

DARLING, DEAREST LETTERS FROM UNESCO 1946–1947

The war came to an end with the surrender of Japan following the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August 1945. With the end of the war came also the end of Olov and Ronny Janse's wartime assignments, and they left the State Department in May 1946. With a sense of recovered freedom and hopes that the world they once knew would soon be brought back to normality, they began to look for opportunities to return to Europe.

In the meanwhile the United Nations was formed, in London, almost immediately upon the Japanese surrender. The UN, which was a reinvention of the League of Nations (a supranational organization that had been created in reaction to the First World War),⁹¹⁴ rose like a phoenix from the ashes of the Second World War with the same peace-striving ideals and internationalist ambitions as its predecessor. The League of Nations had a special sub-organization for intellectual matters: the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation (IIIC),⁹¹⁵ and plans were now drawn up to create a similar organization attached to the United Nations. The IIIC had been concerned with international intellectual cooperation in fields like university education, scientific research, information, and artistic and literary relations, and its mission had been to

⁹¹⁴ Valderrama 1995:chapter 1; Meskell 2018.

⁹¹⁵ It was established as the League of Nations' Committee on Intellectual Co-operation in 1922 and in 1926 expanded with an International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation: IIIC.

provide service to all forms of intellectual activities and scientific ideas.⁹¹⁶ Although the IIIC was of an international character with members representing different countries, France assumed a central position in terms of funding, leadership, and the location of its headquarters in the Palais Royal in Paris. Olov Janse had occasionally acted as consultant to the IIIC while he was working in Paris during the inter-war years, so he was familiar with its aims and mission, as well as its organizational structure and practices. Thanks to their strong moral and financial credibility after the Second World War, the USA had assumed a leading position in the establishment of the UN and was now actively involved in the planning for the new organization, which was going to be called UNESCO – The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. A strong voice in the planning and development of the new organization was Howard Wilson (1901–1969), Professor of Education, whom Janse knew from Harvard and the OSS. In September 1946, Janse wrote a letter to Wilson, who was then the deputy executive secretary of the Preparatory Commission for UNESCO:⁹¹⁷

Washington, D.C., Sept 12 1946

Dear Howard,

The other day I happened to learn that you soon will leave for Paris to attend the UNESCO meeting. As I am anxious to get a position in this organization, when established, may I ask you kindly to let me know if, in your opinion, there will be any openings for me and if so, how to proceed and what people to get in touch with.

As you perhaps know my wartime assignment in ex-OSS and later in the Dept of State came to a close at the end of last May and I am now most desirous to join the UNESCO. I already am somewhat familiar with international cultural cooperation, because while connected with the French National Museums and Sorbonne, I was occasionally asked to act in capacity of consultant in the now defunct Institute of intellectual cooperation in Paris. At any event I enclose a short biographical sketch of myself. [...]

⁹¹⁶ Valderrama 1995:2–3.

⁹¹⁷ Sewell 2015:106; Academic Senate 1969:27.

With kindest regards to both you and your wife.
Most sincerely yours.
Olov R.T. Janse⁹¹⁸

And before long, Wilson responded:⁹¹⁹

Paris XVIème, 25th September 1946

Dear Olov,

I have just received your letter of the 12th September, with its enclosed vita concerning yourself. Nothing would give me more personal pleasure than to have you join our staff, and I very much hope that can be arranged in time. As you perhaps know, we are at present a Preparatory Commission, and go out of legal existence before the end of 1946. The staff we have at present is a temporary staff and the full group of experts we need will be recruited only during 1947. I am calling your letter to the attention of the head of the Social Sciences section and the head of the Personnel Bureau, and we will communicate with you if any post in your field becomes available.

Best regards to you and your wife,
Sincerely yours,
HOWARD E. WILSON

True to his word, Wilson contacted the head of the Social Sciences department, the Egyptian geographer Mahomed Bey Awad, to promote Janse for a position in the new organization. A short handwritten note remains in the UNESCO archive:

Awad –
I know Janse well and he
is tops as an archaeologist.
He is a good man to
consider.
Wilson.⁹²⁰

918. Letter from O. Janse to H. Wilson, 12 September 1946. UNESCO archives: Olov R. T. Janse personal file.

919. Letter from H. Wilson to O. Janse, 25 September 1946. UNESCO archives: Olov R. T. Janse personal file.

920. UNESCO archives: Olov R. T. Janse personal file.

So it happened that Olov Janse was contracted as Counsellor for the Humanities in the Social Sciences Section of the UNESCO Secretariat in Paris. Plans were made in great rush – the first General Conference was planned to take place in November – and two months after he wrote the letter to Howard Wilson he boarded an aeroplane for the first time in his life, and took off for Paris.

Back in Washington, DC was Ronny, who had taken up a position as Cataloguer at the Library of Congress and had her own professional career to tend to. It was the first time since they met, nearly twenty years earlier, that they were parted for such a long period of time. The letters he wrote to her testify to their spiritual closeness and longing for each other. Eighty-one of his letters, unfortunately none of her replies, have been kept in their archive.⁹²¹ Thanks to her intimate involvement in his previous work in Paris and Indochina, the letters abound with details of his work in the UNESCO Secretariat as well as his activities outside the office, where he connected the professional and personal sides of his life in Paris. Together they offer a rare and important glimpse of the realities at the UNESCO headquarters during the first months of its operation.⁹²²

*

UNESCO was established officially only a year after the foundation of the United Nations, on 4 November 1946, when twenty states had signed and ratified its Constitution.⁹²³ This official moment was, however, preceded by a long period of meetings and preparations, which in turn departed from the legacies of the League of Nations' Institute of Intellectual Co-operation (IIIC).⁹²⁴ Its purpose was to serve as a supranational organization for the universal betterment and advancement of education, science, and culture, and its core values were formulated in the famous words of its constitution: "That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."⁹²⁵

UNESCO had its first headquarters in the Hôtel Majestic, on Avenue

921. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

922. Janse's time at UNESCO has also been discussed, based on his letters to Ronny, in the article "The Invisible Archaeologist" (Källén 2014).

923. Valderrama 1995:26–28.

924. Valderrama 1995: chapter 1.

925. Pompei 1972:1.9.

Kléber near the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. Its organizational structure mirrored that of the United Nations, with an Executive Board chaired by a Director General (at that time the British evolutionary biologist Julian Huxley) and a Secretariat. The Director General and the Secretariat both had their offices in the headquarters. The third important part of the organization, the General Conference with its broader international representation of high profile academics and cultural diplomats, gathered for a meeting once a year, the first time in November–December 1946.

The Secretariat worked according to the principles of invisible and neutral bureaucracy serving the wishes and decisions of the General Conference. In reality, however, it was the Executive Board and Secretariat that prepared the cases for decision-making and it was here that most of the work of UNESCO was done.⁹²⁶ The layout of the Secretariat's programme sections reflected the layout of the intellectual work of the new organization. There were sections devoted to Education, Libraries, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts and Letters, Museums, Mass Communication, and the one Olov Janse would become attached to (first as Counsellor and later as Head of): Philosophy and Humanistic Studies. All sections worked for the overarching aim to rehabilitate war-torn structures for intellectual and scientific cooperation, and create a peaceful world through intellectual efforts towards international solidarity. The number of employees increased steadily over the first few months of operation, and in April 1947 there were 162 executive members of staff in the Secretariat. Seventy per cent were citizens of France (48), the United Kingdom (44) or the United States (21), and Janse was the only Swede.⁹²⁷ He was soon promoted to Head of Philosophy and Humanistic Studies, and had an office of his own, in room 254 on the second floor of the Hôtel Majestic. His salary was US \$ 1,500 per year, plus 30 francs per day in per diem allowance. He was (to our knowledge) the only archaeologist among the secretariat staff at the time, and archaeology had no specific space in UNESCO's programme. His section – Philosophy and Humanistic Studies – consisted of himself, the Assistant Jacques Havet from France, and the Secretary Mrs Perry-Warnes from the UK.

*

926. Hoggart 2011.

927. UNESCO Archives: UNESCO/Cons.Exec/2e Sess/14/1947.

After he landed in Paris on 22 November 1946, he was immediately put to work at the first General Conference. He was 55 years old and excited to be back in France, the homeland of his younger soul. He brought over thirty years' experience of academic work in and between Sweden, France, Indochina, the Philippines, and the United States. To his ample academic record was added the experience of intelligence service from wartime assignments with the OSS and US Department of State. He was fluent in both French and English, and he had acted as consultant to the IIIC during the inter-war years. Altogether it made an almost perfect background for a UNESCO civil servant. For himself, on a professional level, a contract with UNESCO allowed him to make the most of his experiences and expertise, and to work for liberal internationalist ideals that had been a guiding light throughout his career. Moreover, on a personal level, an assignment with UNESCO gave him the opportunity to reconnect with a much happier time of his life, and could, if all went well, be the beginning of a permanent return to Europe for him and Ronny. So he landed in Paris with a light heart and great aspirations for the future.

It is mostly from his letters to Ronny that we know what he did in the eight months he spent in Paris. Although the Secretariat was (and still is) the creative hub of the organization,⁹²⁸ it is officially hidden behind a veil of neutral bureaucracy.⁹²⁹ From the onset, the Secretariat staff were subject to a series of strict regulations defining them as neutral international civil servants with no national or personal interests.⁹³⁰ In one of his letters to Ronny, Janse writes that any information about UNESCO that he shares must stay between them, because a notice has been sent around informing them that their work is of a "*caractère confidentiel*", and they have been forbidden to agree to interviews or talk to the press.⁹³¹ With hindsight we can now see that the Secretariat's promulgated invisibility and neutrality has been historically self-fulfilled, because the same bureaucratic ideal has dictated the structures of UNESCO's official archives. No working materials connected with the names of individual members of staff have been kept for the archive. Almost all documents in the archive can

928. Hoggart 2011:30; UNESCO Archives: UNESCO/C/Admin. & Jur/S.C.Ad. & Fin. /12.

929. Hoggart 2011; Weber 1978: Chapter XI; see also Källén 2014.

930. UNESCO Archives: UNESCO/C/Admin. & Jur/S.C.Ad. & Fin. /17. See also Källén 2014.

931. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 5 January 1947. NAA: Janse 2001-29.



Fig. 67. Stamps from Olov Janse's letters to Ronny.

be connected with the more visible (but less important if you want to understand the situated background to the actual work that was done by UNESCO) Executive Committee and General Conference.⁹³² For this reason it would be impossible to trace the work Olov Janse did for UNESCO if we relied on the official archive alone. Fortunately for us, Ronny kept his letters.

Eager to get started with his new assignment, he was thrown into the heart of the action as soon as he had landed in Paris. He arrived two days into the first General Conference and went straight to attend meetings as a representative of the Secretariat. Almost immediately he became engaged in discussions about a report concerning the future work in the section of Humanistic Studies. It had been presented by the Secretariat (represented by Mahomed Awad) and discussed in a meeting of the Sub-Commission of the Social Sciences, Philosophy and Humanistic Studies on 30 November, which Janse attended as a member of the Secretariat. A few days later he wrote to Ronny that he had found the report weak and insufficient, and had picked up the same sentiment in the comments from the American delegate George Shuster.⁹³³ Approaching Shuster after the meeting, he had his perception confirmed. He left

932. For two excellent recent studies pointing to the complex works of the UNESCO diplomatic committees, see Hafstein 2018 and Meskell 2018.

933. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 5 December 1946. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

encouraged and spent the weekend writing an alternative report – which he presented to Shuster, who adopted it entirely and presented it at the next meeting as a proposal signed by the US delegation.⁹³⁴ Janse wrote to Ronny – with exclamation marks and underlining to mark his excitement – that his, or rather, the American proposal had been adopted almost unanimously (!!), and that he was very satisfied indeed to see his very first proposal being so well received – “*Comme tu peux t’imaginer j’ai une très grande satisfaction de voir l’accueil qu’on a fait à ma première proposition ici.*”⁹³⁵ The report itself was not formally attributed to Janse after it was adopted by the US delegation, and its contents is of little concern here – but the measures and movements as described in the letters to Ronny are all the more interesting. They demonstrate how Janse acted in his new role as invisible civil servant, with active inputs of knowledge and strategy into the works of UNESCO, lending it to be used by the officially visible national delegations.

Although he did not get his name officially stamped on the report, nor on the new programme for Humanistic Studies that it resulted in, he was duly rewarded for his work. He was immediately given responsibility for the implementation of the idea of fact-finding boards (which was a main issue in the report), and was put in charge of the work in the section for Humanistic Studies. And on the evening after the meeting, he was invited to an exclusive cocktail reception at the legendary Hôtel de Crillon, with the top names of the American delegation. The Hôtel de Crillon at Place de la Concorde was (and still is) a legendary building in French and international politics, where the American delegation to UNESCO had set up their headquarters. To Ronny he wrote, apparently proud and pleased, that there had not been more than thirty people invited, only Americans. “Very ‘selective’”:

The same evening I was invited to Hôtel Crillon by Mr. Archibald MacLeish for a cocktail party where I was introduced to Mr and Mrs Benton, Assistant Secretary of State and Head of the American delegation, Mr Charles Thompson, Compton and others from the State Department, Chester Bowles, American Head of

934. See Källén 2014 for a more thorough description of the report and steps taken by the actors involved.

935. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 5 December 1946. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

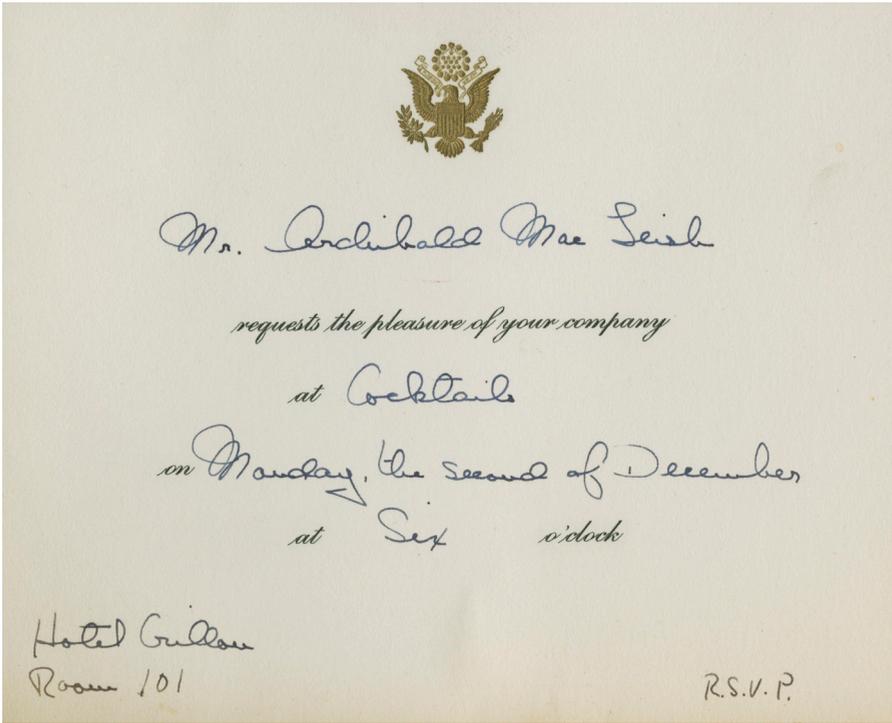


Fig. 68. Invitation for cocktails at Hôtel de Crillon, on 2 December 1946.

the Office of Price Administration. There were only Americans, and it was very “selective”. Thirty or so people.⁹³⁶

It remains rather vague what projects and issues Janse worked with at UNESCO, apart from his involvement in that first report. He got on very well with the Director General Julian Huxley (1887–1975), an outspokenly anti-racist evolutionary biologist and proponent of eugenics [sic], with a firm belief in the progress-cum-evolution of mankind into one “world mind” by means of cultural, educational, and above all scientific guidance by leading Western nations.⁹³⁷ In his function as Head of Philosophy and Humanistic Studies, Janse attended and assisted Julian

936. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 5 December 1946. NAA: Janse 2001-29. In the French original: “Le soir même j’étais invité à l’Hôtel Crillon par M. Archibald MacLeish à un cocktail party où j’étais présenté à Mr and Mrs Benton, assistant secretary of State et chef de la délégation américaine, Mr Charles Thompson, Compton etc du State Dept, Chester Bowles, ame. chief de l’O.P.A [Office of Price Administration]. Il n’y avait que des américains et c’était très ‘selectif’. Une trentaine de personnes.”

937. Waters & Helden 1993. See also Meskell 2018:1–17, 24–27 for details on Huxley at UNESCO. Julian Huxley’s personal visions for UNESCO are detailed in a pamphlet

Huxley in meetings (which he soon got very tired of, and started comparing with the OSS).⁹³⁸ He wrote reports and monitored the work to reconstruct and support rebuilding of humanistic knowledge resources after the war, which was also one of UNESCO's main tasks. He was involved in a project for translation of classics – “a rather interesting, but a gigantic subject”⁹³⁹ – and towards the end of his assignment he began to work with the issue of human rights, at the very onset of the project that led to the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 1948.

Above all, it was the social, diplomatic, side of the UNESCO work that Olov Janse warmed the most to. He was a polyglot, mastering not only French and English to near perfection, but could also communicate with other Scandinavians in their native languages. And his skills went beyond language, to a broad cultural know-how that he had gained from living and working in Scandinavia, France, Indochina, and the United States. Not only could he act as a translator and bridge-builder between the different language spheres, but his experiences allowed him to navigate and negotiate sensibly between different cultures and administrative structures. This in-between competence allowed Janse to play a special role in negotiations of “soft”, “cultural”, or “public” diplomacy, which has been put center stage in many studies of UNESCO.⁹⁴⁰

In recent research on UNESCO, “diplomacy” has come with a number of different prefixes. Some examples from literature relating directly or indirectly to UNESCO are cultural diplomacy, deliberative diplomacy, preventive diplomacy, serial diplomacy, multilateral diplomacy, photographic diplomacy, boycott diplomacy, and heritage diplomacy.⁹⁴¹ Out of these, only “cultural diplomacy” existed as a structural idea, albeit not as an explicit concept, at UNESCO when Olov Janse worked there in 1946–47. The report from the first General Conference in November 1946 says:

It is evident then that diplomacy needs the collaboration of a United Nations Organisation in the intellectual, cultural and ed-

that he produced on his own initiative (Huxley 1947), but which was later criticized for not being representative of the visions of the organization at large (Sluga 2010:402–403).

938. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 9 January 1947. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

939. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 23 February 1947. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

940. E.g. Hafstein 2018; Meskell 2018.

941. E.g. Boutros-Ghali 1992; Götz 2011; Jordan 1984; Singh 2018; Winter 2015.

educational field, based on the free association, the creative activity and the common aspirations of the peoples of the United Nations, so that the efforts of diplomacy may be more fruitful.⁹⁴²

In total, the word “diplomacy” is only mentioned four times in this first report, which can be compared with the word “culture”, which occurs 171 times. Diplomacy was clearly not a key issue in outspoken terms, and when it is discussed it is in the sense of diplomacy proper, i.e. diplomatic relations between nations. It was argued that the diplomatic relations needed to include intellectual, cultural, and educational fields to become more fruitful in the future. Even if it is not spelled out explicitly in the report, this idea and ambition could be called “cultural diplomacy”, or even better, “public diplomacy” in the broader sense of the term (leading back to Kant’s political philosophy in the eighteenth century) that we have discussed in the chapter “OSS and the US Department of State”.

Judging from the online archives, the concept of “cultural diplomacy” does not occur literally at UNESCO until 1964, when it is stated in a book review in UNESCO’s journal *International Social Science Journal* that “[s]cientific co-operation can nowhere be divorced from cultural diplomacy – further evidence that the hope of keeping science apart from politics is a vain one”.⁹⁴³ The concept of “public diplomacy” occurs for the first time eight years later, in a book published in 1972 that is listed in UNESCO’s archive.⁹⁴⁴ Hence we can conclude that concepts such as cultural or public diplomacy were not in use at UNESCO in the 1940s, but are concepts of a much later date, which have become key in academic analysis only in recent decades. It could be argued that UNESCO in the first years of its existence did not need to define cultural diplomacy or public diplomacy explicitly, because the activities that such concepts embrace had been embedded for centuries in European political and philosophical thinking.⁹⁴⁵

Only six days after his arrival in Paris (still during the first General Conference), Olov wrote to Ronny that he was contemplating setting

942. Conference for the Establishment of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, held at the Institute of Civil Engineers, London, from the 1st to the 16th November, 1945, p49. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/search/ob092c27-97d9-47b5-8935-78148a6795af>, accessed 13 April 2019.

943. Anonymous, 1964.

944. Fisher 1972.

945. See discussion in the chapter “OSS and the US Department of State”.

up an international organization for archaeology, and for this purpose he had reactivated his old network of academic friends in Paris, with high-profile scholars like René Grousset, Georges Salles, Georges-Henri Rivière, and Philippe Stern.⁹⁴⁶ He was keen to reconnect with old friends and colleagues – perhaps also with a previous lifestyle – from the pre- and inter-war years. Three connected circles of old friends stand out in the letters. The first includes top academics and museum directors like René Grousset, Georges-Henri Rivière, Marcelle Minet, and André Varagnac. The second, in close connection with the first, consists of art collectors and patrons like David David-Weill, C.T. Loo, Gabriel Cognacq, Jacques Orcel, and Mary Churchill Humphries. These two categories belonged to, or shared social space with, the wealthy and influential Parisian bourgeoisie. Their relations with Olov and Ronny Janse were established before they set off to Indochina more than a decade earlier. The third category was less distinctive in terms of class and social situation, and included old friends and colleagues from Indochina, who had returned to France during or after the Japanese occupation. Among them were Paul Lévy, René Mercier, Jean-Yves Claeys, and George Cœdès. Their relations could indeed have been complicated by Janse’s war-time assignment with the OSS and US State Department (which were explicitly against a French reinstatement of power over Indochina after the Japanese occupation), but judging from the letters to Ronny, his personal loyalty to the French remained intact. In his spare time, he was a frequent guest in the homes of René Grousset and David David-Weill, and he asked them (particularly Grousset) for advice on his UNESCO work.⁹⁴⁷ In fact, René Grousset welcomed Janse back to Paris almost like as a family member. He discussed and helped him with his UNESCO work, and Janse spent much of his spare time with the Grousset family. Following the tragic death of their daughter Ginette, Janse was invited to the family funeral, and he was present when René Grousset was installed on chair 36 as one of *les immortels* of the French Academy in January 1947, among a mere few of Grousset’s closest personal friends.⁹⁴⁸ From his letters to Ronny, it is evident that his relationship with David David-Weill was likewise warm and cordial. Janse was a regular guest at the David-Weill home in Neuilly, both at larger functions and at private tea or luncheons. David-Weill

946. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 27 November 1946. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

947. See “Conclusion”.

948. Källén 2014.

was seeking Janse's advice on matters of Asian art and museums, and purchased a collection of his excavated materials from Thanh Hoa in Indochina that had been stored in Paris during the war:

As I mentioned in my last letter, I went to Neuilly, where I sold some Th-h poteries [sic] and bronzes for 900 \$ which will be sent to our savingsaccount [sic]. I may be able soon to send another smaller sum in addition. I had a very quiet and pleasant talk with Mr D.W. who asked me to come back some day and make a notice about the things he bought. I will probably go back there next saturday [sic].⁹⁴⁹

The affair was indeed a good deal for Janse. He wrote some days later to Ronny that he had "inquired on several places for the prices of the things and none would even pay half the price I received".⁹⁵⁰ Such generosity vis-à-vis scholars and museum personnel was characteristic for David David-Weill, who was known as an important patron of the museums in Paris. He was at that time already coming to age, and died only five years later in his home in Neuilly. After his death he bequeathed over two thousand art objects to French and American museums. His collection of Chinese bronzes (which may have included the ones he bought from Janse) was donated to the Musée Guimet.

Janse was moreover keen to maintain good relations with the American delegation to UNESCO. Although France and the UK dominated the administration at the Hôtel Majestic, the United States delegation to the General Conference had a strong position thanks to its generous contributions to the budget of UNESCO, and the heroic status of the United States after the war.⁹⁵¹ Janse writes to Ronny that he was in continuous contact with George Shuster, and met him and others in the American delegation regularly at the Hôtel de Crillon. It is, he adds in the letter, "very useful for me to meet all these people here".⁹⁵² He also met on several occasions with Chauncey Hamlin, Director of the Buffalo Science Museum where they worked in the interim between

949. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 5 March 1947. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

950. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 16 March 1947. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

951. Graham 2006.

952. Letters from O. Janse to R. Janse, 12 December 1946 (In the French original: "C'est très utile pour moi de rencontrer ici tous ces personnes"); 9 April 1947. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

their second and third Indochina expedition. They talked about some textiles from Indochina that Janse had stored in the attic of the Guimet Museum, and Hamlin wanted to purchase from him. They also discussed Hamlin's ideas to create a new international museum organization.⁹⁵³ Shortly thereafter, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) was founded, with Chauncey Hamlin as its first president. From the letters it seems as if Janse was not particularly fond of Hamlin, but he continued to nurture their relation for strategic reasons:

I think that Hamlin soon will get the Legion of Honor and I hope also that he will not forget, that I made the first steps to get it for him. I wrote to him about this some days ago and I am convinced that it is essential to keep in contact with a man like him [...] All this is of course strictly between us.⁹⁵⁴

This demonstrates how Janse used his French connections to enhance his position vis-à-vis the Americans, and he also used his UNESCO position to gain prestige in his French networks. This strategic positioning served mainly his personal interests but affected, in the form of cultural diplomacy, the work he did for UNESCO.⁹⁵⁵ He acted as a translator and built bridges between the two groups, for example by arranging joint luncheons where he connected key actors. His letters reveal how he went about pulling threads from his different networks, and weaving them together in new formations:

There has been appointed a frenchman [sic] for the "Programme", he is the former head of the [IIIC], Mr [Jean-Jacques] Mayoux. I have a great deal to do with him. I have suggested to him to get [George] Cœdès and [René] Grousset connected in some way with Unesco especially as we are directed to lay special emphasis on India. He agreed with me and said that he would like to get in touch with them. Then I recalled that Mr D.W. [David-Weill] as president of the Nat Museums used to give occasionally luncheons to arrange for scholars to come together. So I went to the phone and called up Mlle [Marcelle] Minet and talked to her about the

953. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 20 December 1946. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

954. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 19 February 1947. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

955. Hoggart 2011:44.

N° 30



Signature du porteur

Olov P. Janse

ASSIMILÉ À UN MEMBRE
D'UNE
MISSION DIPLOMATIQUE

LE MINISTRE DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES certifie que le titulaire de la présente carte est

*Monsieur Olov JANSE
Conseiller à la Section "Femmes
Unies" de l'U.N.E.S.C.O*

& il prie les Autorités Civiles & Militaires de vouloir bien lui accorder les facilités compatibles avec l'exécution des Règlements

PARIS, le *21 Mai 1947*

P. le Ministre & p. a.:

*Le Ministre Plénipotentiaire
Directeur du Protocole*



Jacques Jaujard

problem and then she said I am sure Mr and Mrs D.W. would be glad to organize a luncheon for the Unesco key officials to meet some French intellectuals as Grousset and Cœdès etc. Today she called me and said that the luncheon has been set for the 22nd of May and Dr Huxley, the deputy directors, [Jacques] Jaujard, the Director of Beaux-Arts etc will be invited.⁹⁵⁶

In these interactions, his assignment with UNESCO offered him a certain elevated "quasi-diplomatic" status, manifested with a special identity card issued by the French Foreign office.⁹⁵⁷

956. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 12 May 1947. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

957. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 12 February 1947. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

Fig. 69.
Olov Janse's
UNESCO
identity card.

The social and diplomatic sides to the UNESCO work seem to have sparked his enthusiasm initially, and the reactivation of his former networks gave strength and energy. During the first couple of months he wrote his letters to Ronny in French, and made plans for her to join him in Paris. Much of his spare time outside UNESCO was spent scouring the stores of museums (Cernuschi and Guimet) and the attic of his friend C.T. Loo, renowned dealer in Chinese art and antiquities, for their collections and belongings that had been hidden during the war. The stores were a mess, having functioned as safe houses for private collections of artefacts or personal belongings. Olov's and Ronny's belongings had been packed and stored in a rush by their friends when they did not return from Indochina as planned. Going through the things in the attic – feeling the smooth touch of half a dozen silk shirts from Tokyo, the fragrance of jasmine tea, and a box of dried rose petals from their summer holidays as newly-weds with his family in Sweden – connected him physically and emotionally with bygone times.⁹⁵⁸ The letters tell that the reconnection with their old friends and their stored belongings also in some sense induced hopes for reconstruction – of the lives they lived and the social spaces of affluence and influence they used to occupy before the war.

But there were other sides to the reality at UNESCO and in Paris that gradually wore him down. Post-war Paris was a sad shadow of the city he once loved. He wrote to Ronny:

When you say that it must be very interesting to listen to so many witty conversations I am afraid that you make some wishful thinking. Before the war it was much more interesting and we were perhaps less critical. Now the conversation deals mostly with matters like cold weather, problem of heating, food, etc. However, the little circle of friends we have here is quite interesting, but they are all trying to go to the U.S.A.⁹⁵⁹

Having expected a joyful return to the homeland of his soul, he was taken aback by the misery of the post-war situation. Although he and his colleagues – whom he refers to as *Unescians* – were privileged with a quasi-diplomatic status, income, housing, a restaurant and a cooperative for food and basic supplies, they were also affected by the general situation in Paris.

958. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 5 December 1946. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

959. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 31 January 1947. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

I have just had a visite [sic] here in U. of Mme Maspero, widow of the famous sinologist who was killed in Büchenwald. She is asking for a job in Unesco to make translations or almost anything so she can at least get the benefit of the restaurant and the cooperative. Her eldest son was killed at the end of the war at Metz and she was during most of the war in a polish [sic] concentration camp. Grousset has asked me to do what I can for her here, but it is not easy for the French to get into Unesco, because their quota is already almost filled. There are many cases like this.⁹⁶⁰

“People try to smile but life is not joyful”, he writes to Ronny, only ten days after he arrived in Paris. There was fear for the future, and everywhere were mendicants, blind and mutilated people, as constant reminders of the war, in which the French had suffered terribly.⁹⁶¹ Some of Janse’s old colleagues and friends had lost their lives during the war, and many more had lost their minds or their fortunes. The shortage of food and basic supplies got worse and worse, and the Metro stank because there was no soap to keep clean.⁹⁶² The weather was miserable too. Endless rains were followed by the coldest and longest winter in living memory. The heating system failed, first in the Hôtel Pont Royal where he was staying, and later in the UNESCO building. He was hungry, and the meals of the UNESCO restaurant were insufficient. There were strikes in the postal service, the Metro, taxis ... everywhere.⁹⁶³ Already in December he wrote: *Tous ceux qui peuvent quitte le pays et tout le monde rêve d’aller en Amérique* – all who can leave the country are leaving, and everyone is dreaming of going to America.⁹⁶⁴ He lost weight and complained of nightmares. He too dreamt of America, and began to shift focus towards a future in Washington:

Once I have got U.S. citizenship I am sure I will get a job in Washington. I think, at present it is one of the best towns to live in. [...] It is also no pleasure to live here and the traveling in France, which we used to like so much, is not what it once was.⁹⁶⁵

960. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 5 March 1947. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

961. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 8 December 1946. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

962. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 9 March 1947. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

963. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 14 February 1947. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

964. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 10 December 1946. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

965. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 9 March 1947. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

From Janse's letters we can tell that in the first year of UNESCO's existence, surprisingly little attention was paid to the intellectual work and the actual contents of the programme. The descriptions of the situation in Janse's letters can be verified by UNESCO archive records of meetings, discussions and official documents from 1946–1947. Almost all concern the structure of the administrative system, contracts and salaries, problems with the office building, and not least a constant mulling over budget constraints.⁹⁶⁶ It is evident that this was frustrating for many members of the Secretariat and eventually led many of them, Janse included, to leave their assignments. He applied for a permanent position on 14 January,⁹⁶⁷ and his letters to Ronny show that he was still, at that time, enthusiastic about his work and the context of UNESCO. He wrote about arrangements for her to come visit him, made plans for the General Conference in Mexico in the autumn, and, perhaps most significantly, he wrote his letters in French. But by the end of January, he shifted to English. In his letters over the following months he made several insinuating comparisons with his time at the OSS.⁹⁶⁸ He wrote about endless meetings, from 9.30 in the morning to 6.30 in the evening, even on Saturdays.⁹⁶⁹

Darling, Dear,

Since I wrote you my last letter nothing special has happened, no invitations, life continues dull and uninteresting here. The work is becoming rather monotonous, except for the meetings of the heads of section where there is a great deal of animation. [...] Next week we expect to start the execution of the programme for the Mexico conference and I presume it will be a very, very busy time. Rush, rush, rush. Never mind, I will do my best!⁹⁷⁰

In February they had a period with evening meetings as well, between 8.30 and 11 p.m., and Janse writes to Ronny: "It is very tiring and not so pleasant to sit in a smoke-filled room a whole evening."⁹⁷¹ He was longing to go home [sic] to Washington, and started looking for career opportunities at the Library of Congress. None of Ronny's letters have been

966. UNESCO Archives: UNESCO/C/Admin. & Jur.

967. UNESCO Archives: O. Janse personal file.

968. E.g. letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 9 January 1947. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

969. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 39 November 1946. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

970. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 14 March 1947. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

971. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 2 February 1947. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

saved, but from his responses we can tell that she suffered, was unwell and seems to have been depressed, while he was away. If they had originally nurtured plans to return and settle for good in Paris with his assignment at UNESCO, they both came out on the other end determined to settle for good in the United States. His contract was terminated on 31 May 1947. After that he used some saved vacation time to travel to Sweden to visit friends and relatives for the first time after the war, and got a chance to settle his father's estate. He returned thereafter to the United States with SS *America* from Cherbourg on 18 July 1947.

*

Olov Janse did not leave much of a lasting trace at UNESCO. There is a personal file with his name in the UNESCO archive, but it contains but a few documents relating to his employment. Apart from being an officially invisible cog in the machinery of the UNESCO administration, and his occasional match-makings of influential French academics, art dealers, collectors, and colonial administrators with UNESCO's staff and members of the US delegation through meetings and joint lunches, he pursued one particular question (out of own interest) that might have contributed to the future work of UNESCO. From his letters to Ronny we can see that he was nosing around something which could be described as an embryo to the World Heritage Convention,⁹⁷² which was formed twenty-five years later and has since become the organization's flagship project.⁹⁷³

In December 1946, shortly after his arrival in Paris, he wrote to Ronny that he had discussed with Howard Wilson (who "endorsed it completely") an idea that "could spark the imagination of the entire world". The idea was to put major archaeological and historic monuments – for example Forum Romanum, Parthenon, the Pyramids, the Sphinx, and Angkor – under the trusteeship of UNESCO, and make replicas of the monuments for display in the sunny desert of Arizona.⁹⁷⁴ The idea to put an international trusteeship over important monuments was not entirely new, and it tallied well with UNESCO's overall aim to work against

972. *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, UNESCO 1972.

973. E.g. Meskill 2018.

974. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 17 December 1946. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

threats and destruction of cultural resources, particularly in a situation of war.⁹⁷⁵ Similar thoughts had been circulating already at the IIC in the inter-war period,⁹⁷⁶ but Janse's idea of a UNESCO-controlled trusteeship *and* replica-making of important monuments for placement in an American desert (however bizarre it may sound) captures in some sense the protection–consumption essence of the World Heritage concept today. Janse connected his idea with Roosevelt's idea of international governance, and thus presented it as a US-rooted concept. But the monuments he picked as examples – a classic choice of sites to visit on a nineteenth- and early twentieth-century round-the-world-trip – fell back on his European experiences, and reflect the classic *Bildung* ideals of the European cosmopolitan bourgeoisie and upper classes. All the monuments he suggested were also included on the World Heritage List from early on, and are still known as some of its most iconic sites.

Janse never presented his idea officially at UNESCO, but according to the letters he discussed it informally with several colleagues and acquaintances in and around UNESCO, and had positive responses from Howard Wilson and Chauncey Hamlin, who were both men of great influence in UNESCO and ICOM. Janse moreover discussed his idea with the French anthropologist Paul Lévy (the same Lévy that had been proposed by George Cœdès to participate in Janse's excavations during his third expedition to Indochina, and had now advanced to Director of the EFEO in Hanoi):

Paul Lévy tells me that my suggestion to place certain cultural monuments under Unesco trusteeship may be regarded as most welcome regarding Angkor. This strictly between us. He is very reluctant to return to Indochina. Will sail probably in about two months and stay there only for some time to arrange to get various collections and documents sent to France. He has promised to choose a nice head from Angkor and apply a very reasonable price.⁹⁷⁷

Janse mentions several times in his letters to Ronny this “head from Angkor” that Paul Lévy had promised to get them for “a very reasonable

975. Meskell 2018.

976. Turtinen 2006:46–49; Titchen 1995.

977. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 12 February 1947. NAA: Janse 2001-29.

price". What might seem like a paradox – to work for international trusteeship over Angkor, and at the same time arrange for a part of its monuments to be removed and shipped overseas to enrich one's own private collection (preferably at a bargain price) – was clearly no paradox for Olov Janse. This is a point worth dwelling on, for it says something important not only about Janse as a professional archaeologist, bureaucrat, and person, but also about the discourse concerning rights and ownership over cultural objects in the early UNESCO Secretariat.

We may assume that Olov Janse was not the only member of the Secretariat who used the backstage of UNESCO to promote his own views – not only of what was best for UNESCO, which ought to have been his sole mission. He did it just as much, if not more, to enhance his own position; at UNESCO, in his French networks, and towards an envisioned future in America. He had learned the know-how of this practice from pre- and inter-war cosmopolitan archaeology, where networks of art collectors and intellectuals among the upper bourgeoisie and noble classes in France and Sweden supported his research in Europe and his archaeological expeditions to French Indochina.⁹⁷⁸ This practice was based on enlightenment ideals of the cosmopolitan individual, and was intimately linked to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European colonial societies with their well-known structural inequalities in terms of gender, class, and race.⁹⁷⁹ It would have been remarkable had Olov Janse *not* brought this practice with him, when only a few years later he came to work for a newborn UNESCO. Secretariat staff were recruited on the basis of extraordinary individual achievements and international experience in the academic fields of education, science and culture. Like Olov Janse, most of the executive members of staff had built their careers on visibility and a strong individual voice. Moreover, they were instructed to work for a Constitution enshrining the idea of free enquiry and with a programme built on humanist peace-striving ideals, which required informed experiences and personal points of view.⁹⁸⁰ They were, in other words, "by their oath required to be much more than faithful functionaries".⁹⁸¹ So, what from early UNESCO policy documents may appear like a clean break with pre-war colonial structures, and the creation of

978. Hegardt & Källén 2014.

979. E.g. Cooper 2001; McClintock 1995.

980. Hoggart 2011:11.

981. Hoggart 2011:41.

a neutral supranational One-World organization, included in practical reality a continuation of a pre-war networking and positioning culture where actors like Olov Janse carried pre-war foundations for structural inequality into the new organization.⁹⁸²

*

Notwithstanding its many connections with pre- and inter-war times, the establishment of UNESCO in 1946 represents the distinctive starting point of an international framework for cultural heritage management that remains to this day. Important policy documents which have defined twentieth- and twenty-first-century heritage conservation across the world, such as the Hague Convention, the Venice Charter and the World Heritage Convention, are all the works of UNESCO. Established when the door had barely been closed on the Second World War, UNESCO carried passionate yet fragile hopes for a peaceful future built on intellectual cooperation and ideals of One-World internationalism.⁹⁸³ Many of its initial aims and ambitions in this vein remain with the organization today.⁹⁸⁴ It means also that political values that were at the heart of the initially dominant nations France, the UK, and the USA (universalist liberalism, and naturalization of European world-dominance through “neutral” structures of bureaucracy, for example) also remain at the core of UNESCO, where they are still flagged as universal values promoted for the peaceful future of all mankind.⁹⁸⁵

Such curious inconsistencies between its aims and practical outcomes, and of course its centrality in late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century conceptions and management of heritage on a global scale, have recently made UNESCO a major research object and subject of debate in critical heritage studies.⁹⁸⁶ One of the most important questions for critical heritage studies has been to investigate the formation and workings of a professional corps for conservation and heritage management, which can be connected with UNESCO and its policy documents. The integrity and professional values of this corps are maintained and pro-

982. Sluga 2010.

983. Sluga 2013.

984. Hafstein 2018; Meskell 2018.

985. See also the discussion of public diplomacy and its roots going back to Kant in the chapter “OSS and the US Department of State”.

986. E.g. Harrison 2012; Meskell 2018.

tected by what Laurajane Smith has called an *Authorized Heritage Discourse* (AHD), defining and justifying conservation and heritage management according to universal standards in terms of “best practice”.⁹⁸⁷ Critical research over the past few decades has concluded that this “best practice” does not in fact include the views and visions of all of mankind, but has a strong bias in terms of class and Judaeo-Christian, rationalist, Western European values, which has long excluded alternative approaches to heritage that exist, for instance, in Buddhist contexts, and in vernacular situations all over the world.⁹⁸⁸ Olov Janse’s trajectory through the earliest days of UNESCO offers detailed insights into the foundations of the AHD, and offers explanations for some of its biases. The good will and passionate ambition to create a peaceful future was no doubt there (just as the French and British colonial projects were officially driven by good will for the colonial subjects in the name of universal development).⁹⁸⁹ But the dominance of the main pre-war European colonial powers and the world-leading nations of the post-war era in the new “neutral” Secretariat that was supposed to serve universal values, meant that the project was provided with blinkers for alternative views of education, science and culture (including heritage) right from the onset. Janse largely continued to work with the same ideals and intellectual strands as he had done in the service of Imperial France before the war. And no doubt the members of the Secretariat (like the Director General and General Conference) were, just like Janse, of privileged classes with a high level of classic European *Bildung*.

But there were also some changes that pointed to the future, for Olov Janse’s career and for international archaeology and heritage management. One is the turn against communism as a common enemy and threat to world peace.⁹⁹⁰ Janse describes in one of his letters to Ronny how a Russian member of the Secretariat was considered indiscreet and discontented when she attended meetings – “luckily only on rare occasions”.⁹⁹¹ This in combination with other comments throughout his letter

987. Smith 2006.

988. E.g. Byrne 2014.

989. See the discussion on public diplomacy and Kant in the chapter “OSS and the US Department of State”.

990. See also Graham 2006.

991. Letter from O. Janse to R. Janse, 16 January 1947. NAA: Janse 2001-29. In the French original: “Nous avons une femme qui est dans la section des Sciences. Quand elle assiste (rarement, heureusement) à des réunions, elle voit toujours des complications

indicates a strong anti-communist, particularly anti-Soviet, sentiment in the UNESCO Secretariat at large. With the benefit of hindsight, it is not difficult to see embryos of some of the major world conflicts of the twentieth century – Korea, Vietnam, Cuba – in this universalist peace-seeking mission dominated by two former colonial powers and the USA, where more and more attention was focused on combating communism in the Soviet Union and East Asia. Although they did not see it at the time, blinded as they were in their ambitions for peace by the facts of the Second World War, the Cold War was gaining momentum. And anti-communist policy, later also known as McCarthyism, would dominate the rest of Janse's career after his return to the United States.

If Janse's inter-war endeavours were driven by research questions and ambitions for museum collecting, and his wartime assignments with the OSS and the US State Department were driven by state policy alone, the eight months at UNESCO allowed him to combine his research knowledge and networks with work concerning supranational policy, administration, and soft diplomacy. These were experiences that he would build on and continue to develop in his future work in the United States.

inutiles, pose mille questions indiscrètes paraît toujours mécontente de tout et de tout le monde.”