

CONFERENCE COVERAGE: CONGRESS OF THE
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES, 1972

BY

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The seventh Congress of the International Council on Archives was held in Moscow August 21 - 25, 1972. Founded in 1948, the ICA holds an international Congress every four years in the country of the incoming President, in this case, G.A. Belov, Director of the Central Archives of U.S.S.R., who had been elected Vice President, Eastern Hemisphere at the sixth Congress in Madrid in 1968. Since the proceedings of each Congress are published in Archivum, this is simply an incomplete and personal account by one of the eight Canadian archivists who attended the Moscow Congress.

Most of the Canadian delegation were on the same flight (Royal Dutch Airlines) leaving Montreal at 7:30 p.m. on August 19, with a change of planes in Amsterdam and a short stop in Warsaw before arriving at Moscow at 3:30 p.m., on Sunday, August 20. Our first impressions were of confusion (long struggling queues to have passports, visas, foreign currency and baggage examined); heat (the temperature was said to be 90 degrees and smoke from forest fires near Moscow pervaded the city); innumerable pieces of paper (for identification, assignment to hotels, transportation, deposit of passports, assignment to room, currency exchange, issue of meal tickets, confirmation of travel arrangements) and variety since Moscow is a mixture of modern skyscrapers and ancient churches, an ultra modern metro system and primitive carts, cheap caviar and expensive milk, ancient shawls and mini skirts.

The Congress was held in the huge Trade Union Hall just around the corner from the Bolshoi Theatre. Registration desks were set up in the basement where conference literature was issued, simultaneous translation kits picked up, tour arrangements made, post cards and souvenirs purchased and posted. It was always packed with hundreds of delegates seeking information in many languages. A large cafeteria on the main floor was open all day and although the building was air-conditioned there was a great demand for beer, lemonade, mineral water and tea, as well as caviar and salami sandwiches, etc. The meetings were held in the large and magnificent

Hall of Columns which could seat about two thousand people and whose marble columns and elaborate chandeliers were most striking.

August 21 was devoted to registration and pre-conference meetings. I attended a meeting of the Table Ronde, an organization of the ICA which consists of national archivists of the 100 or so member countries and meets annually. Approximately 40 were present. A new President (Biljan of Yugoslavia) and a new Secretary (Gut of France) were elected replacing Braibant and Bautier who had been President and Secretary respectively since the Table Ronde was founded. A committee to propose reform to the Table Ronde was appointed, arrangements for the 1973 meeting in Luxembourg were discussed and my invitation for the Table Ronde to meet in Ottawa in 1974 was accepted. It will be the first meeting of the Table Ronde outside Europe. In the afternoon meetings of the microfilming, sigillography and Archivum editorial committees were held. Bill Wheeler, PAC, represented Canada on the microfilming committee.

On August 22, the Congress was officially opened in the Hall of Columns at 9:30. The front rows were reserved for the two official delegates of each country, representing the national archives and the national archival association. More than 1200 had registered for the Congress, twice the number of those who attended the fifth Congress in Brussels and the sixth in Madrid. They came from 64 different countries. Those present were from the U.S.S.R. and 90% were from Europe. Approximately half of the non-European delegates came from the United States and Canada. Opening speeches were made by Sanchez Belda, President, and by F.T. Dolgikh, replacing G.A. Belov, whose absence was never explained. After the brief opening ceremonies the first regular session on the program commenced.

The most important speaker in the sessions is the rapporteur who, months in advance, has circulated among all member countries extensive questionnaires on the subject of his session. The returns are analyzed and summarized in the report which he gives at the beginning of the session. Then short statements on aspects of the subject are made by members of a panel. Finally, there is a period for general discussion or, to be more precise, a series of formal "interventions". Anyone who wishes to make a statement on the subject of the session must submit his name in advance, and when he is called by the Chairman he must give the text of his remarks to a reporter for the use of the translators and later by the staff of Archivum who prepare the published proceedings. When the time for the session has elapsed statements may still be handed in for publication.

The first session was on "The Relations between Government Archives and Administrative (i.e., departmental) Archives". The reporter was F.T. Dolgikh. I was a member of the panel with archivists from France, the United States, Hungary and Kenya.

At 3 p.m. the first session of the General Assembly was held for business of the ICA. There was a roll call by countries,

followed by reports by the Treasurer, the Secretariat, each regional branch, Archivum and the various committees. I gave a brief report on the working party on the implications of Automatic Data Processing for archival management which had been held in Spoleto, Italy, in May. The Canadian representative was Michael Carroll who was elected Secretary and Editor of the bulletin ADPA. Two changes in the constitution were adopted, one adding a third voting member in the case of federal countries, the other increasing the membership of the Executive Committee from ten to twelve. A new dues structure, based on gross national product per capita was approved. This increased the contribution of PAC from \$100 to \$710. The new dues are \$50 for provincial archives wishing "central archives" status, \$15 for other archival institutions, \$50 for national archival associations and \$10 for individual members. In the evening all delegates were invited to a concert - a marvellous display of Russian dancing.

Sessions continued for the next 2-1/2 days, a plenary session being held in the Hall of Columns in the morning with other sessions, and sometimes concurrent, in the afternoon. Plenary sessions were on "New Techniques in Archives", "Finding Aids" and "Archives of Developing Countries". "Section sittings" were on archives of literature and art, architectural records and films and photographs. These sessions were rather sparsely attended since most delegates were taking advantage of the wide range of tours of the city and its many interesting buildings, shopping and getting acquainted with colleagues from many countries.

The final session of the General Assembly was held on Friday afternoon, August 25. The agenda was continued from the first session. One of the first items was the election of officers. F.T. Dolgikh, as expected, was elected President, Guy Dubosque of France and J.B. Rhoads of the USA were elected Vice Presidents for the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. It is understood that for the first time the Western Vice President will succeed to the Presidency and the next Congress in 1976 will be in Washington. I was among the new members elected to the Executive Committee. I took my place on the presidium and was informed that I would have a private car and driver at my disposal. The Executive Committee retired to discuss resolutions, leaving the 1300 delegates waiting for about an hour. Then the resolutions, 29 in number covering the subjects of all the sessions, were read and approved. The new President and others gave closing speeches and all participants in the Congress were invited to a reception at the Hotel Adler. The first arrivals found a large room with tables laden with food and wine. There was a brief frantic scene of hundreds of hungry delegates surging around the table and in a few minutes not a crumb or drop was left. The later arrivals had to be content with listening to speeches and toasts in several languages over a loud-speaker.

The Congress organizing committee had arranged with In-tourist to conduct seven post-Congress tours within the USSR. These tours, approximately one week in duration, began and ended in Moscow. The price, paid in advance, included transportation, accommodation, meals and guided excursions at each city visited. I

chose Tour No. 6 to Leningrad, Kiev and Volgograd. On Sunday morning, August 27, all those going on the tours were assembled in the lobby of the Ukraina Hotel when the members of each tour were identified by the Intourist guide assigned to each. We discovered that the Tour 6 group consisted on 5 Germans, 2 Venezuelans, 2 French ladies and 1 Belgian, 2 men from the Vatican, 2 Italians, 1 Bulgarian, 1 Spaniard and 1 Canadian. Our guide, Tanya, spoke only Russian and English, but French and German speaking guides were provided for the excursions in each city. In a short time we were all good friends and settled down to a routine of reporting to specified buses at precise times.

The highlights of the two days visit to Leningrad were a morning spent in the famous Heritage museum and an afternoon at Petrodvorets (Peter's Park) the Russian equivalent of Versailles. Since tours overlapped to some extent we frequently met friends in airports, hotel lobbies and restaurants.

Highlights of the two days in Kiev were visits to St. Sophia Cathedral and the central archives of the Ukraine. At the archives we were met by the Director, Mr. Mityukov, whom I had met at meetings of the Table Ronde in Bonn and Moscow. He astonished everybody by greeting me as a special guest, embracing me, assigning a personal interpreter so we could converse during the guided tour. We spent an hour in each of four departments - restoration and microfilm, foreign affairs, cinema and literature and art. The archives building was new, occupied in 1970, and the exterior resembled the Public Archives of Canada, plans of which had been obtained. Already a large addition for film archives was being constructed. The four-hour tour was followed by a one-hour film on the Ukraine after which we assembled in the boardroom for refreshments. Mr. Mityukov proposed a toast to me, referring to my election to the Executive Committee of ICA, and I replied on behalf of our group. We were all given copies of archives publications and the Director presented me with a specially-bound set and also a bottle of his favourite wine. What we had expected to be a brief afternoon visit finally ended at 8 p.m. when the refreshments were all consumed.

In Volgograd (formerly Stanlingrad) we had a tour of the city, visits to the magnificent war memorial, a hydro plant, a planetarium and the city archives and also went to a circus and had a hydrofoil ride down the Volga. The city archives had a large staff (50) all women except the Director. We had little opportunity to examine the holdings since the brief time allocated for the visit was occupied by refreshments and toasts. Mgr. Burns and I visited the military museum, although it was not part of the tour, and saw the many gifts which had been sent to the defenders of Stanlingrad during World War II.

Back in Moscow all the tours ended with a special dinner of sturgeon, caviar, chicken Kiev, ice cream, coffee and vodka. We then dispersed after fond farewells. All of us felt that the post-Congress tours gave us all a better understanding of the USSR than a visit only to Moscow would have done.

The Canadians who attended the seventh Congress were Mrs. Isobel Dobell, Mrs. Eve de Langley, Mrs. Mabel Good, Mme de Saint-Pierre, François Baudin, J. Martel, Edwin Welch, W.D. Wheeler and Wilfred Smith.

CONFERENCE COVERAGE: ANNUAL MEETING OF

L'ASSOCIATION DES ARCHIVISTES DU QUEBEC, 1973

BY

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McGILL UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

The annual meeting of l'Association des Archivistes du Québec was held at Trois-Rivières on the 5th and 6th of May 1973. The first day of the meeting consisted of a series of five organized workshops devoted to specific archival activities: Records Centres, Classification of Historic Archives, Classification Systems for Records Management, Guides and Research Tools and Problems of Accessibility. The five workshops were held concurrently in order to enable a full discussion of the questions under study in each section, however this format prevented attendance at more than one section. The workshops became the vehicles for proposing resolutions for the business meeting on May 6th.

The resolutions eventually presented reflected three major preoccupations: the structuring of workshops, the establishment of courses in archives and the ratification of a section on Records Management.

The workshops were criticised for being oriented toward lecturing with too little time allotted to discussion. Resolutions sponsored by Carol Couture and André Frenière were both directed toward restructuring the preparation of workshops. It was resolved that next year the membership of each workshop section should be determined two months in advance of the annual meeting. The participants expressing interest in each section should be contacted by the director of the section in order to ensure an adequate preparation for discussion and debate of the problems to be treated. A second resolution by François Beaudin suggested that a round table be organized in which historians could explain the problems involved in initiating 1st, 2nd and 3rd year university students in the use of archives. Sister Vachon, André Frenière and myself spoke to the resolution enlarging it in two ways. It was resolved that students and professors from other disciplines (History of Architecture, History of Sociology, History of Science) should also be invited in order to demonstrate the avenues which are being exploited in archival collections by students both inside and outside the actual history departments.