The ICA: Catalyst of International Archival Cooperation and Promotion

by Alfred Wagner

International archival cooperation before World War II was limited to rare ventures such as the project launched between the two wars to publish a regional guide to archives in Europe. Archivists and librarians were considered together in 1910 at the first World Congress held in Brussels but the intergovernmental arrangements of the post-war League of Nations had virtually no repercussion on archival matters. It was only the strong impetus towards building a new global order, based on a world-wide partnership institutionalised in the United Nations (UN), which induced some systematic action in the essentially institutional, regional and national world of archival organisation.

In 1946, Solon J. Buck, then Archivist of the United States and President of the Society of American Archivists, initiated an international archival programme structure. Its two main components were the creation of the UN's own archives in New York and the founding of an international organisation for archivists to be associated as a “non-governmental organisation” with the United Nations Educational and Scientific Organisation (UNESCO). The idea behind the UN archives, that its many services should have one great archival agency, was not realised but Buck's second programme element did not become viable.1

In May 1948, a committee of experts2 was convened by UNESCO in Paris and declared itself the constituent assembly of an International Council on Archives, under a provisional constitution.3 The First International Congress on Archives, meting in Paris in 1950, formed the Council and ruled that an international congress would meet every three years (changed in 1956 to a four year interval). Charles Braibant, France's Director-General of Archives in 1954, decided that an annual Round Table on Archives should be convened, except for the year in which the Congress met. Whereas Congress is intended to be an open gathering of the world-wide profession and aimed at discussing topics of general interest on the basis of reports and lectures, the Round Table meetings are mostly attended

---

1 It took until 1976 to create a mechanism, ultimately a section of the ICA, to consider the archives of international organisations.

2 The committee of experts consisted of Solon J. Buck and Herbert O. Breyer (USA), Charles Samaram and Eugene Martin-Chabot (France), Hilary Jenkinson (UK), Julio Jiminez Rueda (Mexico), Emilio Re (Italy), D.P.M. Graswinckel (Netherlands), Vaclav Husak (USSR), and O. Steinnes (Norway).

3 See ICA Directory (1978): 35-44, for the most recent version of the constitution approved on 29 September 1976.
by the heads of national archives to elaborate specific subjects on data gathered from international questionnaires.\(^4\)

The International Council (ICA) has five membership categories: \textit{Category A}—archive directorates of member states of federal countries; \textit{Category B}—national or international regional archives associations; \textit{Category C}—institutional members; \textit{Category D}—individual members; \textit{Category E}—honorary members. Its plenipotentiary body is the General Assembly which meets in connection with the quadrennial Congress. In the interval between meetings, the administration and direction of the ICA's business is vested in an Executive Committee which meets annually. The Committee is composed of one member from each of seventeen countries, elected by the Assembly for a four year term as president, two vice-presidents, fourteen members, ex-officio membership of the Secretary-General and his Deputy, the Treasurer, the Executive Secretary and the chairman of ICA's regional branches. One vice-president must be elected from a Third World country. The ICA Bureau then consists of the president, two vice-presidents and the executive officers.\(^5\)

During the late fifties and early sixties, the exclusive concentration of professional archival interest in the grand old archival administrations of Western Europe began to diminish as first, North American practice and, second, Third World needs began to impinge upon accepted and often obsolete traditions. UNESCO's membership and programme expansion, vigorously assisted by decolonisation processes in Africa, had its effect upon ICA organisation too. ICA's activities at first were limited to Africa south of the Sahara and to Southeast Asia. With a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, ICA launched a comprehensive campaign covering thirty one countries (anglo- and francophone) to explore archival need and awaken archival considerations at government levels. Linked to this campaign, regional archival programmes were initiated and coordinated with UNESCO activities to foster, modernise and strengthen archival infrastructures at the national level—through pilot projects and consultancy appointments. Very special attention was given to means of pooling available resources in the regions and, above all, of creating training facilities for archives staff.

The regional branch structure of ICA began in 1968 and, after ten years, lacks formal recognition in only two regions, Western Equatorial Africa and the Pacific. Using the acronym RBICA, for Regional Branch of ICA, the international regions of the Third World can be identified as follows:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{SARBICA} 1968 (Southeast Asia)—Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Burma, Kampuchea, Laos, Vietnam.
  \item \textbf{ECARBICA} 1969 (East and Central Africa)—Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia.
  \item \textbf{ARBICA} 1972 (Arab)—Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauretania, Morocco, Oman Sultinate, Qatar
\end{itemize}

\(^4\) Extensive reports on the ICA Congresses have appeared in \textit{Archivum} in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. The minutes of Round Table meetings have been published separately in French from 1954-78 but an edition in English is being planned for the future.

Emirate, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, both Yemens.

CARBICA 1975 (Carribean)—US Virgin Islands, Jamaica, Bahamas, Barbados, Trinidad, Guyana, Colombia, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Dominica, West Indies, Montserrat, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Puerto Rico, French Guyana, Curacao, Bermuda, Haiti, Dominican Republic, British Virgin Islands.

LARBICA 1976 (Latin America, based on membership of the Asociacion Latinoamericain di Archives)—Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Columbia, Costa Rico, Cuba, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, Venezuela.

SWARBICA 1976 (South and West Asia)—New Delhi, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Nepal, Sri Lanka.


Already, this regional grouping has proved to be the best way of pooling scarce resources and coordinating programmes as crucial to archival development as professional and subprofessional training (including technical staff for restoration and reprography), exchange of personnel on study visits, publication of regional newsletters, microfilming and oral history programmes.

Along with expansion of programme structure, ICA has also widened and consolidated its coverage of archival subject areas. There are now subject-oriented committees in most essential fields—publications, education, automation, conservation and restoration, reprography, sigillography, business archives, literature and art archives and records management. There are two ad hoc working groups, one, studying statistics and standardisation supported by a UNESCO project on archival standards, the other, compiling a multilingual glossary of archival terminology. A Committee on Archival Development, created in 1970, provides guidance or assistance to projects under the authority of ICA’s Executive Committee.

In January 1975, under the patronage of President Leopold Senghor of Senegal, the ICA’s operational programme was greatly strengthened by the establishment of an International Archival Development Fund, generously supported with grants from Canada, France, the Federal Republic of Germany and Nigeria. Nigeria and Yugoslavia have annually subsidized the Fund over the last three years, while Algeria and Iran have made handsome contributions. The Fund is administered by ICA through its Committee on Archival Development and operates without the limitations and constraints of bilateral aid, without bureaucratic regulations and without a heavy overhead. The Fund can act and react on a flexible basis whenever and wherever aid is needed. Requests channelled through regional representatives and national archives administrations cover financial aid to surveys, meetings at regional, national or international levels mainly related to education, institutional programmes for technical and professional work, overseas study tours, regional publications and some equipment.
UNESCO tended at first to see the Fund as a venture likely to compete with its existing projects and endanger its Third World prestige. However, realisation of the wholly inadequate financial capacities of both UNESCO and ICA has brought programmes to a complementary understanding. Joint meetings, symposia, and publications are now a matter of course rather than an exception. One publication project in particular is worth notice—the “Guide to the Sources of the History of Nations” which comprises inventories of archival material relating to developing regions but located outside the regions. Latin America, Africa north and south of the Sahara have already been covered and volumes for Asia and Oceania are in preparation. Both ICA and UNESCO have their headquarters in Paris too and this helps, neutralising much of the bureaucratic effects of international operations. The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) and the International Federation of Documentation (FID), two sister disciplines, have developed organisationally alongside ICA within one unit of UNESCO since 1967 and cooperate on matters of professional and technical training. Similarly, ICA maintains linkages with experts in areas of physical and legal security, preservation of historical monuments and cultural property, historiography and museology. More recently, contacts with the fields of information science and statistical research have been strengthened.

What is ICA’s future? The next International Congress, scheduled for London from 15-19 September 1980, will be devoted to two themes—“The Use of Archives” and “The ICA, its achievement and its future”. The latter theme ought to generate some lively discussion, although the Council does have a medium-range plan for the period 1978-82, which articulates a large number of projects involving Category A members. Priority has been given to all kinds of training, to conservation and restoration and to areas, such as records management and appraisal, which will permit a measure of international standardisation. Although a small secretariat and a few well-chosen members of the profession are vastly superior to a heavy bureaucracy with elaborate rules and regulations, the workload of the Bureau is extremely heavy and getting heavier. Finances do not, and may never, permit the growth of a suitable administrative infrastructure. At present, the French National Archives covers a large portion of ICA’s current operational expenditure and the national archives of the Federal Republic of Germany and of Spain have furnished a professional archivist on secondment for a limited period. There is some chance of the Executive Secretary in Paris receiving an assistant in the coming year—at present he has only an executive assistant and two secretary-stenographers.

Publications of the ICA

A. ARCHIVUM International Review on Archives published by the International Council on Archives with the financial aid of UNESCO

I (1951) Proceedings of the 1st International Congress on Archives,

Certainly this was the author's experience during his service as a Programme Specialist with Unesco, 1968-1975.
Paris, 1950 (Records in Formation; Archives and Microphotography; Economic Archives).
1951. 144 p.

II (1952)

III (1953)
1953. 238 p.

IV (1954)

V (1955)
International Directory on Archives.

VI (1956)

VII (1957)

VIII (1958)
1959. 197 p.

IX (1959)
Birth, Marriage and Death Registers: Part II. International Archival Bibliography 1957: Part II.

X, No. 1 (1960)

X, No. 2 (1960)
1964. 290 p.

XI (1961)
Activities of Archives in the World.

XII (1962)
Notarial Archives.
1965. 128 p.
Municipal Archives.
1965. 144 p.

Proceedings of the 5th International Congress on Archives, Brussels, 1964 (Modern Methods of Classifying Archives; Ecclesiastical Archives; Archive Publications; Introduction and Adaptation of Mecanography in Archives; Sigillography; How State Archivists are recruited and the Start of their Career).
1968. 244 p.

The Great Archive Repositories of the World (Notices on the Most Important Repositories for Historical Research of International Interest).


Proceedings of the 6th International Congress on Archives, Madrid, 1968 (Liberalism of Access to Archives and Microfilming; History of Archives; Salvage and Repair of Italian Archives Damaged by 1966 Floods; Administrative Archives; Economic Archives; Archive Repair; Sigillography).


International Directory on Archives (as of January, 1975).

Proceedings of the 7th International Congress on Archives, Moscow, 1972 (The Relations between State and Administrative Archives; New Archival Techniques; Archival Finding Aids for Scholars; Technical Assistance to Archives of Developing Countries; Literature and Art Archives; Archives of Architecture; Audio-Visual Archives).

Basic International Bibliography of Archive Administration.
Cahier hors  Proceedings of the General Conference on the Planning of
série n° 1/ Archival Development in the Third World, Dakar,
Special  28–31 January 1975

B. NEWSLETTERS of Regional Branches and Committees

*Southeast Asian Archives. The Journal of the Southeast Asian Regional
Branch of the International Council on Archives*, vol. 1-8, Kuala Lumpur,
*Orders:* National Archives of Malaysia, Jalan Sultan, Petaling Jaya,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

*Orders:* ibid.

*Ecarbica Journal. The Official Journal of the East and Central Africa
Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives*, vol. 1, n° 1,
*Orders:* Kenya National Archives, Jogoo House “A”, P.O. Box 30520,
Nairobi, Kenya.

*Bulletin Microfilm Committee, International Council on Archives*, vols. 1-5,
*Orders:* Secretariat Microfilm Committee of the International Council on
Archives, Serrano 115, Madrid 6, Espagne/Spain.

*Bulletin ADPA. Automation - Archives - Informatique, International
*Orders:* ADPA, The British Library, Central Administration, Sheraton
House, Great Chapel Street, London W1V 4 BH, U.K.

*Caribbean Archives (Journal of the Caribbean Archives Association)* vols.
*Orders:* Secretariat de la CARBICA, Archives départementales de la
Guadeloupe, B.P. 74, BASSE TERRE 97100.

*Swarbica Journal (South and West Asian Regional Branch of the
*Orders:* Swarbica secretariat, Dr. N.H. KULKARNEE, National
Archives of India, Janpath, NEW DELHI 110001, India.

*El Boletin Interamericano de Archivos (Asociacion Latinoamericana de
*Orders:* Boletin Interamericano de Archivos, Facultad de Filosofia y
Humanidades, Estafeta 32, 5000 CORDOBA, Argentina.

*The Arab Archives, The Journal of the Arab Regional Branch, International
Council on Archives (in English and Arabic)* n°1, Baghdad, 1975.
*Orders:* Arbica Secretariat, National Centre of Archives, P.O. B. 594,
Baghdad, Republic of Iraq.

C. STUDIES

DAVIES, John, *A Study on the Basic Standards and Methods in Preserva-
tion and Restoration Workshops Applicable to Developing Countries*,

DUCHEIN, Michel, *Les bâtiments et équipements d'archives*, Paris,


**Orders:** Conseil International des Archives, 60 rue des Francs-Bourgeois, 75003 Paris.


**Orders:** Librairie de la nouvelle Faculté, 30, rue des Saints-Pères, 75006 Paris.


**Orders:** Secrétariat de la Table Ronde des Archives, 60 rue des Francs-Bourgeois, 75003 PARIS.


**Orders:** Verlag Dokumentation Saurkg, P.O. Box 711009, D-8000 München 71, FRG.

**D. PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVAL ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE**

The proceedings of the conferences are available from Documentation française, 29-31, quai Voltaire, 75007 Paris and from the Direction des Archives de France, 60, rue des Francs-Bourgeois, 75003 Paris.

Une table ronde utile à l'histoire, par Charles Braibant, . . . et Robert-Henri Bautier, . . . [Actes des trois premières Conférences].

Paris, Direction des archives de France, 1958.—126 p. 15,00F


*Troisième conférence, Zagreb, 1957. Place des archives et des archivistes dans l'Etat.*

Actes de la cinquième conférence internationale de la Table ronde des archives [Lisbonne, 1959]. *Les archives au service de la recherche historique.*—Paris, Direction des archives de France/Imprimerie nationale, 1961.—102 p. ................................. 11,00F

Actes de la sixième conférence internationale de la Table ronde des archives [Varsovie, 1961]. *Les archives dans la vie internationale: droit international des archives, collaboration internationale en matière d'archives, les archives des organisations internationales.*

Paris, Direction des archives de France/Imprimerie nationale, 1963.—160 p. ................................. 18,00F

Actes de la septième conférence internationale de la Table ronde des archives [Madrid, 1962]. *Le concept d'archives et les frontières de l'archivistique.*—Paris, Direction des archives de France/Imprimerie nationale, 1963.—76 p. ................................. 11,00F

Actes des huitième en neuvième conférences internationales de la Table ronde des archives.—Paris, Direction, des archives de France/Imprimerie nationale, 1965.—232 p. ................................. 49,00F

II. Progrès récents en matière de construction d'archives.

*Neuvième conférence, Londres, 1965.* I. *Les Bâtiments d'archives (suite).*
II. Les archives et les traitements mécanographique et automatique des données. III. Le fonctionnement de la Table ronde.

Actes de la dixième conférence internationale de la Table ronde des archives. [Copenhague, 1967]. I. *Problèmes concrètes posés aux directions d'archives par les projets de libéralisation en matière de communication de documents.*
II. Problèmes posés aux directions d'archives par les nouveaux développements du droit d'auteur. III. Problèmes administratifs et juridiques posés par le microfilmage.—Paris, Direction des archives de France/Imprimerie municipale, 1969.—96 p. ................................. 40,00F

Actes des onzième et douzième conférences internationales de la Table ronde des archives.—Paris, secrétariat de la Table ronde internationale des archives, 1971.—174 p. ................................. 40,00F

II. La restauration des documents d'archives.

II. La mission des archives et les tâches des archivistes.

Actes de la treizième conférence internationale de la Table ronde des archives. [Bonn, 1971]. I. *Les archives et l'informatique.*
II. *Les archives des institutions internationales.*—Paris, secrétariat de la Table ronde internationale des archives, 1974.—141 p. ................................. 40,00F

Record of the thirteenth international conference of the archival round Table. [Bonn, 1971]. I. *Archives and automation.*
II. *Archives of the international organizations.*—Paris, secrétariat de la Table ronde internationale des archives, 1975.—183 p. ................................. 40,00F
Actes de la quatorzième conférence internationale de la Table ronde des archives. [Luxembourg, 1973]. I. Les budgets des archives. II. La sigillographie, l'héraldique et la symbolique administrative contemporaine dans les archives.—Paris, secrétariat de la Table ronde internationale des archives, 1975.—179 p. ................................. 50,00F

Actes de la quinzième conférence internationale de la Table Ronde des archives. [Ottawa, 1974]. Les Archives et les Relations publiques.—Paris, secrétariat de la Table ronde internationale des archives, 1977.—138 p. ................................. 60,00F


E. GUIDE TO THE SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF NATIONS

1ST SERIES: LATIN AMERICA


Orders: Archives Générales du Royaume, rue de Ruysbroeck 2-4, B-Bruxelles.


Orders: Algemeen Rijksarchief, Bleyenburg 7, NL-Den Haag.


Orders: Archivo Histórico Nacional, Serrano 115, Madrid.


Orders: Archivio Vaticano, 00120 Città del Vaticano.


Orders: Riksarkivet, Fyverkarbacken 13-17, Fack, S-10026 Stockholm 34.


Orders: Clarendon Press, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP.

Orders: Direzione generale degli Archivi di Stato, Via Agostino Depretis 45a, Roma, Italia/Italy.
HAUSCHILD-THIESSEN, Renate und BACHMANN, Elfriede, Führer durch die Quellen zur Geschichte Lateinamerikas in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bremen, Carl Schünemann Verlag, 1972, 437 p. (Veröffentlichungen aus dem Staatsarchiv der Freien Hansestadt Bremen, 38).

2ND SERIES: AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA

Orders: Inter Documentation Company AG, Order Department, Poststrasse 14, 6300 Zug. Switzerland.
Also available on microfiche.
Orders: African Studies Association, 218 Shiffman Center Brandeis University, WALTHAM, Mass. 02154-USA.

3RD SERIES: NORTH AFRICA, ASIA AND OCEANIA

Orders: Verlag Dokumentation Saurkg, P.O. Box 711009, D-8000 MUNCHEN, FRG.

UNESCO PUBLICATIONS PREPARED IN COOPERATION WITH ICA.
Orders: UNESCO, 7, Place de Fontenoy, 75007 Paris
Documentation, Libraries and Archives: Studies and Research


Résumé

Le Conseil international des archives, souvent de pair avec l'UNESCO, travaille avec un budget restreint à promouvoir les intérêts de l'archivistique et met à la disposition de la communauté internationale oeuvrant dans ce domaine, un service mondial d'information et de ressources matérielles. Une grande partie du travail, a été accompli, et continue de l'être, en fonction des besoins du tiers monde. Quant à l'action du Conseil dans les pays développés, il se manifeste surtout au niveau des publications.

---

The
BUREAU
of
CANADIAN ARCHIVISTS
announces

INTERNATIONAL
ARCHIVES
WEEK

1—8 November 1979

For Further
Information
Contact:

Peter Bower and Andre Martineau,
Bureau of Canadian Archivists,
Room 351, c/o Public Archives of Canada
395 Wellington Street, Ottawa Canada, K1A 0N3