

Ludo van Bogaert – Short history of the Congress (address delivered in 1970 at the VI<sup>th</sup> ICN in Paris)

*(transcribed from handwritten translation of van Bogaert's address for the ISN website by archivist on 3rd June 2019)*

During the First International Congress of Neurology, held after the war in Paris, in 1949, the neuropathological reports and communications were completely intermingled with the clinical and surgical papers. The same was true for the electro-encephalographic contributions. This tendency continued at the Lisbon Congress where, however, the anatomic-pathological reports already had a separate place, both in the (oral) papers and in publications. Moreover, the choice of 'lipidoses' as the theme lent itself to the establishment of their relative autonomy. Nevertheless, at the end of the congress, the officers formulated their desire that, at the next congress, the various disciplines related to neurology meet at the same time and place and participate in a simple meeting. But during the preparatory meeting of the 1957 congress, held in Brussels in 1955, the Congress of the Neurological Sciences was proposed. Neuropathology was one of the disciplines invited to participate in their meeting. Meanwhile, an initiative of Armando Ferraro had resulted in the idea of organizing a First International Congress of Neuropathology, and this occurred in the period between the Lisbon Congress. As Ferraro himself wrote as, this idea, despite his personal enthusiasm, seemed to him too bold for a single person to carry out, and Ferraro recommended to 40 colleagues that they form a National Committee for their respective countries. 35 of them accepted invitation. The other nations, forming the Iron Curtain group: USSR, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, didn't participate at all in this initiative.

Inspired by the national development of neuropathology in the various countries which had been invited, Ferraro brought together in Paris at the Hotel George V, on May 30, 1951, about 20 national presidents of the committees created earlier in order to lay the foundation for the first autonomous congress. The participants of this meeting were: Ivan Bertrand (France), Ludo van Bogaert (Belgium), J. G. Greenfield (England), W. Scholz (Germany), Mrs Løken (Norway), Mr. Minkowski (Switzerland), Ikram Sukru Aksel (Turkey), Knud Krabbe (Denmark), Gonzalo Lafora (Spain), R. O'Meara (Ireland), L. Van der Horst (Holland), M. Gozzano (Italy) and Ferraro himself representing the United States. Mr. Patrikios (Greece), Trelles (Peru), Pacheco e Silva (Brazil), Uchimura (Japan), Carillo (Argentina), and Almeida Lima (Portugal) had given Ferraro authority to act for them.

During this meeting, Ivan Bertrand was elected president and Rome was chosen as the site for the first congress. It was natural under these circumstances, that Gozzano be invited to preside over this first congress and Ferraro accepted the role of secretary-general.

The First International Congress of Neuropathology was held at the Barberini Palace and was opened by Gozzano and by two commemorative speeches. One in memory of Carrillo Golgi which was delivered by Carlo Riquier of Milan, the other in honor of Santiago Ramon y Cajal, delivered by Fernando de Castro of Madrid. A bronze medal with the profile of the two scientists was distributed to all members of the congress.

This first congress had considerable success and greatly contributed to Neuropathology being accorded an autonomous, independent place as an individual medical discipline while maintaining contacts with neurology and psychiatry.

During this congress an ad hoc committee was formed, which was to make arrangements for creating a second international congress of neuropathology which was to meet in London in 1955. This committee met at the home of Prof Gozzano on the last day of congress. Prof Greenfield was ill and could not attend. The committee greatly stressed the interest and success of the Rome Congress but no plans were made. Since many members of this committee were already presidents of national committees, this meeting really constituted the embryo of the formation of national committees of neuropathology. I should mention that Dr Greenfield had already founded in 1951, under the name 'neuropathological Club, a society which was to become the British Society of Neuropathology.

In view of the success of the Rome Congress and the interest aroused in all countries by the creation of neuropathological committees, the Rome committee decided not to wait for the 1957 Congress as had been decided in Lisbon, but to hold an intermediate congress in London which would also be devoted to neuropathology. The London Congress was in fact organized by an 'International Committee of Neuropathology' and its planning was turned over to the British national committee.

This London Congress took place with Dr Greenfield and Dr Dorothy Russell presiding. Before the end of this congress, the international committee laid the foundation of the constitution so that in the future the achievements would be made democratically rather than on individual initiatives or on those of small groups as had been the case until then. This nucleus of a constitution was established by an international committee including Mr Sukru Aksel (Turkey), Ludo van Bogaert (Belgium), who represented Prof Antonio Flores (Portugal), Dr Ezra Christensen represented Dr Krabbe (Denmark), Prof Gozzano representing Prof Riquier (Italy), Dr Greenfield, Dr Gruner representing Dr Ivan Bertrand (France), Dr L. van der horst (Holland), Dr Linell representing Dr Fischer (Canada), Dr Løken (Norway), Dr William McMenemey (England) representing Prof Askenasy (Israel), Dr Ferraro (USA), Professor Trelles (Peru), Minkowski (Switzerland), Scholz (Germany).

In the first article of the accepted constitution, it was noted that the committee would be composed of representatives of each country interested in the development of the neurological sciences, would be given authority by its society or by a federation of societies interested in their disciplines and, in case such society existed, the neuropathologists must have attended the previous neuropathological congress.

The accomplishment of these two congresses (Rome and London) already constituted an important step toward recognition of the autonomy of the neuropathological discipline in regard to its clinical and research applications. Such autonomy was not, however, easily accepted by either all the existing organizations or educational groups in clinical pathology. In addition, in Lisbon the idea of bringing together, at the same time and place, the neuropathological and neurosurgical disciplines in a single meeting was strongly supported: this idea clearly made explicit the concern of clinical personnel for keeping the closest contact with neuropathologists. The concern for autonomy is equally expressed in the idea of the creation of a journal which would accept European anatomoclinical papers, which did not find a place in the great neurological journals of the time.

The first meeting took place in Rome in 1952 and was attended by Ivan Bertrand, J. J. Greenfield, Scholz, van Bogaert and Gotze (the latter representing the Springer publishing company with which contacts had been established). No decision was made because Great Britain on the one hand, Germany on the other, didn't see the necessity for creating a new journal for this kind of papers since they themselves disposed of effective organs of expression. The French delegate was less explicit since already at that time the *Neurological Review* didn't readily accept anatomoclinical papers and also because *Annales de Médecine* had just ceased publication. The problem didn't arise for the United States since it already had a specialized journal.

Meanwhile the World Federation of Neurology had been founded with the same aim of close interdisciplinary ties, it had created a series of Problem Commissions. The objective of the latter was not to create congresses or societies devoted to one or another of the related neurological sciences but to favour exchanges of papers, research work and material within small international groups.

Such a problem commission was founded in 1959 for neuropathology. At the l'Hospice de la Salpêtrière, Prof Alajouanine had placed at our disposition the Pinel library. The Problem Commission affirmed as its objective the recognition of the independence of neuropathology as a research and educational discipline and the securing of a place for neuropathology in the curriculums of hospitals and universities where this place was not already established. The Neuropathological Problem

Commission also proposed bringing about sessions and exchanges with the other Problem Commissions of the Federation.

The idea of creating a neuropathological periodical was again taken up. It was decided that Prof Seitelberger would get in touch with the Springer Company in Vienna. An agreement was made in October 1959 and the first issue of *Acta Neuropathologica* appeared in June 1961.

The Neuropathological Problem Commission of the World Federation included a number of members who belonged to the International Committee created in London in 1954. At the Paris meeting, it was stressed that the two organizations should remain independent: the Problem Commission of the World Federation of Neurology was to remain distinct from the International Committee. The objective of the latter was to establish, on the international level, contact between those who practice the neuropathological sciences, while the objective of the former was to assure connections between laboratories of neuropathology, genetics, etc. within the World Federation.

In 1961, the International Committee met in Frankfurt in order to organize the next Congress of Neuropathology. It was decided that it would take place the same year as the International Congress of Neurology but at a different place, although not too far away. The International Congress Neurology would meet in Rome, the Congress of Neuropathology in Munich with Dr Webb Haymaker and Prof Scholz presiding and Prof H. Jacob as secretary.

A few months after the establishment in Paris of a Problem Commission for Neuropathology, a Problem Commission for comparative neuropathology was founded in Berne, on the initiative of Profs Frauchiger and Fankhauser. On the occasion of the International Congress of Munich in 1961, their Commission organized a symposium devoted to different problems of comparative pathology.

In Munich the International Committee again took up the study of the provisional constitution, established in London, and tried to ascertain the opinion of a number of members regarding the advantage of transforming this committee into a true International Society. Despite the interest of a number of members present, who were favourable to the idea of creating such an international society, the discussion could not go more deeply into the matter, since the meeting of this committee didn't take place until the very end of the congress and many members of the committee had to leave. Prof Luthy offered to have the next Congress of Neuropathology meet in Zurich in 1965.

The Problem Commission of Neuropathology contacted its members during 1962 and 1963 in order to determine more precisely their position in regard to the creation of an International Society. In the meantime, the idea for such a society was gaining ground. There was still hesitation on one point: whether their international society should be created within the framework of the international society of clinical pathology or be created as an autonomous organism. Since decisions about this were to be made at the next Congress of neurology, which was to take place in Zurich, Dr van Bogaert decided to convene, in Anvers in April 1965, a number of members of the Problem Commission on the one hand, of the international committee on the other hand. He also invited Dr Messerli, the secretary general of CIOMS to this meeting. From their discussion. There emerged the wish for the creation of an autonomous international society which could later become affiliated in this way with CIOMS.

The conclusions of the Anvers meeting led Dr McMenemey to again take up the study of a constitution within the framework of the international committee which was to meet in Zurich on the occasion of the Congress. During the meeting of the International Committee there was a definite decision to create an international society which delegated to a sub-group the voting of the constitution. This sub-group was chosen with a very wide geographic base: Drs Luthy, Bischoff, Osetowska, Grevic, Seitelberger, Sourander, Bailey or Abner Wolff (the American society had just changed its representative to the international committee). Dr Blackwood became secretary and Dr McMenemey president of their sub-committee. It was agreed that the sub-committee would bring the results of its work to the meeting set to take place in Copenhagen in 1967, since the new congress was to meet there,

on the invitation of Prof Erna Christensen. The work of this sub-commission was done mainly by correspondence. However, it did meet in Prague in 1966 and a second draft of the constitution and of addition was presented.

On May 18, 1967, a second meeting of the sub-committee took place in Copenhagen and during a discussion on the following day the constitution and additions were accepted by the International Committee with the condition of adding a few amendments which would have to be reconsidered before deciding on the final wording. The international sub-committee on the constitution was then dissolved.

The representatives of the national member societies present in Copenhagen were called together for the second part of that meeting. They were asked both to make plans for the 6<sup>th</sup> Congress and to decide on the number of delegates to make suggestions for the provisional curriculum. A committee for this purpose had been created earlier under the direction of Dr Blackwood. Without enough information on the eventual member societies, it was necessary to put off this question to a later meeting.

The executive committee was then elected. The society was represented only by their committee. It was composed of Dr van Bogaert (president), J. Luthy (past-president), Mr. Kruche, Kornyei, Shiraki, Abner Wolff (vice-president), Bischoff, Gruner, Mecchi, Polak and McMenemey as secretary. It was decided that the two vice-presidents and two other members of the executive committee as well as the secretary-general would resign at the next congress. The executive committee temporarily accepted a number of member societies, a discussion which would have to be ratified at the next meeting.

The first meeting of the executive committee for studying the constitution took place in Paris in 1967. A second meeting in London in July 1968 was considered indispensable because of the death of Erna Christensen who was supposed to arrange the 6<sup>th</sup> Congress in Copenhagen. This 6<sup>th</sup> Congress was then postponed until 1970 and the decision was made to hold it in Paris.

The committee for amending the constitution and byelaws met again on July 4<sup>th</sup> in Paris, at the same time as the third meeting of the executive meeting on May 5, 1969 was being held. A fourth meeting of these two committees took place on Feb 27-28, 1970 in Paris.

From article 3 of the constitution proposed in Copenhagen, it is apparent that the purpose of the International Society was mainly to create and maintain a close, permanent collaboration between the national and regional societies of neuropathology, to urge the formation of regional and national societies, to create and maintain contact with other international organizations in the field of the neurological sciences and moreover in different branches of pathology. Such activities might manifest themselves in the creation of international congresses, colloquia, or symposia, in the encouragement of exchanges of information in the neuropathological sciences and exchanges of researchers involved in neuropathology, and especially in planning ways of training young neuropathologists. Thus the objective pursued by the International Society did not overlay that of the Problem Commission except on one point: the establishment of contacts between neuropathology, 'clinics' and the related neurological sciences.

In fact, the existence of such a large group as an international society does not hinder the attainment of their objectives by the Problem Commissions of the FMN. The theme of these Problem Commissions is in general very limited although interdisciplinary, the participants are few in number, strictly chosen in regard to the theme. The symposia which certain problem commissions have held outside the large international congresses of neuropathology, have been extremely beneficial. They have, for example, brought reciprocal enrichment to comparative neuropathology, to human and comparative neuro-anatomy and to other disciplines as well.