

1914–1935

Years of Hibernation of the ILAE

The ILAE had made a good start between 1909 and 1914. By 1914, there were over 100 individual members and national committees in at least 17 countries (Algeria, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Germany, England, France, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States). The League had a clear organisational structure and a distinguished committee of patronage, a defined work plan, a well-written constitution and statutes, and clear objectives. It was integrated with the permanent commission for the International Medical Congresses, and had held annual meetings in four different countries. It had a high-quality journal, itself with a distinguished committee of patronage and editorial board.

On 28 June 1914, Franz Ferdinand, crown prince of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was assassinated in Serbia, and Europe was plunged into the First World War. In the summer of 1914 no one believed the war would last long, and in *Epilepsia*, a brief note was published: '*Because of the European war, the meeting of the International League Against Epilepsy has been adjourned until the summer of 1915.*' The expectation that the adjournment would be brief was, sadly, wildly optimistic.

The ILAE went into hibernation, and no further activity took place until 1928, when a group of American epileptologists and psychiatrists set sail for Liverpool on the *SS Caronia* in an attempt to 'to revive the Internationale Liga contra l'Épilepsie'. The group visited all the major European epilepsy centres and met with ILAE members such as Muskens, Alfred Ulrich, Henri Claude and Otto Wuth. The attempt failed, however, and the League stayed dormant.