



# 68th IFLA Council and General Conference

## August 18-24, 2002

---

**Code Number:** 104-101-E  
**Division Number:**  
**Professional Group:** IFLA Anniversary - Plenary Session I  
**Joint Meeting with:** -  
**Meeting Number:** 101  
**Simultaneous Interpretation:** Yes

### **The Dutch Tea Party of IFLA in the Seventies - A quick flash back of forty five years before the Dutch Tea Party**

#### **Herman Liebaers**

Honorary President of IFLA  
Brussels, Belgium

---

The best way to start this paper seems to me to quote a paragraph from the opening speech of President Christine Deschamps at the 66<sup>th</sup> IFLA Council and General Conference, Cogeco, in 2000 in Jerusalem, of all places, just before a new outburst of violence in the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis.

“Organisations, like individuals, grow old (I add “and could die”, with FID in mind). They also need, at regular intervals, a facelift, a new garb, a complete rejuvenation. That which was quite suitable in the 1970 s is no longer appropriate to the year 2000 and the development of IFLA’s membership requires better representation, a broader management structure, a better supported and stronger executive. We hope that the new structures will be more appropriate to you.”

They certainly do to someone who has the feeling that his team and he did exactly the same in the seventies. I invite the readers to look carefully at the following names : Sir Frank Francis (U.K.), president 1963-69, Allersjev Jensen (Norway), Estrid Bjerregaard (Denmak), Anthony Thompson (U.K.), Herman Liebaers (Belgium), president 1969-74, Margarita Ivanovna Rudomino (U.S.S.R.), Joachim Wieder (West Germany), Foster Mohrhardt and Preben Kirkegaard, president 1974-79. All three presidents have in common that they served during the cold War.

A good mixture of the old and the new guard. Among the first one an excellent Scandinavian influence can be noted. The successive secretaries general are Joachim Wieder and Anthony Thompson - who would coin the phrase The Dutch Tea Party - while the incoming secretary general, Margreet Wijnstroom, was not yet appointed in 1970.

In retrospect I discover that the present lecture is a direct sequel to the one I gave in 1998 at the 64<sup>th</sup> Cogeco in Amsterdam, entitled IFLA Thirty Years Ago : The Dramatic 34<sup>th</sup> Council and General Conference in Frankfurt am Main in 1968. I recall the facts. While IFLA was in session the Forces of the Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia, President Sir Frank Francis, I, president elect, and the local

organizer H.P. Geh managed to keep the Soviet and Czechoslovakian delegations in Frankfurt and at the closing session an overwhelming majority decided to defer the planned Cogeco in Moscow. On the spot Preben Kirkegaard decided to invite the Cogeco to Copenhagen. As a result I was elected president in the Danish capital and my first Cogeco was Moscow, also the first in the U.S.S.R. Preben's decision saved IFLA in a very critical moment.

The core of this paper will be another Cold War issue, but of a completely different nature. However I shall stick to a chronological order of the initiatives of the seventies and meet my major problem early in my presidency.

As an introduction I would comment briefly on the 1970 Moscow Cogeco. I was not scared by the idea to start my experience as president in the capital of the U.S.S.R., because I knew Margarita Ivanovna Rudomino, the director of the All Union Library of Foreign Literature, since 1959. I think the occasion was a Unesco meeting in Brussels on the International Exchange of Publications. Anyhow the Cogeco went rather smoothly. At the time all soviet citizens were proud of their Sputnik. The more so that it came quite soon apparent that all research papers had been published in Soviet appropriate journals.

In 1970 it was a normal formality to invite a representative of FID and of the International Council on Archives to say a few words at the Opening Session.

Meanwhile I quote from my Presidential Address : "From an institutional point of view the difference between IFLA/FID is easy to make : the thousands and thousands of small public libraries, spread all over the world or still not yet extant in many parts of the world fall outside the scope of FID while they are of paramount interest to IFLA. I would like to go on record as having said that a tiny little library in rural Africa, Asia or Latin America represents as much for the development of mankind as a sophisticated computer-based special library in a rich industrial city." Today I would simply say : "FID was problem oriented, IFLA institutionally minded." Today also the demise of FID, soon after it celebrated its hundredth anniversary, should be noted, I am thinking about our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Very tentatively my conclusion would be : IFLA has been saved by the Council on Library Resources, CLR, FID was technically by-passed by CLR. All that happened in the seventies.

As soon as the grant from CLR was signed, the appointment of a full time secretary general could be considered and the Executive Board had unanimously decided that it would be Margreet Wijnstroom. I knew her personally very well, because bilateral cooperation between Dutch and Belgian - actually Flemish - library associations and individual librarians had become a routine matter.

The grant from CLR provided the payment of the secretary general's salary and that of a secretary during three years. The negotiations with CLR had been conducted by Foster Mohrhardt and Bob Vosper, both consecutive vice-presidents of IFLA. Jim Haas, president of CLR, has given the details of various grants to IFLA over the years in the Margreet Wijnstroom issue of IFLA Journal, published on the occasion of her retirement.<sup>1</sup>

Without being appointed Margreet Wijnstroom had already assisted IFLA in various secretarial capacities, backed by the Dutch Association of Librarians. One of her first initiatives was to circulate a modestly mimeographed IFLA News out of which would grow our current IFLA Journal, the first issue of which would only appear just before the Cogeco in Washington, DC in 1974, when I retired as president.

Wim Koops and Klaus Saur had started already their IFLA Publications series in 1972. It is not easy to explain these lost two years for IFLA Journal. As stated in the introduction to this paper the good influence of able Scandinavian, internationally minded librarians, the kindness of the underpaid part-time secretary general Anthony Thompson, and the publication of their professional journal LIBRI were an important asset of IFLA. This is the good half of the story, but the full story needs another less glorious half of which the main actor was Foster Mohrhardt.

---

1 *IFLA Journal*, 1987, 5/6.

He decided to pay a visit to Sevenoaks, near London, where Anthony Thompson lived and to have a look at his habitat. When he came back I listened to his conclusion : “Tony is a highly educated gentleman-librarian who lives surrounded by beautiful and important books, but I am afraid he does not know how a modern public library looks like. Moreover he is a marvellous polyglot, which we all knew thanks to his performances at each closing sessions of Cogeco, adapting himself to whatever language of the country where IFLA was meeting.”

I invite the readers again to look at the following list of names attending a board meeting in Brussels, on December 11, 1969. It gives a good blend of the outgoing guard, with the old leader Gösta Ottervik, who deserves IFLA’s appreciation, and the new officers led by Foster Mohrhardt : Estrid Bjerregaard (Denmark), Gösta Ottervik (Sweden), president Herman Liebaers (Belgium), 1969-1974, Margreet Wijnstroom (Netherlands), Rudolf Malek (Czechoslovakia), Anthony Thompson (U.K.), Secretary General, Foster Mohrhardt (U.S.A.), Joachim Wieder (Germany), Former Secretary General, Maurice Piquard (France), president Preben Kirkegaard (Denmark), Allersjev Jensen (Norway), president Sir Frank Francis. I repeat : all three presidents have in common that they all served during the Cold War.

As a kind of farewell, I recall the impression of quality the Cogeco of 1960 in Lund and Malmö left in me.

My answer to Foster’s report will close the story of this rather original transition from the old to the new secretariat of IFLA. It was customary for the Executive Board to meet at the British Museum. When Sir Frank was president and Anthony Thompson his devoted secretary. Last time we met in London Anthony had made as usually a reservation in a Bloomsbury hotel near the British Museum, when the oversea’s members of the Executive Board, of which I was one, arrived at the address of the hotel, we found a deep hole in the ground and an inscription that the old hotel was being renovated. I still wonder which language Tony used to book our rooms... So, from distinguished amateurism to efficient professionalism.

In Mostly in the Line of Duty<sup>2</sup> I commented on that transition from old to new in other words. That was more than twenty years ago and I quote : “I hope that my predecessor [Sir Frank Francis] agrees with me that together we cover a transition period in the development of IFLA. He inherited what I would call a “Bourgeois Club” not referring to the social status of the directors of national libraries but to Pierre Bourgeois who was for many years president (the longest term of any president) and former director of the Swiss National Library at Bern. After his death I published an obituary and some Swiss librarians protested against the profile I had drawn. In retrospect I think they were right, but at the time I was so full of the new IFLA matters that I failed to see that the weaknesses of Pierre Bourgeois caught my attention too much and his qualities too little. The IFLA I received from Sir Frank had still a number of Bourgeois features, in fact the IFLA I handed over to Preben Kirkegaard still had too many. I am however no longer sure, as I was during my presidency, that we had to eradicate them drastically.”

### 1. The Appointment of a Full Time Secretary General in 1971

As soon as Margreet was appointed Secretary General the Dutch Tea Party ceased to be a virtual entity to become an effective one in the most natural way. Both Wim Koops and Cees Reedijk were already involved, respectively in the Publication Committee and in the Programme Development Group. Wim Koops, librarian of the University of Groningen, had been a publisher before becoming a librarian. So, nothing was more logical that he became the publication officer of IFLA. Cees Reedijk, director of the Royal Library in The Hague, successor of Leendert Brummel, who wrote the first Medium Term Programme of IFLA, had the reputation of being a wise man, who was an ideal negotiator to bridge conflicting arguments. Later an example will follow. In the shadow of Margreet, the prow figure, Dia

---

2 Mostly in the Line of Duty. Thirty Years with Books (The Hague, Boston, London, Martinus Nijhoff, 1980)

appeared, who could not avoid to step from time to time out of the shadow and was accepted by everyone. I should not forget Milisa Coops, Dutch librarian of Unesco in Paris, who refused always to step out of the shadow, but who wrote in IFLA's First fifty Years the best and most useful 10 page chapter under the title the Evolution of Professional Activities and their Interplay with IFLA's structure. Milisa's own modesty induced me to forget that she acted as editor of IFLA Annual from 1972 onwards, when Verlag Dokumentation from München became IFLA's publisher. Up till 1971 the Scandinavian Library Centre, Copenhagen, was an outstanding publisher. The preface of the last volume pays a well deserved homage to Publication Officer, Dr. Gösta Ottervik.

Finally there is me, a Belgian who refused Anthony Thompson's proposal to come and live in Brussels, when he was still part-time Secretary General. As my native tongue is Dutch and my Dutch friends considered me to be too Burgundian, I took the ideal middle way and decided to transfer the headquarters of IFLA from Sevenoaks to The Hague.

As soon as Margreet Wijnstroom was appointed, I could look towards the future of IFLA. It might be useful to recall that my introduction to international librarianship occurred in 1958 in Vienna, Maria Razumovsky edited this epoch-making meeting in Vienna (published by Unesco). All the European directors of national libraries stayed three weeks together. I being the youngest was appointed secretary, which I shared with Julien Cain's, the éminence grise, own secretary, Marie-Thérèse Kleindienst. It might be worthwhile to record that at the time the very notion of a national library was a rather new point on the agenda of professional organizations.

I had attended IFLA's Council and General Conferences since 1956, when I was appointed director of the Royal Library in Brussels. My first two meetings were in Munich and Paris. I was elected president of the Section of National and University Libraries in 1959 in Warsaw, with Maria Razumovsky as secretary. In Rome in 1964 I was co-opted as a board member and I became a vice-president in Helsinki in 1965, first vice-president in Toronto in 1967. During this IFLA "career" I had time to look at libraries around the world and when I was elected president in 1969 I had collected some ideas, the first one was to help library development in the Third World. I had some valuable field work experience in Manila, as Unesco expert.

Immediately after the Moscow meeting of 1970 I went to Unesco in Paris to ask funding of a pre-session seminar in Liverpool where IFLA would have its 37<sup>th</sup> Cogeco in 1971. My presidency coincided roughly with the years a Soviet staff-member, Oleg Mikhailov, was director of the Division of Libraries, Documentation and Archives of Unesco. I would have been a better president if that coincidence had not existed.

Like my predecessor and my successor I live, work and write according to Western values with words like freedom of expression., but my experience of the U.S.S.R. has helped me to understand that the Soviets lived, worked and wrote according their set of values and sometimes used the same words as we, but never in the same sense. "Democracy" is such a dangerous word.

After the Minister of Culture, Furtseva, had paid a visit to the Royal Library in Brussels, she invited me to come to Moscow and she insisted that it should be in winter time, which really belonged to the Russian soul. So the first winter visit that she invited me at a rather large luncheon party, where she arrived late and with tables full of zakouski which nobody touched, because the vodka would only appear in her wake. Then the first toast was to her oldest capitalistic friend and my answer was : "I am only a capitalist in the U.S.S.R., at home I am an underpaid civil servant." This became a game which was repeated several times. Later I added : "Madame, what you call the masses, we call it tax payers."

At a personal level one could go rather far that way. My friend Margarita Ivanovna, whom I fully trusted as a first Vice-President of IFLA, though I knew that she was a faithful party member, she was also a rich human being.

I have already referred to what Margreet did for IFLA before she was appointed Secretary General. Here I am not going to copy the four pages of her first report in the IFLA Annual 1971. I shall only quote the first sentence : "This report aims not so much at looking back as at looking forward". I am going to read

only the sub-titles of her report. Under The position of the secretariat she nearly gives a whole page to cooperation with FID, which had already its headquarters in the Hague. With the financial assistance of the municipality of The Hague and the Ministry of Education both FID and IFLA could move under the same roof, as part of the Netherlands Congress Building.

Next sub-title : The role of sections and committees, with the help of the Programme Development Group and the Consultative Committee, the secretariat aims at good communications with Sections and Committees. She had already taken five steps to achieve the aim. "Perhaps the most spectacular development is a permanent secretariat of the IFLA Committee on cataloguing, presently located in the British Museum. For this purpose CLR has given a generous grant."

The Executive Board of Unesco refers to a Memorandum of the Executive Board published in IFLA News n° 35/36. Other points : FID , UNISIST and Unesco. Five contracts were signed in 1971. Next sub-titles : International Book Year 1972. It will be part of this paper. Publications. Has already been dealt with in this paper. UBC is a priority item. Public Libraries. Revision of the Public Libraries Manifesto. The Programme Development Group. Here the only sub-title is : Membership.

The Report of Treasurer Preben Kirkegaard has four pages, but here only The structure of members' dues will be mentioned. I imagine that the transition of treasurer Pierre Bourgeois to Preben Kirkegaard could not be a normal one, from a former president of IFLA to a future president of IFLA. Most important however is that the new treasurer proposed a structured new system, that was approved by the Executive Board, discussed democratically with the membership and voted. This was a crucial decision in 1971 for the future of IFLA."

The Secretary General aims at a small secretariat with only managerial responsibility. The professional work will be carried out by the Sections and Committees and a large number of volunteers.

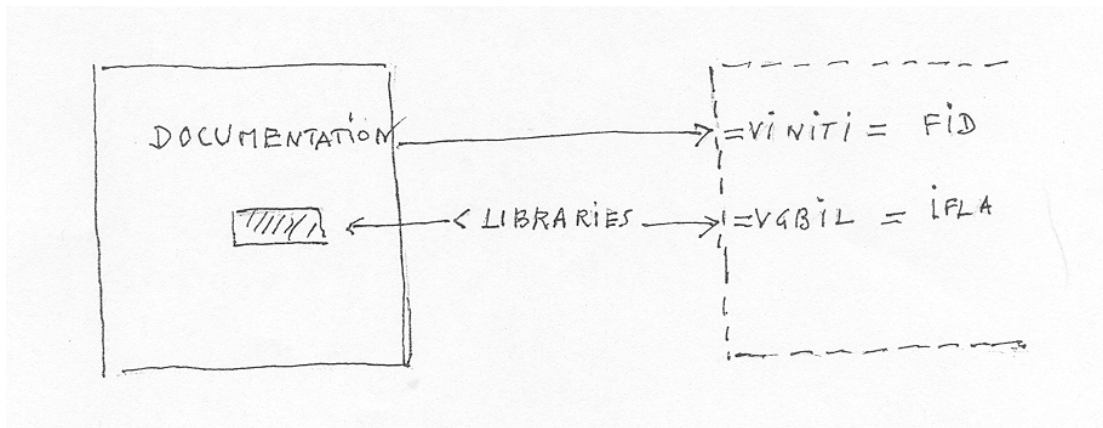
## 2. Developing Countries and the Unexpected Fiasco for IFLA

At the same time as Oleg Mikhailov, Julian Behrstorck was the Head of Book Promotion and he really was the key man of International Book Year 1972, IBY'72, which was actually a Soviet proposal at the General Assembly. Evidently I was forced to compare both Unesco officials. Julian was excellent in using the relative independence of NGO's like IFLA, when a GO like Unesco got stuck politically, due to the Cold War. Oleg, as a good Soviet citizen, did not even understand what an NGO meant. Officially Julian was an American citizen, but he considered himself as a Frenchman. It was easy to work with Julian, difficult with Oleg. All Unesco officials had to pledge an oath of loyalty towards the Organization. Julian did it convincingly as one of the first Americans living in Paris to join the Organization. Probably Oleg did the same convinced that there was no difference between loyalty to the Organization and to one's own country.

It all started in Oleg Mikhailov's Unesco Office in Paris in the spring of 1971 where this Soviet engineer was responsible for Libraries, Documentation and Archives. I had an appointment with him to ask him a grant to organize the first pre-session seminar for librarians from developing countries. This seminar was planned to take place as a satellite meeting before the 64<sup>th</sup> Cogeco session in Liverpool.

Oleg Mikhailov agreed rather readily on the amount I had asked in writing in advance. However he added unexpectedly that the following year he would give the same amount to FID.

I do not want to be unfair to a man I never understood, but with his smiling ignorance of the world outside the U.S.S.R., he constantly hurt me. I had no time to discuss the figure, but he started an explanation, in rather strange English, comparing FID and IFLA. He took a pencil and made a drawing like this one :



Before I could express my disagreement, he quoted VINITI and compared it with VGBIL. Fortunately I knew both U.S.S.R. organizations rather well. VINITI stands for the All Union Institute of Scientific and Technical Information and VGBIL the All Union State Library of Foreign Literature. He transferred automatically the U.S.S.R. situation to the international level and that meant VINITI = FID, VGBIL = IFLA.

I tried to explain to him that the equation was rather simplistic and that the powerful organization of VINITI benefited from the arms race, while libraries could only operate in peace time. The only way to escape from the Cold War was to put *the profession before politics*. I am not sure he understood me.

Mikhailov's mistake was to extrapolate the U.S.S.R. situation to the World at large. FID was a modern and powerful NGO, IFLA was poor and old fashioned. During my presidency, the president of FID was the German Helmut Arntz. We crossed swords on the four continents, both convinced that we were right. My main argument was that I had set up, in the Royal Belgian Library as soon as I was appointed director, a National Documentation Centre for Science and Technology.<sup>3</sup>

#### Unesco resolution 8 regarding apartheid and colonialism

During the last General Conference of Unesco, October-November 1970, a resolution was voted regarding the policy of the NGO's - IFLA is such a NGO - in South Africa, Rhodesia and territories under Portuguese rule. The reference of the text of the resolution is 16 C/108 Add and the essential section is as follows :

Noting that international non-governmental organizations which are associated with Unesco may play an important part in implementing the objectives of the Organization, including its policy of unremitting opposition to and elimination of colonialism and racialism; and noting further that some of these organizations have branches or affiliates in countries in which colonialism and racialism are practiced.

Requests the Director-General to undertake investigations of all international non-governmental organizations enjoying relations with Unesco, which have branches, sections, affiliates or constituent parts in the countries mentioned above, with respect to the practice of racial discrimination or racial segregation in their policies, activities, or membership or their cooperation in any way with the apartheid policy of the

---

<sup>3</sup> In the first volume of my memoirs Mostly in the Line of Duty (The Hague, 1980) I refer in detail to my relations with Helmut Arntz, pp. 201-203. The setting up of the NDCST is dealt with on pp. 33-34.

Government of South Africa; and to report thereon to the Executive Board.

Calls upon the Executive Board to take the necessary measures, in the light of the Director-General's report, to cut off, as from 31 December 1971, all relations with those international non-governmental organizations, in respect of which it has not been established, to the satisfaction of the Executive Board, that their branches, sections, affiliates or constituent part in the countries mentioned above neither practise racial discrimination or segregation in their policies, their activities or in their membership, nor cooperate in any way with the Government of South Africa in the latter's apartheid policy.

Since the resolution was voted an exchange of letters took place between the President of the Permanent Committee of the NGO's and the Director-General of Unesco. The latter invited the NGO's, on 14 January to give information before 15 April on their situation in the countries mentioned above. At the Executive board of Unesco which met on 28 April - 14 May 1971, the Director-General presented a preliminary report based on the answers of the NGO's and the decision was taken to discuss the matter at the next Executive Board meeting on 6-29 October 1971.

Before answering the Director-General's letter, the IFLA Board discussed the matter at its meeting in Brussels on 11-13 February and decided to base its answer, which follows below, on the following considerations :

1. IFLA having consultative status, category A, with Unesco, abides ipso facto by the bill of human rights.
2. IFLA is a professional international organization and not a political one.
3. IFLA, not being different from other professional NGO's, consulted other organizations, more particularly FID and the Union of International Associations.
4. IFLA has only requested from its members to be professional bodies and does not feel that it has the right to investigate its members and will not do so in the future (the expression of this opinion was underscored by the Unesco secretariat when it circulated the answers of the NGO's).
5. The isolation of IFLA members or members of other NGO's in the incriminated territories would lead to a situation where the resolution would defeat its own purposes.
6. IFLA fails to understand that NGO's with very limited influence are invited to sever their relations with their members in these countries while the much more powerful member-states maintain existing relations with these countries (underscored by IFLA)

Having personally an excellent anti-apartheid record, I went confidently to Paris as IFLA President. Having been arrested by the Gestapo in April 1943, I spent 132 days in jail, the first half in the concentration camp of Breendonk, the second half in the Citadel of Huy. Both in Belgium under German occupation. Already in 1954 I recommended A. Coblans as librarian for CERN. He was living in London because he had left South Africa being opposed to the government's apartheid's policy. That was of course not the only reason for my recommendation.

In May 1968 I went to South Africa, within the framework of the Cultural Agreement between Belgium and South Africa. However I had explained that I did not want to meet professor Herman De Vleeschauwer, director-general of libraries in Pretoria. He had been my professor of philosophy at the State University of Ghent, became Secretary General of the Ministry of Education during the German occupation. He was so pro-German that he ordered students to join German Forces in the murderous battle of Leningrad. He was sentenced to death and fled to South Africa. When I arrived in Pretoria - in May 1968 ! - the lady who was in charge of me said : "Professor De Vleeschauwer is in Turkey" and I answered "that is far enough."

At my first appearance before the Executive Board's Committee on racial discrimination of the NGO's, I was so confident that IFLA would be cleared that I added, at the end, something like : "It is easy

to condemn apartheid in a Unesco room in Paris, while the anti-apartheid people in South Africa had the courage to unveil a plaque in the Library of Cape Town University stating in Latin that "This University lost its academic freedom on 26 July 1960 and recovered it in ...".

I was invited to leave the room while the Committee evaluated my statement. When I was called back I heard that I had not convinced the Committee and that IFLA was excluded from Unesco. This was a sharp blow at the beginning of my presidency. The decision could be appealed six months later. When I learned a few days later that FID had been cleared I was furious and I had no other choice than looking in the direction of Mikhailov. I knew well that FID had national members with dues paid by the government.

I need to refer to the fact that Margareet Wijnstroom went to South Africa one year before me and was invited by prof. De Vleeschauwer, Director General of Libraries in South Africa, to a reception. Thinking of me, she refused. She was taken to a police station, where she declared that she had Belgian friends, who suffered under the German occupation and she was immediately released. She told me that story when she heard that I was going to South Africa.

Text of IFLA's answer to the letter of the Director-General :

"In reply to your circular letter of 14 November 1970 concerning resolution 8, I have the honour to inform you that IFLA has no branches or sections in the territories in question. It has one member, the "South African Library Association" and four associate members, namely, the State Library, Pretoria, the South African Library, Cape Town, the University Library, Cape Town and the University College, Salisbury, which have no vote. IFLA has never yet met in these territories and there is no citizen of these countries among the members of the various committees of IFLA. A delegate from South Africa usually attends the annual meeting of our General Council.

From the description of these relations, it is clear that the presence in IFLA of librarians from the territories in question is negligible and that influence is a one way affair, running from IFLA towards the members in these territories. In the last six-year report on the participation of NGO's in the Organization's programme the contribution of IFLA was recognized. Since our associate members have in point of fact no other right except that of receiving our publications, which are all related to the Organization's programme, their number ought to be increased in order to make more copies available in those territories. It would be in Unesco's interests to encourage the NGO's to give its work publicity in those countries.

Since IFLA is an NGO of a professional and scientific nature, it does not wish to become involved in political or moral issues which are not within its competence. It has been concerned thus far only with the professional character of its members and has no intention of departing from that principle. An investigation among its members, as the resolution proposes, might constitute a dangerous precedent and could do serious damage to voluntary international cooperation which is based upon what unites and not what separates men. Moreover, IFLA supports the reasoning of the Conference of NGO's, and more especially as regard the unjustifiable distinction made by the resolution between NGO's and Member States, which are considerably more influential than the NGO's. Lastly, IFLA, for its part, reasserts its opposition to colonialism in all its forms. The resolution, distressing as it is, at least has the merit of raising the problem of relations between the Organization and the NGO's. If those relations were based on a valid dialogue, they might contribute better to the execution of the Organization's programme in the very spirit of the proposals contained in the long-term programme."

During its meeting in The Hague on 27-28 May, the board decided to publish the above information in IFLA-News and to put the problem on the agenda of the General Council in Liverpool.

So the core of this lecture will be the role played by Mikhailov in influencing the Committee. This Cold War episode, I repeat will be of another nature than the Frankfurt a/Main one.

Here I reconstruct the imaginary conversation in Russian with Oleg Mikhailov's soviet colleague in the jury as I did immediately after I heard about the discrimination. "Dear Comrade, I know both NGO's well. FID has no member in South-Africa and IFLA has at least four members. Its president has recently



been invited to a lecture tour at six universities where he talked in English or in Dutch. As you know Afrikaans is similar to Dutch and it is a public secret that the Afrikaanders are generally pro-apartheid and the English speaking South Africans anti-apartheid.”

Fortunately the forthcoming meeting of the Executive Board was scheduled to take place in Moscow, where I hoped to find out the truth. As usually I called Margareta Ivanovna Rudomino the day before departure to give her my flight number and the time of arrival. She would come to the airport with Minna Poznanskaya in her shabby car. When I arrived it was not as usual, no Margarita Ivanovna, no Minna, but a delegation of six men of whom I knew only Mr. Serov. The interpreter spoke an excellent French. I was driven in a large black car to the hotel and I sat next to the interpreter in the back of the car. He kept the conversation going with a series of small questions from which I concluded that he knew nothing about me. When I quoted IFLA, I had to spell out the acronym.

When we arrived at the hotel, a staff member accompanied me to my room. When I was settled, he went down with me in the elevator and the interpreter was waiting to take me to the table where the others were sitting. The bottle of vodka appeared and we began to drink while zakouski were put on the table. I did not last long before Mr. Serov announced that Vice-Minister Mokhov wanted to attend the Board meeting next morning. My answer was diplomatic. Mr Mokhov knew that IFLA was a NGO and that I would ask the Board members if they agreed that Minister Mokhov would attend the Board meeting. That was a pure formality that I did not want to skip. The more so that the meeting took place in Margarita Ivanovna’s office and she was a vice-president of IFLA.

It went exactly that way, except that Margarita Ivanovna was very nervous. I invited the Minister to sit in front of me with the interpreter next him and I could see Margarita Ivanovna at the far left of the Minister. The latter started with a long sentence. Which the interpreter translated in excellent French and I understood that the Minister had heard that I had travelled extensively in South Africa and that I was on friendly terms with the Director of the National Library, who as a civil servant had to be pro-apartheid - pronounced by the Minister apartit. Another rather long sentence in Russian that I had refused to investigate IFLA member associations in South Africa regarding their attitude towards the apartheid issue. A third long sentence in Russian from which I concluded that the jury noted that I refused to cooperate with the jury’s fight against apartheid. I looked towards Margarita Ivanovna who turned her head away. Apparently the Minister was waiting for me to speak out. I looked at all the board members. They all nodded and the silence weighed heavily.

Finally I asked in French, looking in the eyes of the Minister, - should I conclude that Your Honour believes that I am pro-apartheid ?

The reaction was not another long sentence, but a discussion with his interpreter. I could only guess what it was all about, besides the word knigi I did not understand one word of Russian, but I was sure that there must have been a misunderstanding among them. I was in no hurry to intervene, because I hesitated about the cause of the misunderstanding. I thought of course that the interpreter did not know IFLA. At a certain moment the Minister gave instructions, I saw, he looked at me. I took immediately the lead of the operations and said

*- Je propose une interruption de séance, I propose to have an intermission.*

A relief went through the room and I asked the board members to leave the room and wanted to talk privately with the Minister, Margarita Ivanovna and the interpreter. Margarita Ivanovna was not happy with my decision, but she stayed. I talked in French to the interpreter and asked if he knew that IFLA was an NGO with status A at Unesco ? He asked me to repeat my question. Which I did very slowly, thinking that I might win or lose the battle, he simply said NO, as if my question was double Dutch to him. I waited a few seconds and repeated that his French was wonderful and if he could repeat to the Minister what I asked him and what he answered. Which he did and the Minister made a sign which meant, according to my understanding, what next. I looked at the interpreter who said in French the equivalent of “we got stuck”.

Now I put my joker on the table and looked at Margarita Ivanovna who knew exactly what was going to happen and trembled. I said to the interpreter :

- Will please ask the Minister if he agrees that Margarita Ivanovna ask her young French speaking librarian, Minna, my IFLA interpreter since 1964, to join us and sit between the Minister and me, with Margarita Ivanovna sitting next to the Minister in front of us. The minister agreed and the Board members came in with Minna, whom they all knew, they all were optimistic about the outcome, except me and Minna.

Rather formally I welcomed Minna in French and told her that the interpreter agreed that she could help with technicalities regarding national and international library matters and differences between an NGO like IFLA and GO like Unesco. That she knew by experience how these problems were dealt with in the U.S.S.R. but also, most important, outside the U.S.S.R.

There was a discussion among the Russians and I thought I had heard the word VINITI. Smilingly the interpreter said "it is all my fault, I thought that IFLA was a member of VINITI." The Minister : "I always thought that Mr Liebaers was an old friend of Margarita Ivanovna and he invited the Board to share a bottle of vodka with him. After two vodka's Minna, who never drinks, told me "I did not say in Russian what you said in French". I looked surprised and she said mockingly "shall you never realize that the outside world is not able to understand the inside world of U.S.S.R."

Six months later I returned to Paris and the result was that "the Executive Board approves the continued association of your organization." Even with this sigh of relief, there remains a sharp distinction with FID.

It is an irony of history that IFLA's initiative towards developing countries led to the damaging conflict with Unesco.

I can as well add here that I had forgotten the rule that at mid-term I had to be re-elected. I decided that if the suspension had not been withdrawn and if the new dues structure proposed by Preben Kirkegaard had not been voted I would not have been a candidate to succeed myself.

### 3. International Book Year 1972

In the IFLA Annual 1972 the report on the opening session begins, like usually, with the Ministre of Culture. In Budapest it was Dr László Orbán, who seized the opportunity to recall the origin of book printing in his country in 1473.

Five centuries later the President of IFLA went on in the same spirit of international cooperation. Like Dr. László Orbán he underscored the eminent role that librarians were playing in the implementation of IBY '72. It all started in February 1971 with a week long meeting at the hospitable Villa Serbelloni in Bellagio. A generous invitation from the Rockefeller Foundation allowed a group men and women, whose lives had been given to books in the most diverse capacities : publishers, book designers, printers, booksellers, translators, authors, book collectors and librarians (including a FID representative), all of them also readers. I have seen a list of participants and a photograph of the group but I have forgotten when and where.

Later the same year Unesco brought together the Planning Committee of IBY '72. This Committee, renamed Support Committee of IBY '72, met in Brussels in October 1971 and again in Vienna in May 1972. In the most natural way the President of IFLA chaired these different meetings. The result was that IBY '72 kept him busy, even till 1973 when Julian Behrstock, as the responsible Unesco officier, decided that the Support Committee should meet in the non-European cities, where members of the group were active : Ted Waller in New York, Mr. Noma Kodansha in Tokyo, Cardenas Nanetti in Bogota, Armado M. Sandoval in Mexico City and Dina Malhotra in Delhi, publisher of the first best-seller in Hindi. Alone I carried IBY '72 as far as Las Vegas, where the American Library Association was meeting. I spoke at its

International Relations Committee.

Even in this kind of euphoria, we could not ignore that we lived in a divided world. At this level, my protective credo *Profession before politics* appeared to be the safe gate. When it had been decided to close IBY '72 with a Charter of the Book, we felt more than ever the dividing line. Our committee approved it after a difficult discussion, as well as all the NGO's associated with its drafting, from book producers to book consumers. To reach such a broad agreement reciprocal concessions were unavoidable. The Charter exists and received a wide distribution. I was so pleased with the outcome, that I asked a talented staff member of Royal Library, André Toussaint, to write a calligraphic version of the Charter.

The 38<sup>th</sup> Conference and General Council, Cogeco, in Budapest in 1972, left me with a recollection of basic renewal. My preliminary talks with the Secretary of the National Academy of Arts and Sciences started in an original way : "As you know, we have the same regime as the U.S.S.R., but our methods are different." That was his answer to my question "if visa's would be given to librarians from Israel ?" As far as I remember they were granted but late. I went through the impressive list of participants and found only a couple of names of colleagues from Israel. To tease the U.S.S.R. Rumania repeatedly proposed to invite Chinese librarians at the IFLA meetings and created another problem : the relations with Taiwan. That rather dirty game belonged to the Cold War on both sides or even within one side.

The theme in Budapest in 1972 was Reading in a Changing World, chosen in concordance with Unesco's International Book Year 1972, IBY' 72.

Already in 1972 the integration of the developing countries in the IFLA programme had become an essential issue and would stay with IFLA until the Jerusalem meeting in 2000, where Division 8 had to deal with an important problem, related to developing countries.

As an other positive side, I would like to recall the beginning of IFLA Publications Series with Wim Kooops as editor and K.G. Saur Verlag München as publisher. In retrospect this is undoubtedly the main move towards a new IFLA. I still regret that the first issue of IFLA Journal, published by Klaus Sauer, came two years after the beginning of the outstanding IFLA Publications Series. This is the opportunity to congratulate Klaus Saur, the publisher who worked with and for libraries, without private patrons, and returned as much as possible to IFLA, while allowing himself to develop the exceptional project of the World Biographical Information System.

Klaus's staff members took the unique decision to publish, without his knowledge, a kind of Liber Amicorum, for his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, but much more original than usually as indicated by the title of Erste Begegnungen-gemeinsame Projekte.

I would like to make a suggestion, here and now, to offer Klaus Saur a second Liber Amicorum to celebrate his 65<sup>th</sup> or his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday with comments by librarians and publishers on the theme of Librarians turned Publishers or Publishers turned Librarians. If we think alphabetically I am certainly willing to be the author, under L, of a 10 page comment on the proposed theme. If there is a general agreement on this not so serious proposal we could skip the letter S, because the book of 250 pages would be published by K.G. Saur... As to covering the whole alphabet might be a kind of scrabbling between odd librarians and publishers. Very often the letters L indicated the end of the first volume of a two volume dictionary or the beginning of the second one. As to the letter K of Wim Kooops, I think he should equate K with C and Q and put no page for him.

My Presidential Address in Budapest was a sum of IFLA subtitles. In retrospect the last part of the addition - some IFLA problems - gives a kind of goulash taste to the whole, which requires an hierarchical classification of the problems. The first one - International Book Year 1972 - in which I was deeply involved during three years (1971, 1972, 1973) was an initiative that would trigger a permanent concern in IFLA Committees, Sections and Divisions.

Developing Countries required an important part of the agenda in Jerusalem and the final answer to these problems is more remote today than in Jerusalem. Violence, unorthodox wars in many regions of the world are bringing us back to the wise words of Willy Brandt, spoken at Frankfurt Book Fair when I

received the First International Book Award in 1974 : “As there is again war in some part of world, I can not speak about books...” This was not the beginning of his distributed text. I know only of one example where the colonizer and the colonized have developed a harmonious cooperation, namely the U.S. and the U.K. I can only explain it by an early decolonization, followed by a civil war in the U.S.

The third problem Universal Bibliographical Control, UBC (with a weak echo of UDC) is no longer a problem and is undoubtedly the major IFLA contribution to international librarianship. We owe it to the leadership of the team of Arthur H. Chaplin and Dorothy Anderson and an enormous number of unknown librarians spread over the world.

Finally I come to the last component of the title Some IFLA Problems. Thirty years ago I introduced these IFLA problems as follows : “While I have spoken already in Moscow and in Liverpool and here again about UBC, this is the first time that I shall refer to our publication policy. You will realize that I try to limit the topics in this opening address to those which in one way or another interest all our sections and committees or which have reached a stage of maturity which makes reporting worthwhile. I believe this is now the case with our publication policy.” Our Publications Committee, for which Peter Havard-Williams from Longborough and Wim Koops from Groningen are responsible, and have taken the initiative by scheduling a hearing here in Budapest. As long as it is easier to send a paper produced by a librarian around the world than it is to send its author... There I interrupt the quotation and draw the attention to the impressive IFLA Publications Series and, jumping two years ahead of time, to IFLA Journal. Thanks Klaus Saur on behalf of the Publication Committee and IFLA. It is my feeling today that IFLA and Verlag K.G. Saur grew well together.

At the end of the week I had just been re-elected for a second three-year term. I leave it to interested readers to look up my Closing Remarks on pp.63-65 in IFLA Annual 1972, the first one published by Verlag Dokumentation München with Milisa Coops as editor. This gives me the opportunity to thank our Scandinavian officers and members to have taken care of the preceding Annuals, published by the Scandinavian Library Centre.

Five years ago I skipped any reference to FID. Instead of quoting the complaints of the Canadian FID representative, Martha Stone, to me about FID in 1997 in Copenhagen that “FID was as dead in The Hague as in Brussels”. At the very end of this paper I shall meditate on the significance or lack of significance of celebrations of anniversaries..

To conclude this record of IBY’ 72 I shall refer to Reading in a Changing World, edited by Foster Mohrhardt and published by Verlag Dokumentation, München 1976, as IFLA Publications 5. The Table of Contents is impressive and I feel the necessity to reproduce it

Herman Liebaers  
Introduction

Robert Escarpit  
Le Lecteur dans un Monde en Mouvement

Gordon N. Ray  
Books as a Way of Life

Theodore Waller  
Libraries and Reading at the Point of Change

László Mátrai  
Tradition and Innovation: Reading in a Changing Country

O.S. Chubaryan  
Reading in Modern Society: Reading and the Motivating Forces of Modern Society

John Boon  
World Publishing

Desanka Stamatovi\_  
The Future of the Book

F.A. Ogunsheye  
Reading for Development in Urban Africa:  
The Case of Ibadan

Harald L. Tvetervås  
Studies of Readers and Readers' Interests in Norway

I.P. Osipova  
Popularity of Reading in the USSR

István Kamarás  
Reading Habits Research in Hungary

M. Alain  
Recherches Psycho-sociologiques sur les  
Habitudes de Lecture au Canada

George Chandler  
Research on Books and Reading in So-  
ciety in the United Kingdom

Janusz Ankułowicz  
Dynamics of the Development of Book  
Reading in the Country and in Town

From my introduction I quote : “There is unavoidably an important difference between listening to a paper in a overcrowded hall of the Academy of Sciences in the capital of Hungary and reading it four years later quietly at home, whether this home is in Eastern Europe or in North America. The difference between listening collectively and reading individually.”

My personal preference goes to Gordon Ray's Books as a Way of Life. This subjective choice has reached over the years a kind of objectivity, in a sense that friends from all parts of the world wrote me or told me that the chosen title corresponded exactly with the way they felt about books.

It is with some nostalgic feeling that I leave IBY'72 and more particularly my late friend Julian Behrstock, who never told me during these three years of intensive cooperation what drama he went through at Unesco and which is the subject matter of his book The Eight Case. Troubled Times at the United Nations (University Press of America, 1987)

#### 4. Universal Bibliographic Control

In retrospect - once again ! - I would like to repeat for the last time that Universal Bibliographic Control, UBC, has been and will remain IFLA's major contribution to modern librarianship worldwide. Its older parent UCD - the flagship of FID - was a major contribution of FID to two generations of librarians, who called themselves documentalists, meaning actually modern librarians. No one realized in time at FID that ICT was going to revolutionize the whole structure of library and information sciences.

In the preceding pages I have drawn the attention to the innovative role of CLR, now CLIR. As president of IFLA I joined the staff of CLR as international consultant in May 1973, with a one year contract. For the first time I was going to be paid for my work at the international level. It did not last long.

Thanks to the IFLA troika - Foster Mohrhardt, Bob Vosper and IFLA's president - both Foster and Bob, senior officers of CLR, the consequences are so important that I do not hesitate to say that it allowed me to realize the IFLA I dreamed of in 1969 when I was elected.

Let me step down one moment to the national level and mention that in 1969 also, precisely on February 17, King Baudouin formally inaugurated the new building of the Royal Library, henceforth called the Royal Library Albert I of which I was the director since 1956 and which I left in 1973 to join the staff of CLR.

Let me return for one day to the formal opening of the Royal Library Albert I. It came to an end with a banquet where the last speaker was Bob Vosper, who took the floor on behalf of the seventy directors of National or University Libraries who attended the inauguration and who were going to participate next day in a one day seminar on the future of large libraries. The speakers were

Etienne Dennery, Administrateur général de la Bibliothèque nationale, Paris; Cornelis Reedijk, Director, Royal Library, The Hague; Robert Vosper, Librarian, University of California, Los Angeles; I.P. Kondakov, Director, All Union State Library V.I. Lenine, Moscow; Ludwig Borngässer, General Director, Staatsbibliothek, Berlin W and Sir Frank Francis, Director and Principal Librarian, British Museum, London. Their texts are published on pp. 64-122 in the Opening of the Royal Library Albert I by H.M. The King (Brussels 1969).

At the time I was not yet president of IFLA, but I was well on my international way if I could bring together such a group of distinguished librarians, most of them having served IFLA.

Being in Grenoble I used French for the Opening Plenary Session, French being one of the national languages of Belgium. Thirty years later I do not feel the necessity to translate my words in English. On the contrary I am going to limit myself to those pages which carry a message for our time and I have a striking example entitled :

From CDU, Universal Decimal Classification to UBC, controle Bibliographique Universel. It is a fact that FID always uses its French acronym and IFLA switched to English before my presidency. I draw no conclusions from this difference, although the present situation of both, CDU and UBC, invites a comparison. It would be tempting to explain linguistically the disappearance of CDU, but I refrain from doing so, because I think that the end of FID has a completely different origin and I shall come back to it at the end of this paper. However I shall simply note here that UBC took the American Shared Cataloguing Programme a big step further.

After CDU & UDC I spoke about the New Structures of IFLA. As we badly needed them, I am eager to translate the different stages we went through to implement them. At the time we were professional librarians at the national level, but amateurs at the international one. I still hear my predecessor, Sir Frank, saying : "we should at least work one hour a day at international professional problems." Another remark by him while we were having tea at the same time, in the British Museum, is also ankered in my memory : "We tend to forget that the Indians do no longer work for us."

In 1973 I regretted that IFLA had not yet reached the stage where the President could read the Opening Address written by the Secretary General. This is the first time, that I write my thirty years old wish down.

The initial grant of CLR allowed us to appoint a full time secretariat in 1971 and Margreet Wijnstroom took the wise decision that she would manage the Federation and leave the professional work to sections and committees. The idea of deconcentration of the secretariat appealed to her as well as to me. The same happened with the Working Group of Developing Countries of which J. Soosai, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia was the chairman. The choice of a responsible person is always a delicate matter. It is more delicate, more difficult in a developed country than in an industrial one for the simple reason that it is a developing country, which means that the final choice is by us, outsiders. Fortunately our choice was Joseph Soosai. This allows me to remain silent about the other mistakes I made.

The mention above of Shared Cataloguing Programme gives me an opportunity to recall the problem of translation in Toronto in 1967. The Canadian colleagues had to earmark half of their government grant

for interpretation, because they had wisely decided to flow in the interpreters from the U.N. Headquarters in New York. I was rather familiar with this Programme and decided to listen to French interpretation through the session. It was catastrophic. I had the choice between “catalogue divisé” or “partagé” and none of the interpreters had understood what it actually meant. I was not the only one who went through this saddening and costly experience and talked about it to Peter Havard Williams.

At the closing meeting of the Executive Board I proposed, in agreement with Peter, to try to solve the translation problem with a team of librarian-interpreters. Being not technically trained interpreters we decided to ask them only to translate the foreign language into their native tongue. This meant twice as many interpreters as with professional interpreters. However the result proved to be twice as good. It became immediately a tradition, with the additional advantage that it brought younger colleagues to Cogeco. Solving the translation problem was easier than to come to an agreement for the visa problems for citizens from Israel. *Profession before Politics !*

##### 5. Council and General Conference in 1974 in Washington, D.C.

I referred already to the meeting of the Executive Board in Brussels where I informed the members that I was compelled to resign IFLA’s presidency, because King Baudouin had offered me to become his Grand Marshal. With his customary wisdom Bob Vosper suggested at the Brussels meeting that my resignation be accepted and that it would become effective at the Washington Cogeco. This proposal pleased me and was accepted by the King to whom I had said that beginning in 1970 in Moscow and finishing five years later in Washington gave me a feeling of fairness towards the antagonistic capital cities during the Cold War, because I stuck all the time to *Profession before Politics*.

The theme in Washington was National and International Library Planning on which Carlos Penna, the Argentinian Head of Unesco’s Libraries, Documentation and Archives Service, had written a book. I participated in the revision of the second printing. Though the theme was important, I am not going to talk about it. The first reason to skip it is that you are going to listen to my farewell opening speech. Five years ago, in Moscow, I gave the longest speech I ever wrote, now I promise you it will be the shortest one. The second reason is that I do not only leave IFLA, but also my beloved Library in Brussels, where I worked for thirty years, the second half as its director. In this library I did the field work, which allowed me to talk in IFLA about problems for which answers appeared at the horizon.

In the library my worst enemy was the government, in IFLA it was Unesco. In my home town as well as here I depended on them for the budget to cover the operational costs. In Brussels I decided to reverse the traditional rapport between the central administration - let me call it the ministry - and the library as a public service to tax payers, who needed the library for their own work or to give a sense to their own life. The words end-user did not yet exist.

Now, nearly thirty years later, I am willing to admit that IFLA as well as the Brussels Library, in a certain way, stayed with me. I became only conscious of this bond when I left the Kings’ Service and the King convinced the Prime-Minister to appoint me Royal Commissioner for the Restructuring of the Federal Research Institutions, the Royal Library being one of the ten institutions.

Before coming to my shortest and last opening speech, I have two unrelated remarks. Preparing this one, I reread at the formal opening in Liverpool (1971) by the Minister responsible for the Arts and Libraries, the Rt. Hon., Viscount Eccles, P.C.K.E.V.O. and I cannot resist quoting the first sentence “This is the first time I have had the pleasure of addressing an international conference of men and women who have chosen the most civilised profession in the World.” Let me add “that was and is the first and last time I heard such a definition of our profession, coming from a minister of Her Majesty’s government. I had the privilege to meet later Lord Eccles’ in other capacities, but always related in one way or another to books.

And now my epoch making - excuse my modesty - shortest speech in 1974 in Washington :

“The one sentence being : I shall limit myself to one question : what is IFLA today and what might it be tomorrow ? I think now - looking at the audience in Glasgow - after I had briefly referred to IBY’72, UBC and the Working Group of Developing Countries, I quote now the shortest answer I gave to the one question : IFLA AND ME, WAS YOU. TODAY IFLA AND CHRISTINE, IT’S WE. This is the assurance of durability. It is easy to be prophet a quarter of a century later.

I would and should stop here. But reading the IFLA Annual 1974, twenty eight years after it was published, gave me such a kick that I owe to the readers of 2030 a written version of what happened at the 40<sup>th</sup> Council and General Conference in Washington, just before I had been appointed Honorary President on 23 November 1974.

Behind my back, a couple of IFLA officers of old standing had arranged that Joseph Soosai from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, chairman of the Working Group of Developing Countries, would propose that the title of Honorary President be conferred on me. In my failing memory I don’t remember if he or I were kidding one another with expressions like “barefoot librarian” or “architects of the poorest libraries” or “never use the word binding shop, when you speak to a minister, but say : “physical and chemical protection of books against the damage inflicted by bright day light, humidity and fungi.” According to the Annual, page 49, I thanked with a fair share of false modesty. Today, in my old days, I would simply admit that I was happy when Bob Vosper read the charter reproduced at the end of this paper.

Referring to Lord Eccles’s opening address, Dr. Liebaers mentioned how impressed the Minister had been by the support the Dutch government and the CLR were giving to IFLA. Such support was clearly in line with his own acknowledgment that national governments and foundations should back international programmes of action without attempting to control the international bodies responsible.

## 6. The Conference of Directors of National Libraries

The history of the relations of the Conference of Directors of National Libraries, CDNL with IFLA is very simple, but its contribution to the development of IFLA can hardly be overstated.

For me, at least, it started with the election of the new president in 1979. The two emerging candidates were Else Granheim and Guy Sylvestre. They both had a strong supporters. I backed Guy because I thought that after Preben Kirkegaard it was better for IFLA that a Scandinavian was not followed by another Scandinavian and, moreover, a candidate linked to Public Libraries by one belonging to the same group of libraries. Which did in fact mean that my preference was independent of the personal qualities of the candidates, though for obvious reasons I knew better Guy than Else. Let me add that I knew Else through Margreet Wijnstroom, who was a strong supporter of Else.

The historic difference of one vote in favour of Else Granheim is still lingering in the mind of old timers. The disappointment of Guy Sylvestre was understandable and I was the victim of his first negative reactions. It was common knowledge that I had supported him and he hoped that I would support the setting up of a CDNL outside IFLA. Fearing a schism in IFLA and in the Conference of Directors of National Libraries I thought I better withdrew. Knowing the careful negotiating qualities of Cees Reedijk, at the time chairman of the Programme Development Group, I asked him to talk to Guy, who could convince him to stay within IFLA. Writing this story down more than twenty years after the drama occurred gives me still a feeling of relief.

After this recollection of 1979, I turn to Marianne Scott’s Conference of Directors of National Libraries : Forum for Discussion and Action (Alexandria, 1995), where I read : “The idea of forming an association of directors of national libraries was first publicly proposed by Guy Sylvestre in 1973 in discussions with other influential national library directors.” In 1973 I was president of IFLA and this statement by Marianne Scott came as a surprise to me. Then I read : “CDNL began in 1974 when IFLA



held its annual conference in Washington.” Guy Sylvestre invited national librarians attending the IFLA conference to meet in Ottawa... The proposal was enthusiastically adopted. Sylvestre became the first chairman and the National Library of Canada its secretariat (1974-1978). In the part of Marianne Scott’s page 5 where she reviews of the relations with IFLA there is no reference to my recollection.

I decided to return to the 1973 and 1974 Annuals and found nothing in 1973, but a reference in 1974, p. 41 : “The President then read Mr. G. Sylvestre’s report on the recent meeting in Ottawa of directors of national libraries, and asked Mr. C. Reedijk to act as liaison between IFLA and the new group.” No more.

Major Projects is the title of the last part of Marianne Scott’s paper. “CDNL’s major projects concentrate on issues central to library development and international coordination of activities.” I am going to limit myself to read the subtitles and mention the publications they cover.

Later it moved to a comparative study of national bibliographic agencies. Throughout the objective is the efficient, economical and effective use of resources.

- **Role definition**
- **Machine-readable record transfer**
- **International conference on the Preservation of Library Materials**
- **Working group on Managing the Preservation of Serial Literature**
- **Financial management practices in national libraries**
- **Legal deposit and electronic publishing**
- **Bibliographic Records Task force**
- **Voucher system for international interlending**
- **Library Twinning**
- **International interlibrary loans of alternative format materials**
- **Commitment to the Freedom of Speech**
- **Assistance to other libraries**
- **Marianne Scott’s conclusion**

Associations are, to a great extent, what their members want them to be. Their influence grows in direct proportion to the level of work and commitment of those members. Through the 20 years since its founding, CDNL, whose membership is representative of the national libraries of the world, has proved valuable as an international forum for discussion and policy development among heads of national libraries. Now well established as a key part of the network of information sharing among libraries around the world, CDNL has frequently acted as a catalyst for action by related organizations and is itself action-oriented in the development of guidelines, policies, surveys, seminars, task forces and reports. Committed to the support of libraries in developing countries and the basic principles of librarianship everywhere, CDNL is of key importance as a link between agency heads, facilitating collective discussion on issues that have direct relevance to the concerns of national libraries and national information systems.

Marianne Scott’s is a former National Librarian of Canada. If I may add a personal conclusion, I would simply observe that Canada’s initiative - particularly Guy Sylvestre - has realized between CDNL and IFLA a wise and useful mariage de raison, immediately after my end of term in the middle of the seventies.

I had the privilege to attend the 27<sup>th</sup> meeting of CDNL in 2000 in Jerusalem at the Jewish National and University Library of the Hebrew University, Campus Givat Ram (Faculty Club, the Belgian House).

Chairman Peter Lor, South Africa, welcomed me as a founding member of CDNL and I was very moved overlooking the immense workload that has been carried out over the years. I regret that I did not say that when IFLA will celebrate its Centennial in 2027 it should include a keynote speech about half a century of structured cooperation with CDNL and that I silently accepted the mild exaggeration of being a founding member.

## 7. New Statutes and Structure

I availed myself of the IFLA rule that provided the former president could attend, during the two years following the end of his term, the meetings of the Executive Board.

The first use I made of it was to take care of a smooth transition from the modest and mimeographed IFLA News to the IFLA Journal. The former was edited and distributed by the Secretary General. A complete file would amount the 50 newsletters. Though Wim Koops had already a regular contract with Klaus Saur to start the IFLA Publications Series and the IFLA Annual in 1972, he was anxious to publish the first issue of the latter during my presidency. The result was a kind of pre-mature issue, which I would have called the incunabulum period of IFLA Journal.

The question of new statutes was raised as early as Preben Kirkegaard solved the problem of a new dues structure in 1971. Afterwards it was constantly on the agenda of the Executive Board or the Cogeco. When I left in 1974, it came up in Oslo in 1975 and it was voted in 1976 in Lausanne, where the theme was IFLA itself. Proudly president Kirkegaard announced it in his Foreword to IFLA's First Fifty Years. Achievement and challenge in international librarianship. Edited by Willem R.H. Koops and Joachim Wieder.

It seems to me that a quarter of a century after the president's one page Foreword's word, it is worthwhile to reprint it here in view of our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary : "After half a century's existence an international organization - now a large one - has its history to relate, and when this space of time has been marked by war and destruction, as well as by inconceivable progress and bloom of literary culture, and thus of libraries, then the history of an international library organization is a thrilling one.

Librarians are not, admittedly, among those who make crucial political decisions on mutual relations in society, or decisively influence the development of economic conditions. But we are part of the humanistic brotherhood, who realize that the sea cannot be tamed, but try to clean up and regulate smaller streams, thus providing better conditions for growth and development.

The motives of those who backed the creation of IFLA were precisely the cleaning up and regulation of relations that had sanded up during a world war, particularly European relations between libraries and librarians. Besides the recreation of classical links between centres of learning in the Western World, their aim was also the opening up of more wide ranging international lines of communication. After the destruction of the second World War the survivors continued and expanded our organization, in faith and determination.

It is right and proper that the history of the organization should be written at its semi-centenary. The personal evidence of some of the librarians who have taken a lead in the development of to-day's IFLA is an inspiration to all of us. But besides the tale of history, this publication aims at a contemporary evaluation, criticism, and advice concerning our future. This is why we have asked a number of eminent personalities to contribute, not their conventional and sympathetic congratulations, but opinions and perspectives for our activities in years to come.

In 1976 our General Council unanimously adopted a completely new structure for the work and inner coherence in the organization. We changed its name "International Federation of Library Associations" by adding "and Institutions", because IFLA - our unchanged acronym - has developed into something beyond the original exclusive circle of European and American library associations, and much more connected with daily work in the multitude of library and related institutions all over the world.

The new structure is a framework for global co-operation among all types of libraries, and for all functions, specialities and aspects of library work. The different Sections and Divisions provide fora for activities, discussion and debate out of which should hopefully crystallize a firm basis for the progress of libraries as well as for the professional development of the individual librarian.

On behalf of IFLA I thank the authors of each single contribution, and the editors of this our first jubilee publication.”

#### 8. The Jubilee World Congress in Brussels in 1977

When I read this last sentence, I had the following paragraph in mind “Upon reading the various contributions one may discover that many recently proposed ideas are found to be strikingly similar to others put forward a long while ago. This only strengthens our conviction that our activities have been and will remain consistent and fruitful, and that turning to previous experience may be highly profitable at times.<sup>4</sup>

Having attended all the Executive Board meetings in 1975 and 1976, I still felt close to IFLA, when I was invited to address the Centennial Meeting in 1976 in Chicago of the American Library Association and becoming afterwards an Honorary Member. My interest in IFLA remained strong and I was ready to assist in the preparation of the Jubilee Congress organized to celebrate IFLA’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Brussels in 1977. (The third World Conference of Librarians had been held at Brussels in 1955). My idea was to invite eminent public figures, to address a wide audience of 2000 librarians from 108 countries.

---

4 Last paragraph but one of the Introduction to IFLA’S First Fifty Years.

Participated in the announced programme :

*A Opening Session*

Greetings from Distinguished Readers

Introduction  
by Robert Vosper

Greetings from Outer Space  
by Adrian G. Nikolayev (USSR)<sup>5</sup>

A Historian to the Librarians  
By Daniel J. Boorstin (USA)<sup>6</sup>

An Author's View of Libraries  
by Cyril Northcote Parkinson (UK)

Greetings from the Developing World  
by Mrs. Joyce L. Robinson (Jamaica)

*B Theme Meetings*

1. The Book World  
Keynote Speaker : Lord Snow (UK)  
Panel Members : Mrs Ebba Haslund (Norway),  
Per A. Sjörgen (Sweden),  
Mrs. Aase Bredsdorff (Denmark), Fernand  
Baudin (Belgium)

6. Le Plaisir de la lecture  
Orateur principal : Robert Escarpit  
(France)  
Membres du groupe de discussion :  
L. Bataile (France), Claude Aubry (Canada),  
J.-J. Schellens (Belgique), L. Plaquevent  
(France)

2. Government, Law and Politics  
Keynote Speaker : H.E. Léopold Sédar  
Senghor (Sénégal)  
Panel Members : Wolfgang Dietz (Fed.  
Rep. of Germany), László Réczei  
(Hungary), Guy Sylvestre (Canada)

3. Education and Learning  
Keynote Speaker : G. Vaideanu (Unesco)  
Panel Members : Nikolai M. Sikorsky  
(USSR), Jean Hallak (International  
Institute for Educational Planning),  
Prithvi N. Kaula (India)

4. Science and Technology  
Keynote Speaker : V.V. Menner (USSR),  
Panel Members : Mrs I. Wesley-  
Tanaskovic (Yugoslavia), J.-P. de Loof  
(France), J.S. Soosai (Malaysia)

5. Reading for Pleasure  
Keynote Speaker : Mrs Helen Cresswell  
(UK)  
Panel Members : Mrs Anne-Marie  
Kylberg (Sweden), Mrs Ingerlise Koefoed  
(Denmark), István Papp (Hungary),  
Clive Bingley (UK)

*C Closing Session*

Le Défi de l'Avenir

Introduction par Jacques Lethève

Allocution par Roger Caillois

---

5 The Soviet cosmonaut was replaced by his spouse.

6 The Librarian of Congress was the exception, but he spoke as a historian

The last paragraph of IFLA's First Fifty Years written by Ben Rugaas, Director of the Norwegian School of Librarianship, reads like a valuable introduction to the celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. "So, for myself and my views on library education and library schools within IFLA, the outlook for the future is one of reserved optimism. If the implementation of the new structure gives the Federation a new momentum in its professional work, then IFLA could be the international mirror reflecting all our national efforts in library education and other parts of the profession. And as the global village grows stronger we hopefully will be able to use these reflections to cope with the new large-scale solutions that will inevitably affect us anyhow. And in library education, as in every kind of professional learning, the international overview will always give a new dimension to domestic problems. It's what you learn after you know it all that really counts."

It seems to me to be appropriate to conclude with a meditation on the celebration of anniversaries. Over the years I have been quoting librarian Daniel Boorstin, who called the celebration of birthdays non-events and now we are here to celebrate, I quote from the programme "The 75<sup>th</sup> IFLA Birthday Event"!

I became a kind of expert in 75<sup>th</sup> celebrations. In 1998 I got stuck in Brussels with two 75<sup>th</sup> anniversaries; a local one The Flemish Club of which I was the first secretary after the War in 1945 and the celebration made of me an honorary-President 53 years later. The second was a transatlantic celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the BAEF. This foundation grew out of the Commission for Relief in Belgium during the WW 1, which was presided by Herbert Hoover.

In Buenos Aires FID celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary - I prefer to leave birthdays to persons - and I was present to congratulate our late "sister" organization in 1970, recalling of course that it was in my home town, Brussels, that Paul Otlet founded FID in 1895. I did not look up to this event, but I remember rather vividly that I recalled immediately that the developing country, Argentina, offered to the rich European countries a major assistance in the form of the potato. Another recollection of Buenos Aires is the dinner offered to a group of FID officers, to which I belonged for one night by the Unesco Argentinian Officer Carlos Penna, who marked his passage in Paris with the Planning of Library Development. But the dinner itself was memorable, because Carlos was so proud that the best steak in the world was of Argentinian origin. As library planning was the theme of my last Cogeco, I feel I could include a potato in my homage to Carlos Penna.

Now 25 years after FID we candidly picked up that ominous figure 75 while our "sister" organization, FID, has disappeared a couple of years after it celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary with pomp, which forces me to think of our centenary in 2027. In retrospect it is not too difficult to imagine that the devotees of Paul Otlet disappeared after one or two generations. He died in 1944, a year after I entered the profession, just before the end of WW II. In the Royal Library I never heard a reference to him before 1956, the year I became the Library's director, with the old fashioned title conservateur en chef, still in use today.

A man called Georges Lorphèvre, came to see me shortly after my appointment, and wanted to explain how I should run the Library. I listened carefully, because I was convinced that the Library's management was out of date. I do not want to be unkind to the memory of Lorphèvre, who was the author of the article on Paul Otlet in the National Biographical Dictionary. He wrote it as the professional devotee and missed the essential contribution of his hero to the beautiful profession of librarian. I am a friend of the Australian W. Boyd Rayward who was the first to come as close as possible to the genius of Paul Otlet. I quote the last sentence of his not yet published note : "It is no small claim that Otlet may be considered one of the grandfathers of the global world of the internet and digitalization and the changing social order that is suggested by such terms as the information revolution and the information society."

With this magnificent homage to Paul Otlet, I come to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of IFLA, celebrated in Brussels in 1977.

With the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of IFLA in 1977 in my mind, as well as the demise of FID, I look at the 75 year old image of IFLA here in Glasgow. I write here down that the librarians of 2027 will realize that we moved with our times. Proof of which is the comparison of UBC with CDU. The computer killed CDU and UBC benefited from ICT. Nobody speaks any more about UBC, but thousands of librarians implement it every day. I abhor to be prophetic, but I am sure that my grandsons will not

ashamed of their grandfather of what they will read in 2027- not necessarily on paper on which it was written. They will be about 50 years old.

A last time I come back to *Profession before Politics*. I had no choice during the Cold War. But now the Berlin Wall has disappeared since a dozen years and Peace did not come back to us. I still believe that libraries need peace to thrive. Here too I have no choice, when I have September 11, 2001 and its aftermath in mind. I am not proud that I leave this second century of the third millenium to my grandsons what a mistake to take the burden of the whole world on one's poor shoulders.

All texts and as many reports on the discussions as possible have been published in IFLA Publications 15<sup>th</sup> cxw Libraries for All. A World of Books and their Readers - Bibliothèques pour tous. Le Monde du Livre et de ses lecteurs. Edited by/Édité par : Robert Vosper & William R. H. Koops (K.G. Sauer, München-New York - London - Paris).