

### Editorial

Starting with this issue, the *Archives of Virology* becomes the official journal of the Virology Division of the International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS). The officers and members of the Advisory Council of the Virology Division are very pleased with this arrangement and look forward to making the VIROLOGY DIVISION NEWS pages in the *Archives of Virology* an important venue for communication among virologists around the world. I have been appointed by the Virology Division as Special Editor for Virology Division affairs.

The VIROLOGY DIVISION NEWS pages in this journal will become a platform for communicating many kinds of information of general interest to virologists around the world. I have in mind coverage of taxonomic matters (formal issues via the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses, and informal issues via submissions from individual virologists), information on major international activities of virologists, information and opinions concerning the teaching of virology, etc. Your suggestions regarding the kinds of items you would like to see in these pages are most welcome – please let me know your wishes.

Many virologists may not be familiar with the IUMS, nor with the Virology Division. The IUMS, as the principal international organization of microbiologists, has the following objectives (taken from the IUMS constitution):

- to promote the study of microbiological sciences internationally;
- to initiate, facilitate and coordinate research and other scientific activities which involve international cooperation;
- to promote publication of international study and research;
- to promote the organization of international conferences, symposia, and meetings and assist in the publication of their reports;
- to represent microbiological sciences in the International Council of Scientific Unions and maintain contact with other international organizations.

The IUMS comprises several Divisions, one of which is the Virology Division. Each Division operates rather independently, according to its own statutes, fostering the interests of its members in many ways. The Virology Division statutes will be published in a future issue of VIROLOGY DIVISION NEWS. The affairs of the Virology Division are taken care of by the officers, forming an Executive Committee, assisted by an Advisory Council. The present membership of these bodies is listed below.

Of course, the main activity of the Virology Division is the management of the International Congresses of Virology. The congresses have become extraordinary in attendance, scope and quality of the presentations – and a source of pride for all virologists. Active involvement in the leadership, development of programme, and local arrangements of future Congresses is a continuing responsibility of the Executive Committee and Advisory Council of the Virology Division that is taken very seriously. Each Division of the IUMS is responsible for various Committees, Commissions and Federations (collectively called COM-

COFs). The Bacteriology Division operates a large number of COMCOFs, while the Virology Division has only one COMCOF, the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV). More information about the ICTV will be given in a future issue of VIROLOGY DIVISION NEWS. Minutes of the meetings of the ICTV held during the last International Congress of Virology in Berlin will be published soon, and the Fifth Report of the ICTV will appear as a Special Issue of the *Archives of Virology* and also as a soft-cover book.

So, on behalf of the Executive Committee and Advisory Council of the Virology Division, may I again invite all virologists to communicate their ideas about these and other important developments directly to me.

Respectfully,

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## The beginnings of the International Congresses of Virology

How did the International Congresses for Virology begin? This question was repeatedly raised at the 8th Congress in Berlin, and I was asked to write this article for the record.

Virologists had been playing key roles in the affairs of the International Association of Microbiological Societies many years prior to 1968, the year of the first Virology Congress in Helsinki. They included Thomas M. Rivers (1939–47), MacFarlane Burnet (1953–58), Andre Lwoff (1962–70), and Victor M. Zhdanov (1970–74), each of whom served, in the years indicated, as President of the Executive Committee, and Sven Gard, who served as President of the 7th Congress for Microbiology in 1958.

Among virologists who attended Congresses of the International Association of Microbiological Societies (IAMS), in which virological reports were interspersed among presentations oriented toward a variety of other disciplines, it became clear that it would be desirable to have a separate Section of the IAMS devoted to Virology. But in order to be recognized by the IAMS, it was necessary to spring fully grown from the sea, as Aphrodite – perhaps not as beautiful a body, but a functioning one nevertheless. Thus during the IAMS Congress in Moscow, a small revolutionary group of workers, meeting at the home of Valentine Soloviev, felt that the time was ripe for the International Virologists of the World to unite. The group included Peter Wildy, Victor Zhdanov, Joseph Melnick, and subsequently we coopted Nils Oker-Blom. The affairs of the IAMS at that time were run by a bureaucracy whose main interest had been focused on Bacteriology for many years, and the Microbiology Congress failed to provide sufficient opportunities for virologists to meet and to discuss their rapidly developing discipline. Thus, once again, the usual International Congress for Microbiology was held, this time in Moscow, July 24–30, 1966, and 5,541 persons attended. The IAMS Newsletter of November, 1966, reported: “The IXth International Congress for Microbiology is now just memories. The memories vary: of meetings with old friends and making new; of strange sights and foods, and tussles with Intourist; of the circus and the ballet; of the Kremlin, the Hermitage, and the baboons at Sukhumi; of vodka, cognac, and Tzinandali and Russian hospitality; of luxurious suites and university dormitories; of many things.” Members of the Executive Committee of IAMS were provided with suites at the exclusive Sovietskaya Hotel reserved for visiting dignitaries, and they reported “we were well looked after”.

But working virologists were again disappointed: sessions devoted to Virology were few and far-apart, so that most fruitful virologic discussions were held impromptu, often at street corners while waiting for the Congress busses – which ran on infrequent and irregular schedules.

Our group of revolutionaries proposed to the Executive Committee of the IAMS that the virologists be allowed to form a Section within the IAMS. And if we were a Section, why not meet separately, preferably at different times from the large congresses?

The response to our petition was that virologists rightfully belonged among microbiologists, and could not be a separate body – and furthermore, that no significant virologists' group existed, so our request was without substance.

So much for 1966: If we were to become a recognized section, it would be necessary to spring upon the scene fully grown and functioning, perhaps not as Aphrodite but more like Athena from the head of Zeus.

The Helsinki Congress in 1968 came into being with the aid of an International Committee that was readily recruited from 39 countries. In attendance at that Congress were 536 working virologists, each of whom, in accordance with the admission regulations established by the International Committee, had to have contributed at least 3 significant publications to the world's virologic literature. The fact that so many persons qualified for attendance indicated how large and significant the literature of our science had already become.

I had the pleasure of serving as Secretary-General of the Helsinki Congress. A quotation from my opening remarks follows. "Now, this week, by our meetings and discussions of our laboratory work, we shall reaffirm our existence. Speaking not only for myself but also for each of the participants, I wish to express the appreciation that is owed to Professors Peter Wildy, Victor Zhdanov, and Nils Oker-Blom, with whom I have had the pleasure of serving on the Convening Committee, to the 39 members of the International Committee, and particularly to Professor Oker-Blom and his colleagues, to the University of Helsinki and its Medical School, to the City of Helsinki, to the Finnish Ministry of Education, and especially to the lovely and efficient ladies for the local arrangements for the Congress and the social and cultural events associated with it. For the Convening Committee, I also take this opportunity to express thanks to all members of the Congress who have come from near and distant lands, often at personal sacrifice, in order to discuss and exchange their new findings and interpretations at the main sessions and at the seminars. Finally, particular thanks are due for all the chairmen of the general sessions and seminars. Not only have they helped in organizing a most promising and informative program for the coming week, but also they have undertaken the task of preparing the reports which will stand in the published Proceedings as the record of this meeting – the First International Congress for Virology."

The Scientific Program of the First Congress consisted of ten General Sessions, two evening General Sessions of historical nature, and fifteen luncheon Seminars on topics of specialized interest. The fact that each General Session was attended throughout the week by 400 to 500 of the 536 registrants indicated profound and sustained interest. More specialized interests were satisfied through attending the luncheon seminars, each of which attracted 50 to 150 participants.

At the end of the week's program, in an effort to assure continuance of international meetings of virologists, the following resolutions were adopted unanimously by the entire membership of the Congress:

"The 536 members of the First International Congress for Virology whose names are listed below met in Helsinki during 14–20 July 1968 and held a series of daily scientific conferences.<sup>1</sup> The fact that so many of the world's leading virologists assembled in Helsinki

<sup>1</sup> The participants of the Congress are listed in: Melnik JL (ed) *International virology 1*, the proceedings of the First International Congress for Virology, Helsinki, 1968. Karger, Basel.

demonstrates the need and support for International Congresses for Virology. The benefits resulting from exchanges of information on current work in many different countries have led us to pass the following resolutions.

1. 'Be it resolved that the members of the First International Congress for Virology petition the International Association of Microbiological Societies to proceed at once to form a section on Virology, to include all branches of the science, and to arrange for future and regular International Congresses for Virology, with the Second International Congress to be held in 1971.'

2. 'Until such time as the International Association of Microbiological Societies establishes a Section in Virology with the responsibility of holding periodic International Congresses for Virology, the Secretary-General of the International Congress for Virology is requested to continue in office and to proceed with arranging for the Second International Congress for Virology in 1971. The responsibility for future International Congresses for Virology is to be turned over to the IAMS Section on Virology as soon as such a section is created and able to take over this responsibility.'

The scene now shifts to Mexico City in 1970. In view of the fact that virologists provided firm evidence of their existence by having held a successful independent Congress in Helsinki, and faced with the real possibility of virologists withdrawing from the IAMS to form their own organization, the delegates to the 10th International Congress for Microbiology modified their statutes and agreed to the formation of a Section on Virology, a Section on Bacteriology, and ultimately a Section on Mycology. The virologists present at the Mexico City Congress, representing 24 countries, met and organized their Section. The elected officers were Joseph L. Melnick (Chairman), Peter Wildy (Vice-Chairman), Nils Oker-Blom (Secretary) and the elected Advisory Council consisted of S. Gaidamovich (U.S.S.R.), J. Hidaka (Japan), L. Hirth (France), E. Norrby (Sweden), A. J. Rhodes (Canada), and F. Fenner (Australia). The delegates voted to hold the Second International Congress for Virology in 1971 in Budapest. The Convenors of the First Congress were requested to continue to function in the same capacity for the Second Congress, and they were ably aided by a Hungarian Host Committee led by G. Ivanovics, E. Farkas, and I. Dömök.

The Budapest Congress was a huge success, with 984 virologists from 45 countries participating. Included in the Scientific Program of the Congress were five plenary sessions on topics of general interest, and thirty specialized workshops.

This Virology Congress was the first to meet within the official framework of the IAMS. The Council of the Virology Section met in Budapest and adopted the statutes by which the organization would function. These are set forth in *International Virology 2, Proceedings of the Second International Congress for Virology, Budapest, 1971*, J. L. Melnick, ed. (Karger, Basel).

The Council also discussed and recommended the creation of an international journal to be administered by the Virology Section. The first issue of *Intervirology* appeared soon thereafter. From 1972 to 1985, J. L. Melnick served as Editor-in-Chief, and from 1985 to 1990, F. Rapp.

At the outset, *Intervirology* included the following sections and editors: Viral Structure (A. F. Howatson); Plant Virology (A. J. Gibbs); Invertebrate Virology (T. W. Tinsley); Bacteriophage (N. D. Zinder); Replication of Animal Viruses (H. S. Ginsberg); Genetics (P. D. Cooper); Epidemiology (E. H. Lennette); Oncology (F. Rapp); Immunology (N. Oker-Blom); Classification and Nomenclature (F. Fenner). Subsequently two sections were added: Virus-Cell Relationship (G. Klein) and Comparative Virology (F. Brown). In addition to experimental papers, *Intervirology* became the repository of Taxonomic Study



The photograph was taken at a meeting of the Executive Committee and the Advisory Council at the Second International Congress for Virology, Budapest, 1971. Participants, clockwise starting at left, are: H. von Magnus (Denmark); F. Fenner (Australia); A. J. Rhodes (Canada); P. Wildy (U.K.); E. Farkas (Hungary); N. Oker-Blom (Finland); J. L. Melnick (U.S.A.); E. Norrby (Sweden); G. Ivanovic (Hungary); L. Hirth (France); J. H. Subak-Sharpe (U.K.); V. Rennick (U.S.A.)

Group papers and also published the official reports on Classification and Nomenclature of Viruses, issued by the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses. Another historic milestone of Intervirology included the publication of a series of “portraits” of the viruses. The idea of the portraits was conceived by Frank Fenner and Adrian Gibbs, who believed the time was ripe for asking senior virologists to prepare a portrait of the virus, or the family of viruses, that each had spent much of his or her life studying. The portraits were highly successful, and have been assembled as a book, *Portraits of Viruses: A History of Virology* (F. Fenner and A. J. Gibbs, editors). They should be required reading for students and others interested in this field of endeavor.

In 1991, the official Journal of the newly re-named Division (formerly Section) of Virology of the newly re-named International Union (formerly Association) of Microbiological Societies became the *Archives of Virology*.

Those who led the Congresses after Helsinki and Budapest are included in the Table, reproduced from Chairman Marc van Regenmortel’s slide presented at the 8th Congress in Berlin.

At the opening ceremony in Berlin, the Congress paid tribute to the “four founding fathers”. Unfortunately, Peter Wildy and Victor Zhdanov are no longer with us. I was privileged to be present but Nils Oker-Blom had previously committed himself to be lecturing that day on Virology Problems of the Developing World, at a meeting of the International Union of Biological Societies in Nairobi. However, he wrote to the Congress: “I feel very

honoured to be remembered at the opening ceremony of the VIIIth International Congress of Virology. I would have been extremely happy to be present at that occasion but unfortunately I had long ago promised to participate, at exactly the same time, in a meeting in Nairobi. I would be grateful if you could convey to the participants of the Congress, to the organizers and to all my friends my very best greetings and my wish for a splendid and scientifically successful Congress. It gives me great pleasure to see that the modest but enthusiastic start in Helsinki has resulted in a prosperous Virology Division, in better and better congresses and above all in an unbelievable progress of virology. Let us hope that this progress continues leading to a brilliant future for virology, a future made by all of you and, let us hope, especially by young promising virologists discovering new and interesting viruses and viral genes.”

**Table.** International Congresses of Virology

	Conveners		Participants
1968 Helsinki	J. L. Melnick P. Wildy	N. Oker-Blom V. M. Zhdanov	536
1971 Budapest	J. L. Melnick P. Wildy	N. Oker-Blom V. M. Zhdanov	984
	Chairman	Vice-Chairman	
1975 Madrid	J. L. Melnick	P. Wildy	
1978 The Hague	P. Wildy	J. van der Want	~ 2,000
1981 Strasbourg	J. van der Want	F. A. Murphy	~ 2,200
1984 Sendai	F. A. Murphy	E. Norrby	
1987 Edmonton	E. Norrby	M. Van Regenmortel	~ 2,550
1990 Berlin	M. Van Regenmortel	B. W. J. Mahy	~ 4,000
1993 Glasgow	B. W. J. Mahy	R. Pettersson	

I would like to close these reminiscences with a quotation on the subject of International Virology from Peter Wildy, who was one of the leading figures in 20th century Virology, and who played a key role in founding the International Congresses:

“Something must be said about International Virology. Up until 1966, virologists were provided for by meetings held from time to time in different countries under the auspices of the International Association of Microbiological Societies. These meetings steadily grew in size and dullness and virologists became more and more disinterested. In 1966, four mutineers (ringleader: J. Melnick) decided to run an International Virology meeting independently. Though restricted mainly to viruses of vertebrates, the meeting (held in Helsinki) was successful and followed by other more comprehensive programmes in Budapest, Madrid, Amsterdam and Strasbourg [and since then in Sendai, Edmonton, and Berlin].

Several points have become clear. First, it is important for the health of virology and for the interests of virologists that meetings be held separately from others dealing with microbiological disciplines, in order to attain the maximum chance of personal encounter. Second, the breadth of virology is great enough to sustain varied combinations of interest.

Indeed, considerable ingenuity is required to ensure mutually fruitful exchanges. Third, the heterogeneity of virologists (and viropractors) is such that it has often been questioned whether it is wise to continue with such large congresses. So far, I believe they have been a powerful force of good communication. I hope that they remain so."

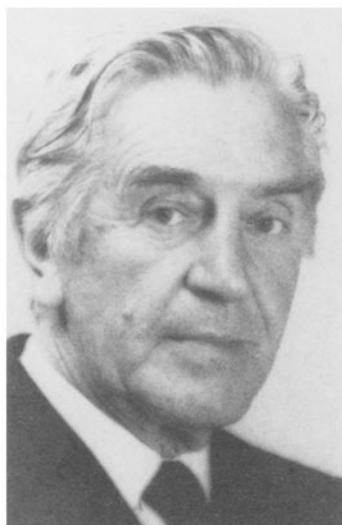
I believe that the Virology Congresses continue to be "a powerful force of good communication" and I believe that they will be so in the future.

Joseph L. Melnick  
Distinguished Service Professor  
of Virology and Epidemiology  
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## Obituary

### Zvonimir Dinter (1914–1990)

On November 7, 1990 Prof. Dr. Zvonimir Dinter died in Uppsala/Sweden; veterinary virology has lost one of its protagonists, a scientist at heart.



Zvonimir Dinter was born on October 24, 1914 in Osijek, Yugoslavia. After finishing his veterinary studies in 1938 he started his carrier at the National Institute of Bacteriology in Krizevci, then joined the Veterinary Faculty in Zagreb. In Germany he started work in Berlin, then continued at the Foot-and-Mouth Research Station on the island Riems, under Erich Traub's guidance. In 1949 he emigrated to Sweden and became a member of the National Veterinary Institute in Stockholm, in 1951 Head of its Bacteriology Department. In the mid-Fifties a collaboration started with Uppsala, first at the Institute of Medical Microbiology, later at the Wallenberg Laboratory. In 1966 he became full professor of virology at the Veterinary College in Uppsala and Head of the Virology Laboratory of the National Veterinary Institute in Stockholm. In 1976 he moved to the Biomedical Center in Uppsala, where he worked literally until the last days

of his life; the evening before he passed away, he was reviewing a manuscript with one of his students. He came to the lab almost every day and was helpful to everyone: students, staff and Head of Department.

Apart from his early contributions to bacteriology (swine erysipelas, botulism in mink) Prof. Dinter stood at the beginning of veterinary virology, with significant contributions to the knowledge on fowl plague, pestivirus and herpesvirus infections. After retirement in 1981 his activity was unimpaired: he edited a review on Diagnostic Virology (1989) and a hefty volume on Virus Infections of Ruminants (1990). A series of biographic articles (published in German) on the early history of veterinary virology makes good reading and