

# IFLA's First Fifty Years: a reprise

Extracts from 'An Outline of IFLA's History', by Joachim Wieder, selected and edited by Harry Campbell.



**Joachim Wieder**

Joachim Wieder was Director of the Library of the Technological University of Munich, Germany, until his retirement in 1977. He was Secretary of IFLA from 1958 to 1963, and Vice-President of IFLA from 1967 to 1973. Together with W.R.H. Koops, he edited the commemorative volume *IFLA's First Fifty Years: achievement and challenge in international librarianship*, published on the occasion of IFLA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1977, and contributed the first chapter in that volume, 'An Outline of IFLA's History', from which these extracts are taken. Dr. Wieder died in 1991.



**Harry Campbell**

Harry Campbell joined the United Nations Secretariat in 1946 in New York, moving to the Libraries Division of UNESCO, Paris in 1948, where he organized the UNESCO/Library of Congress Survey of National and International Bibliographical Services and was responsible for the UNESCO Clearing House for Libraries. He attended IFLA's Rome Conference in 1951 and worked with both IFLA and FID in organizing the Brussels 1955 World Congress of Libraries. In 1956 he was appointed Chief Librarian of the Toronto Public Library, Toronto, Canada and retired in 1981. From 1971 to 1977 he was active in the development of IFLA's Regional Activities programme and made frequent visits to INTAMEL and IFLA meetings. He was elected to the Executive Board of IFLA in 1973, and was First Vice President from 1974–1979. He was made an Honorary Fellow of IFLA in 1979. He was President of the Federation of Canada-China Friendship Associations from 1984 to 1986 and served as a library consultant in China and other countries from 1981–1996. In 2002 he served as President of ExLibris Association, Toronto, which is active in the furthering of library history in Canada.

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## The Beginnings of IFLA (1926–1930)

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The actual origins of IFLA are best considered and interpreted in the light of the reviving supra-national tendencies towards union, characteristic of the post-war period of the twenties. These amalgamating trends were strongly affected by the consequences of the extensive damages wrought by World War I, not only in intellectual and cultural domains but in the fields of economics, technology and politics as well. Then there was the radiance of a youthful League of Nations that inspired great hopes and strengthened to an extraordinary extent the awareness among individual States of their obligation to promote cooperation and understanding across their national frontiers. The League of Nations' Commission for Intellectual Cooperation had been established in Geneva, but had its executive Secretariat in Paris: the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC), created in 1925 and of which the League of Nations' Library Conference formed a part. Librarians now sought to join in the general movement towards worldwide cooperation by means of a permanent international professional organization in an effort to ensure maximum effectiveness of their manifold activities and their weight in cultural policy.

Not without reason Gabriel Henriot has been called the spiritual father of IFLA. He was at that time President of the Association des bibliothécaires français and professor at the American Library School in Paris. At the International Congress of Librarians and Booklovers held at Prague in 1926, he recommended – on behalf of his French colleagues – the creation of a standing international library committee, to be elected by individual national organizations.

A small working group in which, apart from Henriot, there were representatives from Czechoslovakia, England, Germany and Sweden, drafted the proposal in greater detail, and also a nine-point Resolution, which was adopted by the Congress as a 'Provisorium'. The Standing International Library Committee was to consist of delegates nominated by national associations. It was to decide on place and time of official international congresses, and be domiciled at IIC Headquarters. The Resolution's last point stressed the importance of a sound financial basis, to be constructed with the help of contributions from individual member associations.

Henriot's conception, strongly French in orientation and reflecting the influence on IFLA of the intellectual life of Paris in those days, was submitted in Prague to a truly international forum. Among the nearly 700 participants were to be found representatives of 88 organizations from 28 countries. The Slavic element, constituted by Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Russians and Yugoslavs, dominated. Apart from the USA, some countries outside Europe, such as Brazil, Egypt, Palestine and Turkey, had also sent delegates. There were, moreover, representatives from other professions: bibliophiles, booksellers and publishers.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime, the French organizers had changed their views, as was explained in a written recommendation sent by Henriot, who had been asked to sound out, as general delegate of the Prague working group, the possibilities of attaching the future federation to the League of Nations' Paris Institute. He now distanced himself from the original idea of housing the central secretariat in the IIC's crowded premises in the Palais Royal and proposed those of the American Library Center in Paris instead.<sup>2</sup> This change of mind was probably caused by Henriot's misgivings concerning the independence of the new international professional organization, and his hope of obtaining more useful arrangements by means of closer links with the American Library

Association (ALA), which might perhaps lead to organizational, professional and financial support. But he clung to the idea of a permanent seat in Paris. The ALA was, at any rate, effectively drawn into the preparatory work, as became apparent during the Edinburgh Conference of 1927.

### *The Resolution to establish an International Library Committee*

It was there, on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations of the (British) Library Association, that IFLA was established – on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 1927. The final resolution adopted at the closing session of the Congress was the Federation's 'Magna Carta' of foundation.<sup>3</sup> Signed by the authorized delegates from fifteen countries, it was the result of several days' deliberations of a seven member working group. Its Chairman, the Swedish Riksbibliotekar Isak Collijn, was elected first President. From some delegates' reports of the time it may be gathered that two outstanding personalities had distinguished themselves by their exceptional tact and skilful negotiating: Hugo Andres Krüss, Director General of the Preussische Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, and Carl H. Milam, the ALA Secretary (Chicago), to whom the IFLA Statutes of 1929 are due.<sup>4</sup>

Initially, the Edinburgh Resolution was regarded as a basis for further consultations. Entering into force upon ratification by the various member organizations, its text would eventually become the basis for the Committee's definitive Statutes.

The first three general international meetings marked the main stages of this process of consolidation. As proposed by the President, the establishment of the International Library and Bibliographical Committee was officially declared in Rome (1928). At the same session Marcel Godet (Berne) presented some suggestions of great importance for the subject content of international conferences. Only questions of a truly international character, related to international problems or problems of general

interest, and of concern to a number of countries, should be taken up. A principal theme was to ensure the meeting's unity of programme and substance. Although these guidelines were adopted at the time, and would have helped to relieve the meetings of superfluous, mixed-up and incoherent discussion of unrelated topics, they were unfortunately not always followed. Confused and chaotic debates tended to decrease the value of the professional sessions. To a certain extent this was also true of the first World Congress of Librarianship and Bibliography which took place under IFLA auspices in Rome (1929), with meetings in Florence and Venice.<sup>5</sup>

At the Rome general session the International Library and Bibliographical Committee received its official name, and, with the appointment of General Secretary T.P. Sevensma [Director of the League of Nations Library – *Ed.*], its permanent seat at Geneva, in the League of Nations Library. Sevensma's close collaborator, A. C. Breycha-Vauthier, was co-opted to the Executive Committee as Assistant Secretary. In the course of more than 30 years he was to render outstanding services to IFLA, and, together with Sevensma, he guaranteed at the same time an efficient continuous relationship with the Geneva institution, and the material and idealistic possibilities it had to offer. The Statutes prepared by Milam, and already propounded and adopted at the 1929 World Congress, came into force by a decision of the Stockholm Session in 1930, and IFLA was finally constituted as a world union of national library associations, also open to related organizations or central library institutions in countries where no library associations were in existence.

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### **IFLA's Development in the 1930s**

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The decade preceding World War II saw the consolidation of the inner structure of the International Li-



Figure 1. Isak Collijn, IFLA's first President, 1927-1931.



Figure 2. William Warner Bishop, President, 1931-1936.

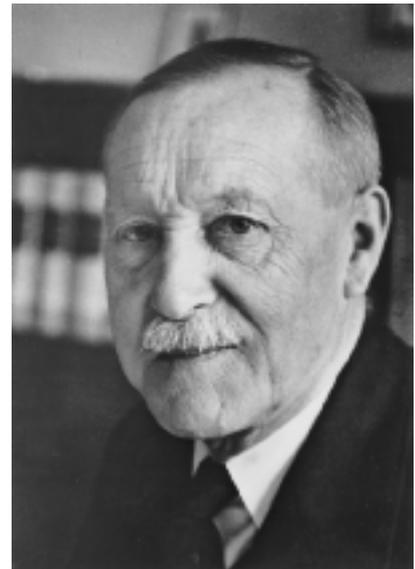


Figure 3. Marcel Godet, President, 1936-1947.

brary Federation, and a continuing expansion of its sphere of influence due to its growing membership and significantly increased authority in the area of cultural policy. In 1930 IFLA had 24 national member associations in 20 countries, in 1935 there were 34 from 25 countries, while in 1939 their number had reached 41 in 31 States, and included two international groupings. Apart from the USA, there were several library associations from outside Europe, such as China, India, Japan, Mexico and the Philippines, since 1936 also Egypt and Palestine. But in its overall activities IFLA had not as yet attained true universality. Its organizational and financial possibilities remained limited in scope, and the overseas members – once again with the notable exception of the USA – could but maintain incidental contacts with the parent body. When China and India invited IFLA with insistence to hold the 1936 annual session in Asia it was obliged to disappoint them, having to decline the invitation owing to financial strictures.<sup>6</sup>

In accordance with the Statutes, but also taking into account the traditional and priority needs of the period, the organization of quinquennial world congresses was an important feature of IFLA's work.

#### *IFLA's first Presidents and its Secretary General*

The Presidents largely determined the broad lines of library policy and the focus of international library cooperation. Their presidential addresses contained valuable pronouncements on programme matters, and taken together, these speeches constituted authoritative sources of IFLA's history – and this remained the case during all phases of IFLA's post World War II development as well.

The first President, Isak G.A. Collijn (1927-1931), Director of the Royal Library in Stockholm, was a distinguished scholar, primarily an incubulist and medievalist of international fame, who combined a wide culture with exceptional linguistic accomplishments. Fluent in eight languages, he furnished on occasion astonishing proof of the latter.

The second President, William Warner Bishop, Library Director, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (1931-1936) did not only embody the best American library traditions, but was also an excellent authority on European librarianship, and its specific needs and problems. This combination showed itself extremely fruitful for international cooperation. Bishop, who was also a learned bibliophile, held respon-

sible offices in the USA as a library consultant.

The opening addresses of the third President, Marcel Godet (1936-1947) were particularly memorable. He was the Director of the Swiss National Library in Berne and attached to IFLA since 1928. An excellent organizer with practical sense, he was at the same time a highly cultivated man, with a wide range of interests, charming and full of Gallic wit, radiating a warm humanity and an unbending idealism. From his neutral country he did his utmost to keep the International Federation together during the Second World War.

His inspiring, delicately worded opening addresses, delivered in fine style, were usually devoted to a main theme. In Paris (1937) he spoke of the book crisis and the basically indestructible power of the book in a period increasingly dominated by emerging mass media like radio and film. "On peut croire que, de toutes façons, en dépit des noires prophéties, bibliothèques et bibliothécaires ont encore devant eux, et pour longtemps, une tâche et des possibilités immenses".<sup>7</sup> Repeatedly – as in Warsaw (1936) and Brussels (1938) – he concerned himself with the relationship of librarians to documentation. This was a complex question that excited strong



Figure 4. T.P. Sevensma, Secretary-General, 1929–1958.

feelings at the time, for the strained relations between the two worlds of essential activities which had too long remained unsolved only began to improve after the great Congress of Documentalists in Copenhagen (1935) and to move towards useful cooperation.

In his impressive and grave opening address at the last pre-war Session in The Hague (1939), Godet summarized all the bleak apprehensions to which he had given voice on earlier occasions in face of the threats to peace and international intellectual cooperation. His analysis of the unbridgeable contrast between opposing politico-philosophical systems was mainly concerned with National-Socialist Germany and the fateful conflict between State and individual, nation and mankind, totalitarian regimes and democratic institutions. Pointing to the corruption of all library tasks which ought to be undertaken in the service of freedom and human decency, Godet raised the question of the purpose and possibility of any further cooperation, pointing to the love of the book shared by all, to IFLA's achievements and to the activities of its Sections and Committees that had proven their capability to surmount all barriers.

Side by side with the marked personalities of the IFLA Presidents,

the Secretary-General, T. P. Sevensma, played a decisive role. A Dutchman of encyclopaedic culture, he was open to the world, temperamental and very active, gifted with a winning humanity and amiability. A skilled and successful negotiator with a dynamic personality, he was always out for new contacts. IFLA was fortunate indeed to benefit from the unpaid exertions of such an outstanding executive officer. Seen in the light of history, he appears the very soul of the young Federation, and at the same time as the embodiment of the enthusiasm which in the early days characterized many champions of international cooperation. The annual reports he presented at the Sessions of the International Library Committee show how much IFLA's history depended on his personal initiative and activity. In 1938 he left the League of Nations Library which he had made a unique documentation centre for international studies, and returned to Holland to take up the direction of the Library of Leyden University, while remaining Secretary General of IFLA.<sup>8</sup>

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### World War II and the Subsequent Period of Reconstruction (1939–1951)

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Understandably, the political and military upheavals caused by the Second World War almost completely paralysed IFLA's activities. International meetings could only be resumed in 1947. The fact that the Federation's seat and central office was located in neutral Switzerland (with Secretary Breycha-Vauthier at the League of Nations Library in Geneva and President Godet in Berne) allowed for the circulation of information by correspondence and the maintenance of certain contacts which made possible various interventions and relief actions. Thus IFLA took part through Breycha-Vauthier's membership of the Advisory Committee on Literature for Prisoners of War and Internees in the distribution of large numbers of books to various

camps. This beneficial action was directed by the Red Cross, and was carried on with the cooperation of several international organizations, such as the Young Men's Christian Association. In 1940 the Geneva Secretariat published Vol. 11 of the *Actes* of the International Library Committee, containing the proceedings of the last pre-war session and reports of twenty member associations and eight committees. This documentation was to prove a valuable tool when the time came to restore IFLA's interrupted traditions.

The first post-war Session took place at Oslo in 1947. Its organization was partly made possible by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, which had also made available a sum of USD 9000 for the resumption of IFLA's work. The Conference was attended by 52 delegates from eighteen countries. In accordance with a sound tradition, FID (International Federation for Documentation) and – for the first time – UNESCO (recently established as successor to the League of Nations' International Commission for Intellectual Cooperation) were also represented.

In 1947 Godet was finally able to hand over the presidency to Munthe. For political and health reasons he would have preferred to have been allowed to have relinquished his position in 1939, but due to the difficult situation of that moment, when the German side – obliged to represent officially the National Socialist regime – was laying a claim on the leadership of IFLA, Godet had been persuaded to continue in office, much to the relief of the Norwegian President designate.

One of the fundamentally important events at the Oslo Session was the conclusion of a formal agreement between UNESCO and IFLA concerning their systematic cooperation.<sup>9</sup> The details of this document defined the mutual acceptance of principles, major tasks and objectives of both international bodies, mutual consultation, regular representation at plenary sessions and general conferences, exchange of information, as well as



Figure 5. Wilhelm Munthe,  
President, 1947–1951.

the promotion of IFLA projects in the interest of UNESCO's general programme. In particular, IFLA was officially recognized as the principal non-governmental organ for UNESCO's cooperation with professional library associations. At the same time UNESCO promised financial support for the execution of IFLA's programme and more particularly, for specific assignments, meetings, secretariat help or documentary purposes. As from 1949 IFLA received an annual UNESCO subvention of approximately CHF (Swiss Francs) 1500. The regular UNESCO representative and reporter at IFLA sessions of the time was E. J. Carter, head of the UNESCO Libraries Division, who showed perfect understanding in promoting IFLA's work in word and deed. He regarded "libraries as active and living demonstrations of UNESCO's basic ideas and practice".<sup>10</sup>

The fourth President, W. Munthe (1947–1951) was appointed as Director of the Royal University Library, Oslo in 1922 and remained in that position until 1954. Munthe belonged to the old IFLA guard and had become familiar with its needs, problems and responsibilities. With his personality bearing the imprint of Anglo-Saxon and German culture, he was known to be an outstanding expert on American librarianship and the author of

a much-appreciated book: *American Librarianship from a European Angle*. But his personal qualities of goodness and simplicity, his helpfulness and convincing humanity were at that time even more greatly appreciated than his professional competence. Such a representative and ambassador of goodwill who could not be overlooked (also because of his tallness) had certainly found his rightful place at this time of difficult new beginnings.

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### Fundamental Reorganization and Crisis of Growth (1952–1969)

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Various explanations can be found for the quick loss of validity of the traditional concepts, structures and working methods that predominated in IFLA during the immediate post-war period. They had become too narrow and patriarchal, and in the early 1950s their inadequacy and the urgent need for reform made themselves increasingly felt. Only some aspects of the spectacular change are described here: the rapid acceleration of the process of transformation in all economic, social, political and cultural fields, caused by the gigantic development of technology; the continents drawing nearer to each other in a worldwide communication constellation, with its ensuing international data and information needs; the greatly increased importance of libraries and documentation centres in an era in which almost 90 percent of all the scholars brought forth in the history of mankind were flourishing and active, and in which the democratization of knowledge had the highest claim to education and culture; the challenges connected not only with the possibilities opened up by automation and electronic developments, but with the new audio-visual media and the information technology.

Other facts of great consequence were added to these after 1950, and confronted international library cooperation with new tasks and problems: Europe's retreat from its central position in the



Figure 6. Pierre Bourgeois,  
President, 1951–1958.

world, the end of the era of imperialist colonialism, the Socialist countries' growing participation in cultural cooperation, and lastly, the stronger self-assurance of the Third World and the demands based on its needs.

#### *The era of Pierre Bourgeois (1951–1958)*

Pierre Bourgeois was the second Director of the Schweizerische Landesbibliothek (Berne) to become President of IFLA. No more suitable personality could have been found in that particular stage of IFLA's development to adapt the Federation to the conditions of modern times and to undertake with foresight and energy the work of reorganization. Bourgeois was made altogether of different clay than former IFLA presidents. A natural scientist by origins, open to the realm of technology, a federalist by conviction and an efficient organizer, easy to contact, although as bachelor at the same time personally aloof and cool, a good public speaker and linguist, he knew how to carry through his conceptions in a convincing way and to instigate initiatives in accordance with his mind. His close contacts with documentalists, with whom IFLA had up to then merely maintained diplomatic contacts, were at the time regarded as a favourable sign of better cooperation in the future.

The Brussels World Congress of 1955

That useful cooperation was clearly shown by the most spectacular event to occur during the Bourgeois presidency: the Third International Congress of Libraries and Documentation Centres, organized in Brussels in 1955, after two years of preparation. Important financial support had been made available by UNESCO for this purpose, as well as support for its policy of international library unification and coordination. It had moved to bring in the AIBM (Association Internationale des Bibliothèques Musicales) as a companion to IFLA and FID. Thus there were three large parallel conferences in the framework of a monster congress for librarians, documentalists and music librarians. Common sessions were held on the theme: The tasks and responsibilities of libraries and documentation centres in modern life. In the substantial first volume of the Congress Proceedings and the concise introductory reports can be found the names of most of the prominent librarians who distinguished themselves in IFLA's history at the time.<sup>11</sup>

At the invitation of the President, the meritorious pioneer of Indian librarianship, Professor Ranganathan (Delhi), in 1954, wrote an article from the angle of a developing country: 'IFLA – what it should be and do' which contained complaints and expostulations, programme demands and exhortations. He mainly criticized the fact that IFLA still had not grown into a truly international organization, that the West European, North American element was still predominant. That still too strong remnants of pre-war imperialism lingered on, particularly among the feudal old guard, who did not allow the broader-minded younger generation to come into its own. Also, that developing countries were forced to accept elements of Western culture and that the Third World gathering strength did not receive sufficient encouragement and opportunities. Ranganathan demanded a larger representation

and cooperation for the developing countries and the neglected regions of the modern world in IFLA committees and other groups, particularly on the Executive Board, and put forward the wish to see its seats distributed proportionally: Western Europe and North America 40 percent, Asia 20 percent, Eastern Europe, Africa; Latin America and Australia 10 percent each.<sup>12</sup>

The financial situation had been improved in various ways, thanks to the helpful patronage of UNESCO, which had furnished, apart from the regular subventions, additional grants for publications and concluded contracts for specific projects. In 1957 these grants amounted to approximately CHF 7,500. President Bourgeois was of the opinion that progress was too slow. At the Madrid session (1958) he happily announced that the American Council on Library Resources, of which Verner Clapp was the Director, and who was very much interested in worldwide library cooperation, had voted a subvention of USD 20,000 for the preparation of an international conference on the unification of cataloguing rules.<sup>13</sup> A Preliminary Conference was to be held in London in 1959, and an information bulletin was to be issued.

### *IFLA under the Presidency of Gustav Hofmann (1958–1963)*

In Madrid Gustav Hofmann (Munich), Director General of the Bayerischen Staatlichen Bibliotheken, was elected President as successor to Bourgeois. Hofmann was a successful and highly esteemed champion of German librarianship – then in the throes of renovation and confronted with common tasks of a supra-regional nature.

Almost all members of the Board had been replaced, and the Secretary General had retired at the same time as Bourgeois. Aged 79 years, Sevensma had devoted himself to IFLA through three decades. He was made Honorary President in appreciation of his outstanding merit.

The International Conference on Cataloguing Principles, Paris (1961)



Figure 7. Gustav Hofmann, President, 1958–1963.

was a memorable event, rich in consequences. Delegates from 53 countries and twelve international organizations as well as 104 observers from 20 countries attended. Convened by UNESCO, it was financially supported by the Council on Library Resources, which provided USD 95,000 in order to hold the meeting under IFLA auspices. An important agreement was reached, a notable forward step in the field of international unification of cataloguing principles and recommending further measures which were purposefully promoted in the following years by the IFLA competent Committee. The lasting success of the Paris Conference was largely due to the untiring efforts of its expert Executive Secretary A.H. Chaplin (London), who long continued to play a very important part in various IFLA Committees. His first official conference report appeared in 1962 in 25 editions and eleven languages; the final version was published in 1963.<sup>14</sup>

### *The establishment of the IFLA Central Secretariat*

The establishment of a permanent central Secretariat had become unavoidable as a result of the explosive growth of the Federation since the late 1950s. Its world-wide geographical expansion was bound up with a multiplication of all work of an organizational and administrative nature. A few indications may serve to illustrate this development.

In 1958 IFLA counted 64 member associations in 42 countries; in 1963 there were already 88 in over 50 countries in all continents but Australia. Particularly important was the affiliation of the Central Library Council of the Soviet Union in 1959, ushering in a new period of useful cooperation with Eastern Europe and the socialist countries, as well as the membership of several international organizations like the IALL (International Association of Law Libraries) and AIL (Association of International Libraries). The renewal of the Latin American Section and the growing number of member associations in developing countries clamouring for support were for IFLA a rousing call to face its responsibilities and duties towards the pressing need to carry out activities in countries outside Europe.

In 1963 came the appointment as Secretary General of Anthony Thompson (London). Author of the well-known *Vocabularium Bibliothecarii*, and having gained varied international experience, energetic and endowed with extraordinary linguistic skills, he combined singleness of purpose with an unselfish idealism.<sup>15</sup> It was a fortunate coincidence that IFLA, although still having an insecure financial basis, had found this loyal man who was prepared disinterestedly to reconcile himself initially with restricted working conditions and a very modest personal remuneration. For eight years he was to be involved with IFLA's fate, in an influential position.

#### *Long-term Programme and preparation of new Statutes*

Ever since President Hofmann, praising the example of FID's long-term policy, had – already at the Session in Lund and Malmö (1960) – called for a long-term programme of IFLA activities, this important project had figured on the agenda. In the end, upon consultations with various individual experts, a small working group was set up to finalize the project. It consisted of highly competent librarians of wide experience: Sir Frank



Figure 8. Anthony Thompson (R) receives the IFLA Scroll from Preben Kirkegaard at the Brussels Conference, 1977

Francis, F. G. B. Hutchings, H. Liebaers and L. Brummel. The latter had a decisive part in the substance as well as the form of the publication issued in 1963 in English and French under the title: *Libraries in the World*. This manifesto was an impressive evaluation and action programme, a beacon for the next decade of development.

To enable IFLA to master the multitude of pressing tasks on the widest possible basis, it had become necessary, once the central Secretariat had been set up, to provide the Federation with new Statutes as a guarantee for future stability and continuity. The revision largely prepared by Hofmann remained the basis of the final consultations and editing of the revised Statutes that came into force under his successor in 1964.

#### *IFLA's development during the Presidency of Sir Frank Francis and up till the Secretariat's removal to The Hague (1964–1970)*

The revised Statutes, finally officially adopted at the Rome Session (1964), were of lasting importance for the further dynamic development of IFLA, above all during the second half of the sixties. The most significant new provisions are men-

tioned here: Next to the full members with voting rights came associated members without the right to vote, to which belonged individual libraries, central bibliographic institutes and other institutions concerned with library matters. In addition to the old Executive Board, now to consist of the President, only four Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer and the Secretary General, there was created a Consultative Committee formed by the Executive Board and the chairmen and secretaries of all Sections and Committees together with one representative of the regional groups. The terms of office of the officers were limited to three years with the possibility of one re-election. The President and the Vice-Presidents should represent different geographical regions, library systems and types of library. A chairman and secretary should be elected for each Section and Committee. International congresses were foreseen from time to time only. The general assembly was renamed General Council.<sup>16</sup> The changes made in the Statutes aimed to make IFLA's structures more flexible to cope with its universal tasks, to improve the Board's executive power by restricting its size, and to promote the direct cooperation in international common tasks on a broad



Figure 9. M.I. Rudomino and Sir Frank Francis (President, 1963–1969) (Moscow, 1972).

basis by enlarging the Advisory Committee.

How did the President of that time cope with the seemingly unceasing growing crisis of IFLA and the multitude of the complicated urgent tasks and problems? Sir Frank Francis, Director of the British Museum and Principal Keeper of its Library, brought to his new office the wealth of experience gained in the course of a brilliant professional career and his leadership of IFLA benefited greatly from the valuable contacts he provided as well as from his undisputed authority. Combining high culture with a winning humanity, a talent for diplomatic negotiation and fine oratory, he possessed at the same time a realistic sense of the obtainable. All these qualities were of great value in that particular phase of IFLA's stormy development. He knew how to unite the new with the old, matters spiritual and material. Already familiar with IFLA activities through his long association with the National Libraries Section and the Cataloguing Committee, he had often represented the Federation's interests in UNESCO and at numerous international seminars and conferences.

His speech in The Hague (1966) pointed towards the future, and dwelt on the unheard of changes

facing the modern library community brought about by the new possibilities of automation which enabled the libraries to speed up information retrieval and bibliographic control in the interests of reader demands. Sir Frank praised in particular the cooperative project undertaken by the Library of Congress together with other countries and national bibliographies, and in the framework of this modern universal cooperation, the issue of centrally printed catalogue cards.

The acceptance and the implementation of this proposal for shared cataloguing on an international scale would result in a speedier bibliographical control of the materials flowing ever faster into our libraries, would reduce cataloguing costs and would release the energies of our cataloguing forces, which are at present engaged in duplicating each other's efforts a countless number of times in different libraries not only in all parts of the world, but in almost every country under the sun.<sup>17</sup>

The speech ended in an appeal for ever more active cooperation in order to make available modern electronic techniques for speedy scientific information and literature retrieval without, however, neglect-

ing the human and humanistic tasks that, arising from the noble traditions of the library profession, still formed its very core.

This was also the keynote of his message to the Toronto Session (1967) which – for reasons of health – he was unable to attend. Basing himself on the encyclic *Populorum progressio* in which the Pope had formulated some of the world problems connected with the universal thirst for knowledge and education, Sir Frank wrote that librarians should tirelessly apply their knowledge and expertise, to further the progress of mankind, in fulfilment of their spiritual and social mission and that IFLA had to shoulder its responsibilities in this sphere.

We must recognize the need for reorientation in our library thinking, work for the development of new concepts and techniques, and aim the efficient adaptation of all our expertise to the circumstances of the great world as it is.

For the first time the President touched upon IFLA's great task of cooperating in an International Year of Books and Libraries.<sup>18</sup>

During this period important improvements were effected in solving certain linguistic problems connected with the strongly increased attendance at annual conferences. Officially recognized as one of the congress languages at the Session in The Hague (1966), German was afforded the benefit of the simultaneous interpretation facilities available in plenary meetings. In Frankfurt (1968) a team of librarians worked successfully as amateur interpreters for the first time. It was Peter Havard-Williams', the future Vice-President's, particular merit to have organized and systematically encouraged this extraordinarily useful group to which experts from various Eastern and Western countries offered their outstanding linguistic gifts.

The Frankfurt Session deserves to be mentioned also because it was



Figure 10. Margreet Wijnstroom, Secretary-General, 1971-1987.



Figure 11. Herman Liebaers, President, 1969-1974.

on this occasion that IFLA's inner force and firmness of purpose were suddenly put to a test of such severity as had never occurred before. The Session risked being cut short by a menace of political and ideological nature, caused by the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, but the Federation was able to weather this crisis, although the next session, to be held in Moscow, had to be deferred.

*Changes of officers and structure. Financial situation and activities of the Secretariat until 1970*

In connection with IFLA's further development in the 1960s, the untiring and useful contribution of the Secretary General, Anthony Thompson, should also be mentioned. Without his discretion, disinterestedness and loyalty, the central Secretariat could not have existed. Content with an inadequate remuneration, he managed for six years to maintain at IFLA's disposal a suitable, rent-free office in his own home in Sevenoaks (Kent), 35 km from London, whereto the Secretariat had been removed in the autumn of 1963. In his financial report for 1969 the Treasurer drew attention to the Secretary General's economy and 'incredibly low' expenses.<sup>19</sup> Thompson's serv-

ice to the cause of international understanding and cooperation was in tune with his deepest philosophic convictions. To him it meant an ethical obligation. This basic attitude also manifested itself in the affectionate care he lavished on the contents and layout of *IFLA News*, the quarterly information bulletin he edited in English, French, Russian and - since 1969, and for some time - in Spanish versions.

Thompson's progress reports afforded insight in the hard work accomplished in the Secretariat. The *Actes du Conseil*, since 1969 appearing in a new form and renamed *IFLA Annual*, were also prepared by the Secretary General. He was responsible for the continuing flow of information within IFLA, and particularly for current contacts between the Secretariat, the Executive Board, the Sections and Committees as well as for the dispatch of various publications.

Numerous arguments were put forward during these years in favour of a new structure for IFLA and of augmenting and rationalization of its activities, primarily as regarded the Executive Board and the Consultative Committee, but also the working groups. These efforts resulted in two innovations

that not only brought relief to the Secretary General but were to prove of great importance for IFLA's future. They were announced by Sir Frank at the Copenhagen Session (1969) - the last he presided.<sup>20</sup> To reinforce the Secretariat, Miss Margreet Wijnstroom (The Hague), the extremely competent and capable General Secretary of the Netherlands Central Association of Public Libraries, was given the assignment to promote IFLA's external affairs, and at the same time to improve the Secretariat's relations with Sections and Committees.

She was to collaborate closely with the Consultative Committee, whose responsibilities concerning IFLA policy were enlarged. A 'Programme Development Group' was established of which Miss Wijnstroom would be secretary. Under the energetic leadership of Dr. C. Reedijk, Director of the Royal Library in The Hague, who was as deeply committed to the cause of international librarianship as his predecessor Brummel had been, the new group tackled its tasks: the preparation of a short term action programme with a list of priorities, and the structural reform of IFLA. Of primary concern were problems relating to IFLA's ultimate universality, based on the use of electronic



Figure 12. Preben Kirkegaard,  
President, 1974–1979.

technology and recognizing the need for really successful cooperation with developing countries and related world governmental and non-governmental organizations. This orientation, tuned to Sir Frank's ideas, was soon to receive additional vision and force from the newly elected President Herman Liebaers, Director of the Royal Library in Brussels and an energetic champion of international cooperation.

### Departure to New Horizons

The year 1970 was a year of transition, full of activities simultaneously undertaken from Sevenoaks and The Hague, under the sign of decisive new orientation, of preparations for the universal role which IFLA pursued energetically. The significant programme speech delivered by the President at the 36<sup>th</sup> Session in Moscow bore witness to this. About 750 participants from 40 countries formed a record attendance.<sup>21</sup> As host acted Mrs. Rudomino, the highly qualified Directress of the Moscow All-Union State Library for Foreign Literature. During her time of office as Vice-President she successfully contributed, thanks to her diplomacy and warm-heartedness, to bring about closer professional and personal contacts between the

Soviet library world and the West and to create a favourable atmosphere of mutual understanding.

Of course, Liebaers wished to have the Secretariat near himself. He would have preferred to see it located under the same roof as FID. When such an alliance of the two main non-governmental organizations in the library field could not be realized, it was decided to establish the IFLA office at least in the same city, early in 1971. For Thompson this was the occasion to resign, after 8 years of tireless, selfless striving; his loyalty to IFLA remained as strong as ever. M. Wijnstroom succeeded him as Secretary General.

Time was ripe for a thorough structural reform. An amazing number of events, measures and innovations occurred in the course of the seven years leading up to IFLA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They can be listed as follows: Reinforcement of the economic foundation and productive capacity by means of financial reorganization; complete revision of the existing statutes by the elaboration of new ones emphasizing a federative and regional structure in view of geographic expansion and professional assignments; start of effective international cooperation with Third World countries; more constructive cooperation with relevant international bodies in the fields of education, science and culture, documentation and standardization, but also with governmental or private foundations; elaboration of a new medium-term programme of activities, including the determination of priorities; effective use of all possibilities of modern technology for the benefit of common tasks on a global scale; comprehensive information and publishing activities; systematic campaign for the wider recognition of the cultural and social significance of libraries all over the world, of which IFLA's all-round cooperation in the UNESCO-sponsored International Book Year 1972 is a lasting token.<sup>22</sup>

The essential aspects of the various measures and innovations enu-

merated here were reflected in the activities and results of the last annual Sessions with their valuable pre-session seminars for librarians from developing countries, which, since 1971, had become an especially useful institution. The Conference of Moscow (1970), Liverpool (1971), Budapest (1972), Grenoble (1973), Washington (1974), Oslo (1975) and Lausanne (1976) represented indeed milestones of IFLA's latest development towards new horizons.<sup>25</sup>

When Herman Liebaers, after having taken over in his country the highly responsible office of 'Grand Maréchal de la Cour de Belgique', resigned from the presidency in Washington at the end of 1974, the Treasurer of the Federation, Preben Kirkegaard, Rector of Denmark's Royal Library School, was elected President. For long years familiar with IFLA's problems and needs and having already greatly deserved of its former evolution, he purposefully continued the innovation work of his predecessor to which he has devoted his abilities enriched by outstanding experiences in the interest of promoting library co-operation on a worldwide scale.

### Note

The above text comprises extracts from 'An Outline of IFLA's History' by Joachim Wieder, published in *IFLA's First Fifty Years: achievement and challenge in international librarianship*, Edited by Willem R.H. Koops and Joachim Wieder. München, Verlag Dokumentation, 1977. (IFLA Publications, 10). ISBN 3-7940-4430-4. (o.p.). The extracts have been selected and edited by Harry Campbell. The references in the original text have been renumbered to provide one consecutive sequence for the present paper. The photographs have been added for this edited version.

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