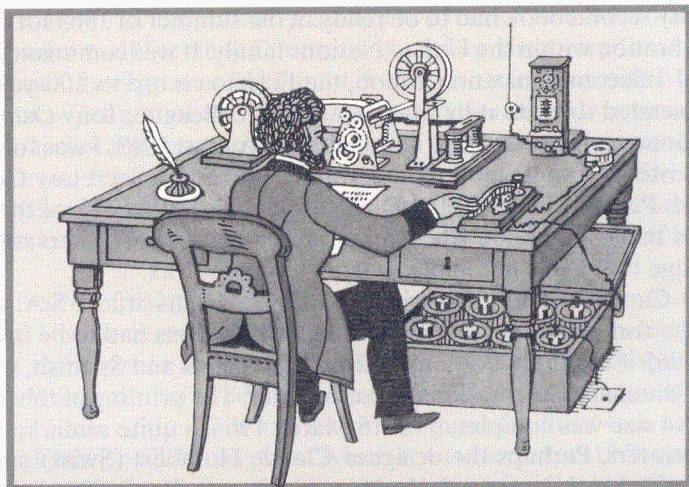


Title 69

Telegraphic transmission, using the **Morse Code**, by an official of the German Postal Authority in 1863, at the time of the foundation of the ITU. *Courtesy Deutsche Postreklame.*



Title 69

Cover Picture for the **Centenary Book** of the International Telecommunication Union, published in Geneva in 1965 and written by the Author. The deep blue picture with a semaphore on the right and a satellite in the top left corner was designed by the Swiss artist Claude Humbert, who designed the whole lay-out of the 343 page work in English, French and Spanish. It was printed by Henri Studer SA Geneva and cost SwF 10 on publication. It was soon sold out but never reprinted. *(Author's photograph ©)*



My second book had to be ready in the summer of 1965 for the first Centenary Celebration within the United Nations family. It was commissioned by the International Telecommunication Union, the ITU, to record its 100-year history. I was recommended to write it by a science writer colleague, Tony Osman. On my first visit to Geneva, the seat of the Union, on 8-9 August 1963, I was formally commissioned to write the book, and I met Gerald C. Gross, the Secretary General (American) and M. Persain (French), the Director of External Affairs of the ITU. For the duration of this commission I became an International Civil Servant which had the advantage that I was not liable to British Income Tax.

Careful calculations with the Printers Henri Studer S.A. of Geneva showed that the completed manuscript with all illustrations had to be in their hands by January 1965 if the three editions, in English, French and Spanish, were to be ready for the Centenary Celebrations in the summer. The printing of the 344 page book of nearly A4 size was completed on 15 March 1965, a quite remarkable achievement by the printers. Perhaps the designer Claude Humbert (Swiss) and the author (British), may also claim a small share in this record. The book was a complete success, distributed world-wide by the ITU at a price of 10 Swiss Francs, and the three language editions were soon sold out, but it was never reprinted. I called it *From Semaphore to Satellite*.

I therefore had 17 months—of which two were spent as a Fulbright Scholar on a Grand Tour of the United States to collect material for the book—to write about 100 years of technological history and of international co-operation, as well as the social and political implications of the telecommunication revolution which took place during those 100 years. The Union—but not the book—started with electrical telegraphy in Paris in 1865 with 20 states as members and the book ended in 1965 when there were 125 member-states, when the orbits and frequencies of satellites had to be allocated and television from the Moon was forecast. (It did occur four years after publication.)

I enjoyed writing the Union's history, my frequent visits to Geneva, and in particular the close cooperation with the excellent designer Claude Humbert. M. Persain had sent out an appeal for historical illustrations to all Members of the Union and as a result, both designer and author could choose from a very rich source of information. Pictures and text grew together in harmony.

I concluded—although I did not put these thoughts into the book—that the history of the Union over 100 years, with its uncountable Committee Meetings attended by so many different nationalities, does prove that international cooperation can lead to success, although a long time scale must be tolerated. This lesson should be learnt by all politicians.

[Back to Synopsis](#)

[To... CIBA and ITU - My first visit to the USA - as "Foreign Leader". Title 69A](#)