the International Union for the Preservation of Nature and its Resources. The increase in the number of candidate-clubs raised by-law problems. The delegates decided henceforth to admit only organizations which were primarily interested in mountaineering and which had national standing. Profit-oriented organizations as well as speleological clubs were no longer to be admitted.

Let’s go back briefly to 1965, which had been called the year of the Alps. To mark the occasion Walter Bonatti opened up a new direct winter route on the north face of the Matterhorn. The Bureau sent him a message of congratulations which concluded as follows: ...without exalting solo climbing, the UIAA acknowledges that mountaineering needs men who have the stature of a Bonatti, and that it requires hero-types who know how to inspire youth.

President Wyss-Dunant delivered two major speeches before the assembly from which the following remarks are extracted: ...It is proper that the UIAA should continue to grow not as a result of excessive publicity, but rather through the righteousness of its future accomplishments. The love and respect we have for mountains inspires us to go beyond political frontiers, beyond social or religious limitations and work to unite mountaineering all over the world...; and, in addition: ...Mountains are a liberating force. The climber moves towards a crest which forcefully symbolizes man's aspiration for spiritual elevation; with reliance on his capacities man can gain control over his fears... One must have a total mastery of techniques in order to appreciate the aesthetics of the panorama.

In 1967 the Bureau appeared desirous of insuring fair representation on the Executive Committee of every region in the world. A rotation of clubs among the non-permanent seats were its suggested means of attaining this desideratum. The proposal was not implemented although the Executive Committee was increasingly taking on a role as the Union's directing body by mustering the most important associations. The Bureau was also concerned with the establishment of sections outside their national boundaries by mountaineering clubs belonging to the UIAA; these sections were creating an unpleasant competitive situation vis-à-vis the national associations. Three years later J. Vandevoorde (Belgium), backed by U. di Vallepiana (Italy) and H. Greenwood (Britain), were to reconsider the problem and express their wish that the UIAA tactfully deter its members from setting up sections on territory outside their national boundaries.

The Executive Committee considered drawing up comparative climbing accident statistics in the various Alpine countries. The project was not implemented for lack of a commonly accepted definition of the term accident, but it is still alive. The same year the assembly gave attention to the problem of remuneration for rescue teams going to the assistance of foreign climbers that were victims of accidents abroad. All too often it is difficult to recover such expenses, either because the interested party is insolvent, or because nobody can find him. An interesting study was made by F. Hiess (Austria), who came to the conclusion that international insurance covering these special risks seemed too burdensome and that it would be preferable to make available compensatory funds at the national level to cover rescue organizations. In addition F. Hiess suggested the collection of a rescue fee by all associations. For his part J. Juge deemed it necessary to impress climbers with the magnitude of rescue costs.

Following a rare UIAA discussion with a political background, the Club's expansion was formalized by the admission of two important members, the American Alpine Club and the Alpine Federation of the USSR. But the budget was still restricted to about 5,000 Swiss francs, something which limited participation opportunities.

The Bulletin, which since December 1967 was being printed rather than mimeographed, now acquired increasing prestige as the UIAA's information medium. Still, its circulation of 500 copies was too small to interest advertisers and there was no resolution of the problem of advertising support to stabilize its cost. In 1968 it reproduced an interesting investigation by the Alpine Federation of the USSR into the composition of a climber's personality.

In Madrid at the instigation of M. Mendez-Torres (Spain) the delegates decided to establish a new grading scale of climbing difficulties. The purpose was to standardize the systems in use found in the graded Weltzenbach and Anglo-Saxon scales. It seemed simplest and most expedient to retain the use of existing symbols as basic guidelines. Fritz Wiessner (United States) joined the appointed working group and prepared a rough draft of degrees of difficulty. The group also busied itself with conventional symbols to describe routes on topographical guides, and it recommended the simplification of graphics.

In London R. Roubal (Czechoslovakia) replaced W. Goetal as head of the commission for the protection of the mountain environment. Evoking problems created in national parks he declared to the delegates: The effectiveness of the commission's work will depend on the will and enthusiasm of all the world's climbers to defend nature and the mountains. At R. Pfeningberger's (Austria) proposal the assembly unanimously voted a motion opposing the construction of a glacier highway through the Stubai Alps: Such an intrusion by technology into a haven of Alpine peace that bestows health on mankind is condemned in the highest terms by the entire UIAA.

Scientific questions aroused the interest of several delegates. E. Gippenreiter (USSR) promoted the idea of natural science research groups whose purpose would be to work with expeditions. D. Franc (Yugoslavia) failed in his attempt to create a commission dealing with high altitude physiology. A. Janik (Poland) suggested the UIAA publish a tri-lingual encyclopaedia devoted to the Union's members because reciprocal information among associations is important. This motion was first given impetus by the Poles themselves, and was to be taken up again by the Bureau which, beginning in 1975, was to publish each year an information pamphlet about the UIAA and its members.

F. Hiess (Austria) replaced H. von Bomhard as vice-president, M. Borovikov (USSR) tried unsuccessfully in 1969 to abolish the by-law on Executive Committee permanent members which for historical reasons favoured the great Alpine clubs, but which he claimed was out of step with the principle of parity. The fact was that a number of non-permanent members were now also being re-elected regularly. But with respect to this, the president answered that the criterion was activity, and that it was always the same clubs that did the spadework for the UIAA! On this front the Spanish Mountain Federation was reinforcing its role as a bridge between the Union and the Latin-Americans by representing the UIAA at an Andinist congress in Santiago de Chile.

In Prague the assembly appointed a commission under the leadership of J. Juge whose purpose was the study of belaying methods. The group proposed to collect information on different belaying methods, to test them in an effort to determine the best procedures, and then to broadcast its findings. It might also be observed, as a footnote, that when the French Mountain Federation sent an inquiry to the French Academy (Académie francaise) about the neologism belaying (assurage) which was to replace the term belay (assurance), considered ambiguous, the green-coated permanent secretary M. Genevoix replied on November 20, 1969, that the Dictionary Commission considered the word belaying (assurage) to be correct and legitimate as descriptive of the act of preventing a fall by one means or another.

The appearance in the Bulletin of an article on competitive (or speed) climbing as practiced in the USSR launched the first of many debates on this subject. It should be noted that the procedure requires the competitors to climb a wall or cliff in a minimum amount of time while being belayed from above. The Russian specialists were of the opinion that the presence of spectators enhanced the popularity on Alpine sports and that the best competitive climbers were also the strongest mountaineers in their country. To this the Anglo-Saxon delegates countered that the idea of a chronometric race is foreign to the spirit of climbing. Without trying to end a debate which was to be resumed in 1976 when the UIAA granted its sponsorship to the Trofeo Mazzalama, one must here assert the principle of tolerance upheld by the Union: however much men and their methods may differ, none of them are lesser mountaineers than their neighbours.

The latest UIAA by-laws limited the president's terms of office. In London, the delegates accordingly elected a new leader in the person of Albert Eggler, a barrister who had led a Swiss expedition to Mount Everest and Lhotse. With this appointment the associations expressed their will to retain UIAA headquarters in Switzerland, which is, after all, a pre-eminent ground for the meeting of nations. The newly-designated president was, however, Bernese and the relocation of offices gave rise to administrative complications. The other members of the Bureau were as follows: P. Pidoux (treasurer), L. A. Gailland (CISA), J. Juge (safety), G. Tonella (Bulletin) and W. Munter. H. Kuehn, of Bern, headed the secretariat. Finally E. Wyss-Dunant was granted honorary membership in the UIAA.

The idea of a multilingual publication had temporarily been tabled when the Bulletin had first been printed. President Eggler made use of a dues increase to introduce German into the Union's Bulletin and thereby promoted greater circulation. In addition he

appealed to advertisers to support the pamphlet and asked the associations to refer to it in their national journals. It was thus that an important article on electronic detection devices for avalanche victims got special notice.

Again, A. Eggler vigorously encouraged the commission for mountain protection to launch a propaganda campaign in 1970, a year dedicated to the preservation of nature. A slogan was suggested: One defender of nature for every tourist and every climber. In addition the Union joined the International Union for the Preservation of Nature and its Resources.

That same year the ropes commission converted itself into an equipment and safety commission, and F. Solari (Britain) replaced P. Henry (France). Henceforth the group was to include both amateur and professional climbers as well as manufacturers and heads of laboratories. After drawing up the first standards for ropes and having improved on them, they then set up standards for snap-links (Karabiners). The member associations now began to bestow seal of approval on due receipt of quality notification from the commission. Nevertheless, the terms of agreement were not always identical, and it soon became necessary to standardize procedures respecting the bestowal of seals of approval. It was at this point that the commission called in a jurist to supervise use of the UIAA seal: this was A. Fontana (Switzerland) who attempted to strengthen control over the seal by means of assistance from outside organizations (ISO, Veritas, Censer, etc.). When it became aware of what going on, the French army decided to require the UIAA seal on all ropes used to equip mountain troops.

In 1972 the executive Committee was welcomed in Lichtenstein (the smallest country represented in the UIAA). Here Fritz Wissener (United States) submitted the treatise on levels of climbing difficulty which was to be the first regulatory document of climbers ever suggested by the Union. Published in three languages, this UIAA table of levels of difficulty (which introduced the grade AO) was immediately adopted by European and South American mountaineers.

A new by-law revision opened the way for definition of Bureau member duties and provided an opportunity for a discussion on presidential lengths of office and the decentralization of the Executive Committee. Since the number of candidates to this last body was growing, the total seats on the Executive Committee was increased from twelve to fourteen. Despite a request by A. Boronikov (Soviet Union) a working group once again rejected a move to abolish permanent seats.

In the fall of 1972 the UIAA celebrated its fortieth anniversary in the lovely setting of Chillon Castle (Switzerland). The affair was distinguished with a speech by R. Messner (Italy) on man and mountains from which the following passage is excerpted: ...Mountaineering plays a role of liberator of the young who seek to escape a civilization of material ease that is accompanied by spiritual degradation... climbers become aware of what it is that elemental values, such as hunger, cold and fear, can contribute to their lives.

A great mountaineer now stepped into the UIAA presidency: Jean Juge, who had a remarkable climbing record (north faces of the Grandes Jorasses and the Eiger, Bonatti Pillar on the Dru, first solo ascent of the west summit of Cho Oyu, etc.); the new Bureau consisted of F. Hiess (vice-president), P. Bossus (secretary-general), B. Guinand (treasurer), A. Fontana (legal) and G. Tonella (publications).

That same year the Swiss Alpine Club's modifications of its hut reciprocity system rekindled the question of bilateral agreements. Once the Swiss Alpine Club, under UIAA pressure, retracted its decision, the Executive Committee in 1973 created a huts

commission which was to re-examine the whole business and also concern itself with pollution and the supplying of energy to huts.

A UIAA delegation visited Greece to participate in a congenial demonstration to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the, first ascent of Mount Olympus, the throne of the Gods. C. Kakalos, who had acted as guide during this exploit, had the pleasure, at the age of 95, of greeting the participants.

A UIAA-sponsored symposium on the Alps... future was held in Trento in 1974. In his opening speech president Juge declared: ...We are not against progress, but we favour the harmonious development of tourism and traditional activities. We want to impress on governments and mountain people alike that there is danger of killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. Elsewhere J. Juge and P. Bossus visited an international encampment organized in the Pamirs by the Alpine Federation of the USSR. Upon their return they were to encourage this kind of Alpine get-together as an excellent form of meeting place where climber might compare differing techniques and explore distant ranges that had no hut system.

Following a request by L. Zobale (Italy), the UIAA decided to create a ski-mountaineering commission, thus demonstrating the Union's interest in that sport. Its purpose was to disseminate information (such as data on the winter opening of huts, avalanche dangers, etc.) and to test out cross-country ski-equipment. The commission also managed to get embroiled in the question of rallies, something which led to a dispute in which it was forced to act in self-defence. When J. Juge conferred UIAA sponsorship on the Mezzalama race, held on glaciers at over 4,000 meters, cries were heard in opposition to the rally's competitive nature and to the risks derived there from. A frank discussion convinced the assembly that its president was merely bowing to the inevitable laws of change.

Once more the treasurer expressed concern over growing delays in dues payments and he appealed to the associations' consciences: their reaction was to agree to raise the dues. The debate provided an opportunity to observe in action the political power of the small clubs which were allowed to get away with no more than small payments to the UIAA. To resolve these problems the assembly created a finance commission which was to report periodically thereafter.

The safety commission and the commission on belaying methods were found to be frequently dealing with almost identical matters. Because of this the Executive Committee, acting on a suggestion by R. Pfeningberger (Austria), decided to merge the two groups into a safety commission. This last was put under the charge of P. Baumgartner (Switzerland) who issued a reminder that safety results from training.

In 1975 N. Tzartzanos (Greece) was elected vice-president. At the same session a certificate of honorary membership was bestowed on Ugo di Vallapiana (Italy) to reward the devotion and broad-mindedness of a man who had dedicated his whole life to the mountains. Written in Latin the certificate disclosed to the delegates that UIAA translates into conventus omnium gentium ad montes ascendendes societam! Finally the Bureau ordered the striking of a silver-plated badge on a blue background with the Union's emblem, a little gew-gaw to help advertise the UIAA throughout the world.

For several years delegates had been concerned over the growth of expeditions in both the Andes and the Himalayas. The British Mountaineering Council submitted a plan for technical training of Sherpas. The Peruvian Andean Club (Club Andino Peruano) requested the inclusion of native climbers on all expeditions so that they might sharpen their mountaineering knowledge. Early in 1976 the UIAA's expeditions commission was

created: its chairman was to be L. Gevril (France). The commission had three missions: a) to establish a chronological table of projected expeditions that would help prevent overlaps; b) to improve relations with host countries in order to achieve the easing of local regulations; c) to work out a code of good-will for use by expedition leaders. In 1978 the full text of Nepalese regulations was to be published in the Bulletin and R. Riefel (France) was to be appointed UIAA representative in Kathmandu.

In 1976 the Latin-American associations, with the full approval of the UIAA with which they were to collaborate more closely, reorganized themselves into a Pan-American Union of Mountaineering Associations (UPAM). The Union's universalistic tendencies were enhanced by the admission of six new members. Simultaneously relations were established with the International Union of Mountain Guides' Associations and the International Speleological Union.

The UIAA continued to pursue its activities on all fronts; and the following actions are representative: creation of an amenities commission, the refinement of a general regulation for the commissions, a motion by A. Nowruzi (Iran) intended to establish a global weather service for climbers, a debate over the presence of foreign club sections in Denmark and Great Britain, the establishment of standards for ice-axes, the publication by the Klub Wysokogorski of an encyclopaedia on member associations, a study on the obsolescence of ropes, etc.

At the general assembly in Barcelona the delegates chose Pierre Bossus as president and he appointed his board as follows: vice-president: N. Tzartzanos; secretary-general: R. Schneiter (the first woman ever seated on the board); treasurer: B. Guinand; legal counsel: L. Extermann; foreign relations: F. Jaffe; publications: G. Tonella. The burden of administrative duties, which had quadrupled in a decade, keenly underscored the problem of volunteer work. This is why it was decided to hire a part-time woman employee. While initially located in shared quarters, UIAA headquarters, thanks to some handy manoeuvres by the Bureau, were to be moved into an official building owned by the city of Geneva.

A new agreement between the UIAA and CISA helped improve relations between the two organizations. Referring to this mutual agreement, presidents Bossus and Friedli jointly ratified a recommendation to establish radio frequencies used in avalanche victim detection devices. A poster adopted by the two bodies and featuring distress signals was printed and distributed by the UIAA secretariat.

In 1977 the assembly met for the first time in the New World where it was ceremoniously received in Mexico City. During the session the delegates unanimously approved recommendations - later to be adopted by several clubs governing mountain trekkers. The UIAA also adopted a charter about mountain waters in which it called the attention of governments to the role of the Alps as a source of pure water. The Austrian Alpine Club, with Union backing, launched a pure mountains movement which was advertised by means of a poster.

In the preceding decade rock climbers had made enormous progress in the field of free climbing, and cliff climbing had attained a level of difficulty hitherto unsurpassed. At the German Alpine Club's request president Bossus participated in Munich in a symposium which included top level climbers from several countries. All participants expressed their wish that the matter of scales of difficulty be reopened and redefined to reflect higher standards in recognition of what had been achieved in the passage of time. The 1978 assembly expressed its receptivity to the idea and ratified the establishment of a Seventh Grade of difficulty (exceptionally difficult = EX). It must, of course, be specified that this Seventh Grade in no way devaluates lower grades and that as of now it is

ranked below a semi-official and doubtful Eighth Grade which has made its appearance in some schools.

In 1979 president Bossus had the pleasure of announcing the ratification by all large Alpine clubs of an agreement over reciprocal hut privileges. Under this agreement hut owners were to grant discounts to foreign visitors who belonged to UIAA affiliated organizations. This discount was to be facilitated by the yearly printing of a UIAA vignette. This development represented an important success for the Union and terminated forty-seven years of difficult negotiations!

The safety commission expanded its field of activity and established standards for harnesses and helmets. The jobs of supervising use of the seal of approval and of conducting scientific research had now become very burdensome, and several associations proposed resort to a fee to be paid by whomever used the seal. The matter has, however, not yet been resolved.

The by now periodic review of the by-laws recurred in 1980. In clearing the slate, all distinctions between permanent and non-permanent members of the Executive Committee were abolished and its size was to be increased to sixteen (about a third of UIAA members). In Geneva that same year the assembly re-elected P. Bossus. J.-P. Cretiaux and A. Fontana respectively succeeded B. Guinand and G. Tonella. As an acknowledgement of his devoted collaboration with the UIAA for more than forty years, the delegates granted honorary Union membership to the Bulletin's former editor.

Responding to a request by the Spanish Mountain Federation which in 1965 had requested the formation of a medical group, the delegates approved the creation of a medical commission. Organized by J. Rivollier (France) and chaired by P. Segantini (Switzerland) the commission took upon itself the task of writing a dissertation on mountain medicine, dealing chiefly with high altitude illnesses, and to work out in London a descriptive bibliographical list of all publications dealing with mountain medicine.

During the Diablerets Film Festival President Bossus conducted a UIAA-sponsored seminar on expeditions. The participants expressed their wish that there be a reduction of constraining regulations in host countries and that expedition objectives be more precisely stated.

In 1981 an old UIAA project was completed at Manang (Nepal). A training course for Nepalese climbing leaders took place in a mountaineering school built by the Planinarski Savez Jugoslavice under the Union’s aegis. Attended by some forty Nepalese Sherpas the course benefited from the presence of four European guides who had been supplied by the associations. Several courses of instruction, organized jointly by the UIAA, the UPAM and the Spanish Mountain Federation, and involving first rock-climbing and then ice and snow, were also staged in Chile.

At Lugano, during the most recent meeting, J. Odriozola (Spain) was elected vice-president to replace H. Domke (Germany) who had held the position from 1977 to 1980. As an expression of thanks for its efforts to promote mountaineering in South America, the UIAA was made an honorary member of the UPAM. The ski-mountaineering commission devised a poster in four languages which provided instructions for ski-tourists.

In addition the associations agreed to celebrate the UIAA's fiftieth birthday both in Chamonix, where the Union was founded, and in Kathmandu, which is the present centre of Himalayan mountaineering. To close this brief historical account, mention must

be made of opinions expressed by A. Kunaver (Yugoslavia) at the meeting's end: The UIAA has become a global reality whose tasks are forever growing.

7. Problems and Perspectives

Summarized herewith are a few matters of current interest now being studied by the UIAA's various bodies. It is hoped these observations and opinions will give the reader something to think about.

7.1 Overuse of the Mountains

It is a common place to speak of the mountains as being overrun. Everyone is aware that high valleys are being overpopulated, that noise and tumult are the tourist industry's fellow-traveller, that automobiles and cable cars disgorge huge crowds in proximity of summits and that the mountaineer can avoid these disturbances only by flight. How can the healing quiet of the Alps be evoked amid the ruckus of aircraft and helicopters that over fly the crests and land on the glaciers? Even the Himalayas have not escaped: there, a multitude of trekking establishments is guiding relatively untrained hikers to altitudes of almost 6,000 meters. Admittedly men feel ever more confined within their country's frontiers and air transport can now provide them with rapid access to the Andes and the Rocky Mountains. But the result is that the number of tourists in Nepal grows by 20% in a single year!

Granted, the existence of mechanical means of access and of hotel chains do not by themselves deter men from using their feet to reach mountaintops, but they destroy the inner motivation which urges us to make an effort. The purely external pleasures of a tourist who has been transported effortlessly bears no relationship to the climber's or the hiker's moral enrichment.

Problems are developing in huts and shelters which no longer fulfil their role as points of departure for lengthy climbs. In good weather hundreds of tourists occupy cabins that have limited capacity, the hut-keepers are converted into hotel clerks, and the owner-clubs no longer control the situation. Will it become necessary, as some extremist ecologists have suggested, to burn down these shelter-hostels?

To the extent that the dispersion of climbers throughout a range represents a safety factor, so too do fashionable routes attract too many climbing teams at a time when lesser-known and equally remarkable sites are neglected if not abandoned.

But nothing is cured by complaints. Surely climbers would like to stem man's invasion of the mountains. And yet is it not an elitist viewpoint to deny to others access to one's own privileged domain? Is it not fair for everyone to have the right to come close to nature so as to make up for urban mediocrity? The problem is compounded if one agrees that the inhabitants of Alpine valleys have the right to enjoy economic progress.

To be sure, the real problem is not to protect mountains from man, but rather from profit-oriented forces and the fashions of the hour. Every success requires restraint, and an overly popular natural world now runs the risk of being loved to death. While the UIAA must champion mountain people to preserve an authentic habitat which is shrinking today like untreated leather, it must also, through the associations, play an informational and educational role vis-à-vis the general public, in the knowledge that old values can yet be rediscovered.

We may ask ourselves whether the Union's informational efforts and the self-discipline it preaches will prove meaningful in coming decades. Many climbers are moving away out of the ranges that have become polluted by mass tourism and are thereby abandoning areas that were dear to their predecessors. Will mountains in the future be divided between vast commercialized zones and a few rare cliffs reserved for the initiated?

A little optimism won't hurt! The UIAA has faith that there exist antidotes for plain laziness and the herd instinct. Already there are signs of reaction against the domestication of mountains, and surely tomorrow this reaction will assert itself. The UIAA encourages those who, not having dropped the torch, continue to explore all avenues irrespective of profit or honours.

Mountaineering must remain individualistic, an act of man and not a social event. We climb for personal satisfaction so as to perfect ourselves in the struggle against natural forces. Mountain grandeur suffers when it is reduced to the status of an organized sports arena.

7.2 The Protection of Mountains

Let's admit it at the outset: everyone of us has a grave responsibility as regards protection of the mountain environment. It is we who, as visitors of the mountains, bring our trash, our comfort needs, our noise along with us. There is no need to quantify this responsibility: little or greatly we have at least once failed in our duties. If we wish to leave for our heirs a few crumbs of alpine scenery in their original state, it is urgent that we act individually, with faith and conscience, like the water drops that little by little erode the hardest rock.

The UIAA and its mountain protection commission cannot achieve miracles. Their job is to draw climber and general public attention to damaging construction projects, to the excessive use of mechanical climbing systems, to the inconsiderate construction of trails and hostel-shelters, in short to the depredations caused by growing technology.

The commitment which the UIAA demands cannot find practical expression exclusively in laws and regulations. It is better that our hearts be moved by the condition of various localities because we need a wilderness world in order to rediscover ourselves. Mountains are one of the few regions which are still partially preserved. This heritage is neither unchangeable nor inexhaustible. Let us know how to preserve it!

It is certain that the struggle against excessive tourist exploitation of a region, against the disastrous results of highway construction and high altitude airports merits our active support. The multiplicity of mechanized practices (trial, ski-cable-car, high altitude landings, etc.) has its limits which must not be surpassed. But above all we should give attention to our own pollution (bottles, papers, etc, etc.) and plan to bring down empty that which we carried up full. We should be satisfied with observing flora and fauna from a distance.

The protection of nature is a form of education. Here the UIAA plays an important role, because it urges those persons in charge of youth to provide courses about authentic mountain values and to implant in their students the notion that there can be no alpine morality without a nature ethic. The situation will also improve if every association would urge its members to participate in the collective protection of the Alps.

At present mountaineering is exerting an ever growing attraction on all classes of society. What else could be the reason for the hiking revival, for the growing interest in rock-climbing if it is not a reaction against city life, against noise, mechanization and social coercion? The UIAA effort to protect the integrity of the playing field of action will be echoed, for it answers the basic needs of the new users.

Moreover, by systematically indoctrinating climbers with a respect for mountains and their inhabitants, the UIAA is becoming engaged in such a vast social action that its protest against excesses and its appeals to government will increasingly be heeded.

One specific goal is to develop relations between mountaineers and authorities in the protected areas. The Union's mission is aimed at creating ties not in order to remove wills-of-the-wisp, but rather to fit its projects into a frail world. Finally when conflicts arise between mountain users and those who protect a specific sector, the UIAA can act either as an advisor or as a mediator.

While it is important to forewarn both the undisciplined and the uneducated groups who are the basic reasons for mountain degradation, the UIAA nonetheless recognizes that in an effort to preserve areas of solitude and silence, individual examples are worth more than conferences or publications.

7.3 The Evolution of Rock Climbing

There exists no fixed climbing code, and everyone travels the mountains to the sound of his own drummer. The climber who attempts the Meije by the normal route is no less deserving than the rock-climber who, for the first time, gets up an overhang with the use of direct aid. To scale a summit is an act of freedom, a calculated undertaking by the climber, and has nothing to do with the methods employed or the itinerary followed.

The use of various types of aid has been a topic of debate since the last century. P. Preuss insisted on the total rejection of all technical products, including the use of the rope; and while his example was rejected by those climbers who wanted to be survivors, his doctrine is being rekindled in certain modern climbing schools. Note also the situation in Bohemia where pitons, chocks and magnesium oxide are prohibited, and where, nevertheless, climbers attain a high degree of proficiency. Every generation to be sure has a tendency to question the ethics of its predecessor. To quote Ricardo Cassin: The young must be given the right to use new means to carry on their personal experiments. Of course all methodological changes have their basis in that eternal desire to improve which characterizes those persons who seek the unknown.

The exploration of the Alps is now ended. Consequently the objective of the modern climber differs from that of the classic mountaineer. The great routes on mixed terrain are now forsaken for steep rock and ice faces. The conquest of summits is replaced by an urge for hardship in sports activities. But motivation stems also from the search for greater difficulties. The desire to outdo one's self, the preference given to a more honest struggle with the mineral world have found their expression in a revival of ultra-difficult rock-climbing not related to the high mountains.

The rediscovery of practice rocks near large urban centres and of modest cliffs on riverbanks has now led to their renewed and diligent frequentation. There young people, unshackled and with modest equipment, practice their skills, and this gives them a greater impression of freedom. It is, in fact, not surprising that today's tendency to downgrade old routes should have seen its beginnings in these rock-climbing gardens.

Many blame training cliffs for inducing climbers to concentrate exclusively on mountaineering techniques. To be sure the lack of education about objective dangers, the lessened physical stamina which rock-climbers experience on long climbs react unfavourably on any program of well-balanced training. But many innovative methods which later became classical (such as the use of climbing shoes) made their appearance on modest cliffs, and many famous mountaineers started out on mere crags. Mountaineering is a kind of original Promethean freedom and, like every climber, the rock specialist will make his own tracks.

The sport has sometimes been confused with its methods in subtle quarrels over distinctions between points of balance, points of progression and points of rest. Yet needless byzantine metaphysics should be avoided, and the fact reasserted rather that

free climbing is a clean system which requires an enormous commitment. The economy of means should exist in the climber's mind before it becomes fact on a cliff.

An exceptional rock-climb is always a daring undertaking, and it can be dangerous. It requires much practice. The desire to respond to challenge must be geared to a realistic estimate of one's resources. Except for the safety aspect, which almost always requires recourse to equipment, the modern climber confronts the rocks with nothing more than physical and moral strength. The need to refine the rules of the game has superseded the desire to succeed.

The rating of difficulties is a ticklish and chronically recurring problem. It should not, however, be overemphasized, for it is not an end in itself, but rather a system to assist climbers. Nevertheless, since its invention in 1894 by the Austrian F. Benisch, who already anticipated seven degrees of difficulty (1 being the most difficult) some twenty methods have successively been proposed: linear, decimal, asymptotic, open and closed gradations, etc. The UIAA, confronted with this abundance of procedures, considered it desirable to try to consolidate things in 1971 by establishing a single system.

The rating system it set up satisfies the desires of top-level climbers who wanted to see their best efforts reflected in print. The recent introduction of grade VII in the international rating scale thus mirrors an historic yet natural evolution. But on this matter the UIAA reaffirms that modern developments in the art of rock-climbing do not originate in arbitrary arrangements. The grade serves as a comparative indication, a caution for the beginner, and not as a stamp of achievement.

It should be added that, although grades on training cliffs are usually underrated, it would be preferable not to treat these areas as exceptional cases: efforts would always be made to match grades with those prevailing elsewhere. Mountains are for everybody-not merely for the elite. Whatever may be the measure of technical progress the thing that counts is the spirit behind the enterprise: if it takes courage to try to solve ever more difficult problems, it requires similar courage to enhance one's understanding of one's nature! This is why the UIAA considers as positive any development that promotes free rock-climbing.

7.4 Safety in the Mountains

At first glance there appears to be a conflict between mountaineering and safety. The climber is primarily an adventurer whose commitment occurs in an intrinsically dangerous wilderness area. Ice slopes cannot be scaled without peril, and yet the very assumption of risk is a fundamental aspect of mountain sports.

Nevertheless the recognition of danger helps you face up to it. Clearly nature is not hostile to man, but it will not tolerate his modifying it. Thus the climber must create conditions to protect his position in the mineral world he is tackling. Ever since the age of mountain exploration climbers have tried to equip themselves with gear which would allow them not only ease of progression, but would also provide them with greater safety.

Without wishing to allude to climbing equipment mentioned in accounts of the Roman-Numidian war, one can go back at least as far as the XVI Century when travellers feared for their safety when crossing the Alps. G. Grateroli, in his treatise De regemàne iter argentàcum and J. Simmler in his book Respublicae Helvetiorum both supplied wise counsels (valid even in our time) on equipment and security methods!

Types of equipment did not precisely develop over the years in a fashion capable of meeting climbers' needs. Initially it was raw materials and manufacturing techniques which were the determining factors in equipment: note for instance the transition from hemp ropes to nylon which in effect changed what was all too often a psychological link into a genuine instrument for belaying. In practice, climbers often borrowed from other sports or professions the means whereby they could improve their progression and achieve greater self-reliance. On the other hand the modernization of equipment served to improve techniques and led to greater intrepidity. Modern ice-axes and crampons are what made possible the ascent of ice-cliffs that are currently in vogue.

The UIAA's role is to promote reliable equipment suited to the needs of the terrain. No one, of course, can guarantee the un-breakability of this equipment. Were this possible, the potential damage in an accident could be compounded: a rigid steel cable, lacking elasticity, could sever a climber's body in the event of a fall.

Today the UIAA's seal of approval symbolizes an important change because it expresses the international demand of consumers that certain items of equipment be supplied with a quality guarantee.

Using Executive Committee channels, the associations have entrusted the safety commission with the right to establish standards, and a quality-control commission confers the right of seal usage on those items of equipment which meet these standards. For the reader's benefit, the following are the steps whereby the UIAA seal of approval is conferred: 1) the product must be tested by its manufacturer; 2) it must be examined in one of eleven laboratories approved by the Union; 3) the seal is conferred if test results prove satisfactory; 4) finally there is quality control at regular intervals (accomplished by testing samples).

The search for quality benefits the manufacturer who is stimulated to test his products; and quality control gains acceptance because the manufacturers recognize that it is in their interests and because today they work closely with the safety commission to which they dispatch observers.

There is, however, a problem in reproducing in the laboratory the conditions encountered by climbers on high mountains: temperature variations, equipment wear and tear, etc. Current test conditions are now visibly nearing geographic realities, but in the interest of precision many items of equipment are also subjected to field experiments by professionals.

Only the proper use of the equipment available to the climber can guarantee his safety. Here one must rely on the educational labours of the associations, for what may seem elementary to a specialist man be intricate to a novice. This is why the commission conducts field work by seeking the assistance of a number of famous personalities in contemporary mountaineering: R. Messner, J. Pons, P. Schubert, W. Naitz, etc. It then tries to experiment with belaying systems that require only the equipment normally carried by climbers: thus the capstan hitch (known today as the UIAA knot) is an excellent way of combining rope and snap-link in combination to achieve a dynamic belay. The ultimate aim is to establish simple and effective means of belaying under all conditions. At the moment studies are concentrated on various types of snow anchors.

The UIAA is also examining an important safety-related problem. This concerns the legal consequences of a climber's actions when accidents occur. Most of us climbers simply assume that climbing involves risks and that the climber is just as responsible as others for his own safety. But in their eternal search for a guilty party experts in jurisprudence display an ever-growing tendency to seek causal responsibilities. Recent

litigation has demonstrated that this attitude leads to aberrant situations which conflict with the deontology accepted in mountaineering circles. In a document entitled Risks and Responsibilities the UIAA stresses the concept of assumed risk and suggests, among other things, that the courts make use of qualified Union-appointed experts to provide authoritative opinions in disputed matters.

Perhaps R. Messner should have the last word: Rather than rely on his belayer, the climber must rely on his own security.

7.5 Expedition Problems

Foreshadowed by Whymper's explorations of Chimborazo and those of Conway, Jacot-Guillermot and the Duke of the Abruzzi in the Himalayas, mountaineering congestion in far-away places keeps growing at an accelerated pace. Climbers are finding it more and more difficult to do their thing in the overly well-known European and North American ranges where every face and every ridge have been systematically travelled. Now that conquest by discovery has run its course, the need to challenge new territory inevitably provokes climbers to become interested in high Asian and American chains as well as in distant Arctic islands.

For the last fifteen years the growing number of Himalayan expeditions has become a source of rivalry. The overbidding for porters, the institution of fees for climbing permits, the need to make reservations several years in advance, all hinder the practice of mountaineering as it is conceived by the UIAA. But this structural debasement is a world-wide phenomenon and we have a presentiment that other areas, hitherto unaffected, will in future run into the same problems.

It is not only the number of Himalayan undertakings but also the variety of practices that cause friction between host country authorities, which expect to reap a profit from their natural heritage, and the applicant groups, which want freedom of action. The UIAA is aware of this problem and that is why it has set up an expeditions commission (which includes such personalities as A. Anglade, S. Buscaini, J. Coudray, N, Dyrenfurth, J. Pons, etc.) whose job is to simplify administrative formalities and remind expeditions of their responsibilities in host countries.

It is not the UIAA's role to act as a substitute in expedition organization, but the Union wants to impress participants with the impact of their passage on local populations. It also wishes to impart to the host countries that mountaineers and mountain people have many common interests. With the approval of all parties the Union can act as an arbiter. In its relations with the associations its aim is to become an information centre for certain specific problems such as that, for instance, of high altitude medicine.

The substantial financial means needed to scale major summits are usually beyond the reach of those who participate in these undertakings. The participants thereupon seek club or government sponsorship, but more often they turn to commercial establishments which introduce the profit motive into the spirit of the undertaking. The UIAA is disturbed by this disagreeable aspect of expeditioning and is trying to suggest remedies.

The conquest of the highest summits is now fortunately an accomplished fact, and the pattern of ascents is experiencing the same evolution that occurred in the Alps. The climber today seeks to lower costs and shows a preference for light expeditions. There are several advantages to this trend: a) a reduced budget eliminating the patronage of organizations tainted by nationalism or of commercial interests alien to the mountains; b) a decreased impact on the economy of remote valleys that have been messed up by large groups; c) a new dimension for mountaineering, now no more dependent on fetishistic equipment.

As the history of alpine valleys has shown, mountaineering represents the chronological vanguard of mountain tourism. The Himalayan massif, despite its vast size and its remoteness from potential clients, will not avoid this evolution. Trekking, an activity half-way between mountaineering and hiking, brings both light and shadow into the mountain world: shadow when one looks at the brutal intrusion of alien societies into valleys which heretofore had their own native systems, or when one thinks about pollution and economic and moral disorder; but also light provided tourism is subjected to planning that might transform primitive regions into prosperous Switzerlands.

The difficulty of access, the magnitude and height of climbing routes, and weather conditions have hitherto made necessary the use of extreme practices in Himalayan climbing. But experience demonstrates that in the end man manages to liberate himself from excessive requirements by means both of better appreciation of his physiological and psychological resources and of the constant improvement of equipment. The use of oxygen will be considered anachronistic, solo ascents are growing in numbers, the use of skis is becoming common on certain peaks; in short, the most intrepid undertakings will become commonplace. These changes, which will occur more rapidly than forecast, will have to be accompanied by a corresponding change in the climber's attitudes. Is it a mark of idealism to expect that a better understanding of the mountain world will enrich the climber to the same degree as a sport exploit?

Mountaineering always seeks a spiritual strength that emanates from ancient cultural backgrounds. During an expedition the climber becomes a player in the life and philosophy of the regions he travels.

8. Conclusion

Properly speaking the UIAA is not a federation of clubs. Its founders regarded it as a communications medium whose purpose was to instigate and facilitate exchanges of information. Its job today is to contribute to the development of mountain sports throughout the world by seeking the collaboration of all interested parties. Its activities may be grouped together under four main categories:

8.1 The UIAA is a Forum

The Union is a trading post intended to stimulate and disseminate ideas and projects, and also to encourage constructive relationships among associations. Through its assemblies the UIAA promotes unity of action among member clubs and thereby increases their effectiveness.

But any forum is a priori open to differing, even opposing viewpoints. The principle of tolerance is therefore deeply anchored in the minds of Union leaders; for a mind open to innovation and to the adoption of different concepts will always be associated with the ideal of brotherhood.

To this must be added the fact that the UIAA is completely apolitical and that it avoids imposing its decisions, but prefers to take pains that these become the aims of a consensus.

8.2 The UIAA Renders Service

The Union's field of activity is constantly growing, for it is entrusted every year with new tasks: graded scales of difficulty, the standardization of topo-guides and ski maps, creation of an equipment seal of approval, examination of belaying methods, courses of instruction for Sherpas, organization of youth camps, establishment of reciprocal rights in shelters, numerous proposals for the protection of the mountain environment, medical commission looking into high altitude problems, advice for hikers, studies of climber responsibilities, motion picture prizes, establishment of expedition regulations, etc. This list, however incomplete, demonstrates - if there is still need to do so - that the UIAA is carrying out a mission meriting the interest of all climbers.

A climber admittedly is always more or less an individualist and does not much appreciate it if his sport is organized for him by others. But the UIAA imposes no restraints: it merely draws up a code. In addition it is on the lookout to encourage and support objectively the many facets that make up the mountaineering movement.

We are doing a useful job by responding to needs. Moreover our work is disinterested, for we have the conviction that good will makes it possible to face up to the constant changes that keep mountaineering alive.

8.3 The UIAA Represents the Mountaineering World

Today the Union consists of fifty associations representing all those who travel in the mountains. Its influence extends beyond the framework of established clubs with their 2.4 million members. Because of this, it is representative of all persons who visit the mountains.

The many forms of mountaineering have been progressively developing for two centuries: classic ascents, hikes, expeditions, competitions, extreme forms of skiing, solo climbing, etc. The UIAA acknowledges the diversity of these practices which fit the personal needs of each of us and which contribute to the dynamics capable of assuring the future of mountain sports. It encourages all aspects of mountaineering that are based on ethical standards in harmony with the mountaineering community as a whole.

Thus the Union defends the important principle of freedom and autonomy for climbers on the basis of their personal beliefs. To the associations it preaches a spirit of understanding stripped of all nationalistic overtones and strives to be the active interpreter of legitimate petitions.

Within the scope of its mission the UIAA thus demonstrates its desire for independence and understanding. As the mirror of all points of view, it achieves mastery of mountain deontology, thus becoming an expert interlocutor for the authorities.

8.4 The UIAA Looks to the Future

A former president asserted: It is our constant concern to follow the evolution of mountaineering, to keep in better touch with its active participants, especially with the ablest of the young in order to stand as the designated representative of the modern generation and not to be the relic of a bygone era. It is natural for the UIAA to turn to the young, to those rising forces whose right it is to seek their own path. Had this not be so from the outset, mountaineering would have become an inert substance and it would have remained ignorant of the concept of achievement. To ask young climbers blindly to follow their predecessors is as senseless as it is useless.

The fact that the sporting aspects of climbing have gained ground over the years is no longer considered a sign of decay. By nature man does not dwell in the past, but rather leaves the beaten path to discover the unknown and achieve the impossible.

We deem an attitude to be constructive which is in harmony with a disposition for progress. This disposition may be found among the protagonists of free climbing, whose uncompromising ethics reject the employment of means that pervert the sense of their efforts. The UIAA salutes those whose ideals are not to conquer but to overcome an obstacle in the most aesthetic possible manner. The future consists in raising one's standards!

Mountaineering may be defined foremost as being an activity, but, in contrast with gymnastics, its mechanisms are in search of a spiritual objective. It is not enough to define our sport as the exploration of the landscape or the quest of achievement. One must add to this that powerful propensity which impels us to move from the known into the unknown, even on modest climbs. Is not every ascent a form of renascence for him who undertakes it? But mountaineering as a quest is a personal matter which has no relation to arbitrary conventionalism. Beyond the need for adventure the climber's act of faith depends on exploration of his self. To a greater or lesser degree he is aware of a perpetual sense of discovery and of inner values. And yet mountaineering is not an irrational activity, but also an appreciation of the relation between man and mountain.

Have we achieved the wishes expressed in 1932? It would be presumptuous to answer yes, but the seed that was sown has sprouted. Understanding and solidarity among climbers have been reinforced, and there are institutions which henceforth assist the climber's performance. Is it not gratifying, in the age of mass production and reason, that men should show unselfishness in the promotion of their ideals? The UIAA's role will be vindicated provided all climbers or tourists obtain at least some moral advantage from its labours, and provided everyone submit his contribution to a sport that is constantly in a state of flux, a situation that represents both its strength and its weakness.

Where there's a will, there's a way! Such were the prophetic words of C. Hudson that might well serve as the UIAA's motto.