ARCHIVES FOR SCHOLARSHIP; SOME AUSTRALIAN OBSERVATIONS ON THE EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES³²

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On 9th-13th May this year an Extraordinary Congress of the International Council on Archives was held¹ in Washington, D.C. The proceedings will in due course appear in *Archivum*, but in the interim some notes on the speeches and working papers of the Congress may prove of interest: perhaps to the less multi-lingual they may be of interest even after their publication in *Archivum*.

The Congress was made possible by a grant from the Council on Library Resources. It was organized by a committee composed largely of officers of the National Archives and Records Service of the United States, under the chairmanship of the Archivist of the United States, Dr Robert H. Bahmer. It met in the Department of State, with simultaneous translation facilities in five languages (English, French, German, Spanish, and Russian), and was attended by 438 delegates and observers from more than 50 countries.²

The Scholar's One World

The principal address on 9th May was given by Dr Lyman H. Butterfield, editor in chief of the Adams family papers for the Massachusetts Historical Society. Dr Butterfield based the title of his address, "The scholar's one world," on an address by a former president of the Society of American Archivists, Solon J. Buck.³ He used incidents from the experiences of Henry Adams when he was trying to get access to papers in Paris and Seville in 1879 to show just how difficult was the task of the historian before modern attitudes of archives administration were current. He then went on to show the need for international cooperation in access to archival material even for a scholar working in the relatively confined limits set by the study of the Adams family; for example, such a scholar needed access to Russian diplomatic records to cover John Quincy Adams's mission to Russia.

In dealing with publication in microfilm form, Dr Butterfield said that the issuing of the Adams papers on microfilm⁴ had actually benefitted the letterpress edition, in that the editors could exercise greater freedom in selection for the latter. He also drew attention to other substantial projects of microfilming in the United States, such as the programme of the National Archives, the indexing and filming by the Library of Congress of presidential and similar papers,⁵ and the microfilming programme sponsored by the National Historical Publications Commission. (These were also mentioned later in Mr Leisinger's paper.)

Liberalization of Restrictions on Access to Archives

Dr W. Kaye Lamb, Dominion Archivist of Canada, presented a general survey of this field. He divided his paper into two main sections, dealing first with more recent archives, and secondly with older archives, being particularly concerned with the creation of single microfilms of the latter (as distinct from edition publication on microfilm).

He described the bewildering variety of policies concerning the restriction of access to archives, referring to the survey of accessibility to diplomatic archives compiled by the U.S. Department of State⁶ and also to a discussion by C. P. Stacey.⁷ The Department of State found closed access periods ranging from over 100 years to 10 years in one large group of countries, with many others considering each individual application on its merits, and some denying all access. One of the standard reasons for a closed period, national security, was fairly quickly passed over in the discussion. Dr Kaye Lamb said that this was rather too uncritically invoked; he might have quoted Acton: "To keep one's archives barred against the historians is tantamount to leaving one's history to one's enemies."⁸ Several speakers in discussion mentioned a radical approach to access by some revolutionary or newly independent governments,⁹ but M. Robert Bautier pointed out that there was still likely to be a continuity of the vital national interests.

Another element of government, the preservation of anonymity for a civil servant frankly expressing his recommendations on policy to a superior, was examined in more detail. It was suggested that if the records were opened too quickly the quality of administration might suffer and so too might the fulness of the final historical record. Some countries with a very strong tradition of democratic government stress the necessity for the public to be able to examine the actions of the administration: M. Olof Jagerskiold of Sweden, where almost all files, no matter how recent, are open to public examination, emphasized this theme, but clearly did not persuade all listeners that the record did not suffer as a consequence. Dr Kaye Lamb referred to a similar tradition in the United States, mentioning President Kennedy's position that records ought normally to be available after fifteen years. Since the archivists' meeting, in June of this year, the U.S. Congress has passed a bill to amend the public information section of the Administrative Procedure Act to liberalize and guarantee the right of citizens to examine the records of Federal agencies.¹⁰

Several speakers discussed the protection of personal privacy: Dr Kaye Lamb's defence against the scandalmonger in a hurry is to wheel in five trolleys stacked with records and promise him more when he has worked through that lot.

In dealing with the microfilming of records in response to individual requests, Dr Kaye Lamb emphasized the fact that the archivist largely loses control of the subsequent use of the film, and cited many instances where he cannot thus risk misuse; consider the example of private papers given to an archives under restricted conditions of access. But after making this and several other qualifications, he strongly affirmed the benefits of microfilm, both as a convenience to scholars and as a medium for the archivist to serve them while preserving, or enhancing, the security of the archives. (These themes were taken up again two days later.)

The associate reporter, Dr Herman Hardenberg of the Netherlands, dealt more particularly with the juridical and legal problems of access. He referred to the summary by Bautier already cited (n. 7), pointing out that in some countries distinctions were made between access by nationals and access by foreign visitors; the latter may have to approach through diplomatic or similar channels. (In later discussion the President, M. Etienne Sabbe of Belgium, defended this practice, saying that the foreign scholar often received special assistance as a result of this rule.)

Dr Hardenberg described the need for the laws and regulations to take account of a wide variety of situations by varying the conditions and periods of access, e.g. in the protection of personal privacy or business secrets, in the protection of fragile material (a different thing from restricting access with a view to the future deterioration of the records through use), in permitting the destruction of records either wholly or after microfilming, and so on.

He mentioned legal conditions governing the loan of archives both within and outside a country¹¹ (which of course microfilm can lessen): in the Netherlands, for example, archives can be lent to countries offering reciprocal privileges as long as the documents are sent by diplomatic courier. He also touched on the exchange or return of archives when they had been removed from their country of provenance, through war, territorial or political changes, and the like.¹²

The legal status and treatment of private archives varied a great deal between countries.¹³ In Western Germany and Italy, for example, the government assumes legal power over private archives with the view that they are part of the cultural property of the nation. In other countries there is at least a system of registering private archives: this has existed in the Netherlands since 1965, and the work of the Historical Manuscripts Commission and the establishment of the National Register of Archives in Great Britain is well known.¹⁴

In Belgium the Archivist General has some legal control over ecclesiastical archives within that country; this appears to be true for some others.¹⁵

National Programmes for Documentary Publication

Dr Oliver W. Holmes of the U.S. National Historical Publications Commission found two main reasons for the tradition of the publication of primary sources in the western hemisphere. The first was simply that the original documentation of the founding and early history of the Americas is in the archives and libraries of nations such as England and Spain, and the European countries have of course had a continuing influence on American affairs ever since. Some individual states of the U.S.A. as well as the federal government, Canada, and the Latin American countries, had all undertaken programmes of documentary transcription and publication based on these overseas archives.

Second, the emergence of the American nations as democratic states emphasized the public ownership of the public records;¹⁶ Dr Kaye Lamb had made the same point. But governments themselves had not been the chief publishers: most of the publishing had been done by universities, historical and other learned societies, and by individual scholars.

Dr Holmes then went on to describe some of the programmes of publication in very much more detail than can be done here. He began by mentioning colour facsimile reproduction of the few remaining documents from the Mayan, Mixtec, and Aztec civilizations. The next period, the colonial period, had dominated document publication in Latin America, simply because it had lasted for three centuries. Even so a huge amount of material remained untouched, and many of the volumes that had been published had appeared in small editions with little annotation of the texts themselves other than the introduction. He suggested microfilm as a suitable medium for publishing more of the official record material. He also noted the great interest in publishing the journals of early travellers, missionaries, and the like, contrasting this with the comparative lessening of interest in such material in the United States since the turn of the century. Sesquicentennial celebrations had been one cause of increasing publication in the revolutionary and national periods in Latin America, and 140,000 documents, the entire "Archivo de Libertador" (Simon Bolivar) had been published on microfilm, an innovation for Latin American archival publishing. In later discussion Sr Gunnar Mendoza of Bolivia mentioned the paucity of published Latin American records presenting economic and sociological materials.

Turning to the publication of documents in the United States, Dr Holmes traced the hesitancy which lack of funds, historiographic trends, and uncertainty about microfilm as an alternative medium of publication, caused in the 1930's and the war period. He found a turning point in 1950, when the first volume of *The papers of Thomas Jefferson* appeared, and the National Historical Publications Committee was given greatly increased authority by the Federal Records Act.¹⁷ Many projects similar to the Jefferson publications have been begun since, often with the assistance of foundations or periodical publishing houses. University presses have usually been the publishers. The editions have been characterized by their comprehensiveness, their textual accuracy, their fulness of scholarly annotation, their typographical quality, and, of course, their costliness. By Public Law 88-383 of 1964 the National Historical Publications Commission was enabled to begin a small grants programme to assist such projects, and the Ford Foundation has also been a notable supporter.

A few long-standing series have been published by government agencies, such as the Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States and the Territorial papers. Few publications are appearing from the individual states.

By contrast with nineteenth century Britain, comparatively few societies have been specifically devoted to publishing sources in North America, though the historical societies have often assumed this as a responsibility. A notable exception is the Champlain Society of Canada.

M. Ghennady Belov of the U.S.S.R. also devoted much attention to the question of who actually edited records for publication. M. Bautier in 1959¹⁸ had shown that in western Europe some countries, such as Italy and France, emphasized the archivist's organization of records almost to the exclusion of allotting resources for editorial work, but some countries had had notable series edited by archivists, even though learned societies might be concurrently engaged in similar programmes. Dr Holmes had emphasized the inalienable responsibility of the archivist to see that appropriate records were published (though not necessarily edited or published by the archivist), and the cooperation necessary between archives, historical societies, and other agencies to bring this about. In later discussion Mr Roger Ellis of Great Britain said that significant series that were difficult paleographically needed to be published by letterpress, and M. Marcel Baudot of France, by describing the expertise in paleography which an archivist developed, implied that he might be appropriately the editor of such materials.

M. Belov said that some countries preferred to organize their main publication programmes round particular subjects, whereas others were much more concerned to publish whole *fonds* systematically. Russia and some of the other East European countries inclined to the former, whereas others such as Great Britain and Spain emphasized the latter, particularly for the medieval period. M. Antonino Lombardo of Italy thought that historians preferred publication by subject, and archivists publication by *fonds*.¹⁹

M. Belov described briefly some of the main fields of publication of each country, and it seemed that in a very general comparison the East European countries put much more emphasis than the western ones on the publication of nineteenth and twentieth century series, and that often their publications were oriented to social and economic investigations. In discussion a Hungarian delegate, for example, described a programme of systematic publication of historical statistics extracted from archival material.

Microreproduction of Archives for Reference and Publication Purposes²⁰

Although the principal reporter for the session was M. Antal Szedo of Hungary, the purposes for which materials were microfilmed were set out more systematically by his associate, Mr Albert H. Leisinger of the U.S.A. He listed them as reference, e.g. as a substitute for note-taking, space-saving, security, preservation, publication, acquisition, and other uses, principally in facilitating administrative access in several locations at once.

M. Szedo gave many European examples of microfilming for security and preservation of the originals from further deterioration. In Hungary, for example, all the charters before 1526 had been microfilmed, and in Spain there had been much filming of medieval documents in the cathedral archives. (Sr Antonio Matilla Tascon of Spain confirmed the urgency with which this programme was being pursued.) Many European countries were acquiring security collections of microfilms of civil registers as a by-product of Mormon microfilming for genealogical purposes.²¹

Under the heading "Supplementary microfilming" he discussed the microfilming of series held in one country's archives which filled a gap in those of another, and the allied situation where a country by treaty or for other reasons returns archives to another, but microfilms them first. Thus Hungary microfilmed various series before sending the original documents to Yugoslavia in accordance with the peace treaty of 1947.

M. Szedo revealed considerable disagreement as to how complete microfilm copying of *fonds* should be, and how microfilms might be used subsequently. The position of the United States, as described by Mr Leisinger, was that there was no need to control the subsequent use of documents published on microfilm. Some of the qualifications made by others were administrative rather than objections in principle: for example, Mr Maclean wanted reports on subsequent use in order to justify continuing budgetary support and to evaluate the selection of series for publication. Some archivists advocated the filming of complete series in preference to extensive reference copying, but M. Szedo showed that many countries objected to such complete publication. In later discussion M. Christian Gut of France argued that personal guidance by the archivist was the most reliable way of finding all the documents of value to an enquirer, thus by implication questioning the whole principle of publication.

Behind these statements one sensed the sentiment of what Dr Kaye Lamb had called "pride of possession and of inheritance." Bolivia, M. Szedo reported, forbade the sending of films of entire *fonds* abroad, under a law which banned the export of material that was part of the country's artistic or historical patrimony; Spain, and M. Szedo supported this attitude, forbade the transmission of microfilms to a third party, and so on. Spain, Switzerland, and some other countries were reluctant to film *fonds* which did not contain material concerning the country requesting the film (in contrast, say, with records dealing with a former colonial possession).

In general it seemed from the talks by M. Szedo and M. Belov that the use of microfilm for publication, as distinguished from the other purposes listed by Mr Leisinger, is not yet important in Europe, with some exception being made for Russia and an outstanding exception in Great Britain.

Mr Leisinger's report was a very detailed description of the variety of purposes for which documents were microfilmed by a large number of institutions in the United States, of the history of microfilming programmes in the National Archives, and of the present publication programmes of both the National Archives and other institutions. In general he found a wide acceptance of the use of microfilm for most of the purposes listed above, and this included strong support for expanded programmes of publication by microfilm, and willingness to copy entire series for reference or publication purposes. In regard to publication he distinguished 1948 as a turning point in the microfilm publication programme of the National Archives, for in that year an amendment to the National Archives Act allowed the establishment of a revolving fund for publication by microfilm. There has been considerable effort by the Archives to film entire series which had a clearly defined subject interest, and 270,000 rolls of microfilm had been sold from 1941 to 1966.²² He described the careful editorial work which precedes filming, and which usually results in the inclusion in the film of a descriptive introduction and at times special aids such as indexes or registers. Processed guides are also normally prepared to accompany films.

There have of course been many large projects of cooperative microcopying in the United States, and there has been increasing concern to develop coordinated programmes in this area.²³ The Library of Congress has recently established a centre for the coordination of the copying of foreign manuscripts, and planning and support of the publication of United States materials on microfilm is a concern of the National Historical Publications Commission. International Cooperation in Facilitating Access to Archives

Prof. Aurelio Tanodi of Argentina spoke on the general aspects of this subject, and M. Charles Kecskemeti of France, the Secretary of the International Council on Archives, described the work of the Council.

Prof. Tanodi's working paper on international cooperation²⁴ was largely based on replies to a questionnaire he had distributed. He enumerated these replies in considerable detail, with some of his material duplicating parts of earlier papers, so these present notes do not pretend to be a systematic survey of his paper, and are presented in a rather different sequence.

One form of international cooperation in archives is the cooperative compilation of guides to archival sources. Both Prof. Tanodi and M. Kecskemeti mentioned the *Guide to national historical sources*, in which the countries holding documents relevant to a particular region are each compiling a guide to their sources for that area. The greater part of the work has been completed for the first region, Latin America;²⁵ work has just begun on the second, Africa south of the Sahara.

Some countries, such as the United States and Czechoslovakia, had been pursuing considerable programmes of publishing guides and checklists to those series in their records which were of particular concern to various foreign states. Such publications were often distributed on an exchange basis. Prof. Tanodi said that it was also planned to include in a future issue of *Archivum* descriptions of large archival deposits from the point of view of their usefulness for international research. Another supplementary means of compiling such information was through projects for international students training as archivists, as was done in France in the Stage International des Archives.

This theme led to his suggestion for the establishment of an International Centre for Archival Documentation, to collect published bibliographical sources for archives and to act as a clearing house for unpublished bibliographical information, and in its final resolutions the Congress looked forward to the establishment of such a centre. There were several suggestions that the bibliographies of finding lists and other material on archives published in *Archivum* be renewed and expanded, but M. Bautier said in effect that he could not continue to compile such a list without assistance. Norway suggested the use of the *International bibliography of historical sciences* as a suitable medium for such reports.

Prof. Tanodi listed a wide variety of opinions on the desirability of the general exchange of finding lists and similar tools. Some countries, such as Switzerland and the United States, already conducted an extensive system of exchanges; others limited their exchanges to checklists of mutual interest, or had no exchange programmes at all. Some held that the International Council should sponsor a comprehensive scheme of exchanges, others that there should be emphasis on bilateral schemes, while some were worried about the inequities that would be presented by most exchange schemes.

This diversity of opinion was even greater in respect to the exchange of microfilms of actual *fonds*. These differences had been described by M. Szedo, and Prof. Tanodi gave many more examples. Still, there were some substantial exchanges in operation under bilateral agreements, such as those between Norway and Denmark, or between some of the East European countries; M. Zemskov of the U.S.S.R. said that that country was exchanging 100,000 frames of microfilm a year with Sweden.

There has been some activity in international or joint editing and publication, on microfilm or otherwise. M. Belov in his paper had described a variety of joint publications of documents by countries in East Europe, e.g. *Participation of Hungarian internationalists in the Civil War in the* U.S.S.R., 1917-1922, others by Russia and Sweden, and similar plans in the Benelux and Scandinavian countries. Prof. Tanodi described the work of the UNESCO mobile microfilm units in Latin America,²⁶ the Arab countries and southern Asia. Master copies have been stored in Mexico City and Cairo to supply further copies as needed.

There was much discussion by Prof. Tanodi and others on priorities of microfilming: in the end the Congress recommended that "special attention should be given in microfilm programs to documentation relating to nations whose history is dependent upon sources preserved in other countries."²⁷

Other topics raised included the consideration of an international reader's card to be issued by heads of archival institutions (the Congress resolved that the Executive Committee study the feasibility of this) and the expansion of training programmes for archivists (again endorsed by the Congress, particularly in regard to Africa).

There were of course many other recommendations in the reports sent to Prof. Tanodi that UNESCO and the more developed countries provide many other kinds of assistance to the archivists of the developing nations. A very practical political suggestion recommended that individual members of the Congress request UNESCO national commissions to press UNESCO to increase its assistance to archivists and the International Council.

M. Kecskemeti, the associate reporter for this session, discussed the work of the International Council on Archives. A considerable amount of his paper consisted of quotation or summary from an article by M. Bautier,²⁸ which will not be repeated here. He raised the question of the strongly European character of the International Congresses, and argued the need to overcome financial obstacles to the creation of more regional bodies like the Inter-American Technical Council on Archives.²⁹

He also spoke of the work of the Committees on Terminology and Sigillography, and reported that in 1965 the Executive Committee had approved in principle the creation of a permanent Commission of Restoration Technicians.

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With reference to the General Assembly of the Council, he said that it had been reconstituted so that national delegations would have two votes, one being normally vested in the central archives administration and one in the national professional association.

Again he raised the question of insufficiency of support from UNESCO for the work of the Council and archival work generally. The Council relied heavily on the archives administration of France and other countries to perform much of its work.

One UNESCO project not so far mentioned here is that of a pilot project creating a model archives service in an African country.

Many of the resolutions passed after these addresses have been mentioned in these notes, and the others will be found in the Library of Congress Information bulletin referred to. It was difficult to estimate which resolutions will result in substantial action in the near future: in general they recommended greater cooperation and liberalization, and the aiding and augmentation of archival work everywhere, especially in the developing nations.

General Comments

To an observer, easily the most valuable part of the Congress was the working papers supplied for each session. The sessions themselves were arranged so that the reporters who prepared the working papers summarized or commented on them, and in these notes no distinction has been made between their working papers and their actual speeches. These summaries were followed by comments from each of four or five members of a panel, usually selected with some concern for geographical diversity, and then this was followed by general discussion from all delegates. The working papers were often of high quality, systematic and fairly detailed, and partly as a result of this it was seldom that any of the later speakers contributed a fresh viewpoint of any generality: most remarks simply stated national practices or attitudes. (The contrasts in these could of course be very interesting.)

Another reason for the limited success of the discussions was simply the tremendous disparity in archival development among the countries represented. The publication of records normally presupposes the organization of the archives themselves, and documentary publication usually ought to be preceded by the publication of general guides and inventories. Most of the African and Asian delegates and some of those from Latin America were clearly not in a position to consider publication as a major concern. Their need was for assistance simply in organizing or describing their collections, even, for a few, in collecting their collections. Their appeals for UNESCO and other aid did in a way serve to put the discussions into an international perspective, but they also increased the diffuseness of the debate.

Because of the richness of the detail the working papers contain, it is very much to be hoped that they will appear in full in *Archivum*, complete with the bibliographical apparatus that some of them lacked. In the meantime these notes may be of some value to those who were not in Washington in May 1966.

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 2. This figure, and details of the address by Dr Butterfield, are taken from a report of the Congress in U.S. Library of Congress, *Information bulletin*, 25:267-68, 26 May 1966.
- 3. Solon J. Buck, "The archivist's 'one world," American archivist, 10:9-24, Jan 1947.
- 4. Lyman H. Butterfield, "Vita sine literis, mors est;' the microfilm edition of the Adams papers," U.S. Library of Congress, Quarterly journal of current acquisitions, 18:53-58, Feb 1961.

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- 12. This is dealt with much more fully and in some historical detail in Les archives dans la vie internationale, Actes de la 6^e Conference internationale de la Table Ronde des Archives, Warsaw, 1961, ed. R. H. Bautier. Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1963, pp. 11 ff.
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- 1964. (5th International Congress on Archives, Brussels, 1964.)
- 16. Though the following quotation was made primarily with reference to security, I be-lieve it is also relevant here:— "Let us preserve the records of public actions, de-clared Thomas Jefferson, 'not by vaults and locks which fence them from the public eye and use, in consigning them to the waste of time, but by such a multiplication of copies, as shall place them beyond the reach of accident." (U.S. National Historical Publications Commission, A report to the President containing a proposal ... to meet existing and anticipated needs over the next ten years, etc. Washington, D.C., 1963, p. 8.)
- There is a useful list of articles on publication programmes in the United States in O. W. Holmes, "Recent writings relevant to documentary publication programs," American archivist, 26:137-42, Jan 1963.

For a summary of past work and future plans, see U.S. National Publications Commission, A report to the President, etc., 1963 (see note 16.)

- 18. See note 7.
- 19. Charles E. Lee discusses some principles of selection of records for publication (as well as the support a publication programme brings an archives institution) in "Documentary reproduction; letterpress publication — Why? What? How?" American archivist, 28:351-65, Jul 1965.
- 20. The 1st International Congress on Archives in Paris in 1950 discussed microfilming; see "Archives dans leurs rapports avec la microphotographie," Archivum, 1:75-101, 1951.
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