

# Toward an International Archives Program and Council, 1945-1950

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IT HAS BEEN SOME TIME since members of the Society of American Archivists have reviewed activities, initiated as World War II was ending, in connection with the establishment of (1) a United Nations Archives, (2) an archives program for UNESCO, and (3) an international organization of archivists. Perhaps such a review is desirable as a background for the meeting this September in Washington of the International Council on Archives (its first such meeting in the Western Hemisphere) contemporaneously with the Society's own fortieth anniversary meeting. This article will be concerned only with the story of the establishment of these international programs in which the National Archives and the Society played substantial role. Let us hope that others who have been more closely involved will bring the history of these programs, including accomplishments or their lack, up to date.

The extensive involvement of our National Archives in the protection of records in war areas both during military operations and under military government led directly to its concern for, and encouragement of, international cooperation in restoring and improving archival services after the war.<sup>1</sup> All wars, of course, have created problems in the protection of records, but none ever before on the scale of World War II. One has only to mention the new and extensive use of bombers, followed by the use of newly developed rockets. England suffered longest from these air attacks because the Germans could not quickly occupy it with troops as they had done neighboring countries on the continent. But the Allies quickly reciprocated in kind, with the result that cultural centers in central and southern Europe were likewise exposed to danger. Archives and other administrative and cultural resources had to be moved from cities and industrial areas into old country palaces not likely to be bombing targets, and even into salt mines. And, finally, there was the atomic bomb. What would a future war be like? And how could we be assured there would not be one? Hopefully there would be a United Nations to bring wars to an end, or at least to minimize them.

And the end of the war brought other record problems, seen more clearly as the Allies occupied conquered territory and instituted military government. Who was to insure the restitution of salvaged and captured records to their rightful owners, whoever they were? Who was to restore records damaged by moving, by emergency storage conditions, and other war-created circumstances? What about new methods

The author, a founding member and past president of the Society, served in the years 1944-48 as program adviser to the archivist of the United States, and in 1946-51 as chairman of the Society's Committee on International Relations. Associated, in both capacities, with the planning he describes, he had a major part in drafting the proposals mentioned and in maintaining the files that served as the main sources for this article.

<sup>1</sup> For a summary description of our role during the war years, see Oliver W. Holmes, "The National Archives and the Protection of Records in War Areas" in the *American Archivist* 9 (April 1946): 110-27. The present article is in some respects a sequel.

of repair? What about the use of photography, especially the recently developed microfilm techniques, in connection with salvage and the creation of insurance copies? How were new types of records, much used during the war, like motion pictures and sound recordings, best to be preserved? Finally, how were modern facilities for encouraging the renewal of research to be provided, including up-dated descriptive guides and inventories?

The National Archives was being asked these questions by our own and foreign governments, but could provide only some of the answers. In trying to do our part we had learned that we could not achieve much without the cooperation and help of archivists from the allied nations. We received such help especially from England and, later, as Allied military governments took control, from archivists on the European continent. The need for international organization and cooperation was clear. It inspired Solon J. Buck's presidential address, "The Archivist's 'One World'," delivered at our Society's tenth annual meeting in Washington, October 24, 1946. For background of the international programs being developed, perhaps one should only suggest going back and reading that address.<sup>2</sup> It had tremendous influence.

### *Creation of the United Nations Archives*

Our first question, naturally, was of what we could expect from the United Nations. We were thinking about it at the National Archives while the San Francisco organizing conference was in progress in the spring of 1945, and especially after the signing of the charter on June 26th. Our thoughts resulted in the preparation of a seven-page document which we entitled "Proposal for the Establishment of a United Nations Archives." It was processed in more than one hundred copies in October 1945, but has never appeared in print.<sup>3</sup> It insisted that the United Nations needed an archival repository for four categories of records: (1) "Noncurrent Records of the United Nations Organization and its Various Affiliated Bodies," (2) "The Archives of International Organizations that the United Nations Displaces or Absorbs in Whole or in Part," (3) "Records of Other International Organizations," and (4) "Records of International Concern and Importance."

It could be assumed that the United Nations would soon be required to set up an archives unit for the first category of records. Notable in the second category were the records of the League of Nations. As for the third category there had been, and presumably would be, international conferences and many temporary international agencies set up for the accomplishment of specific tasks but not necessarily affiliated with the United Nations. The disposition of the records of such agencies had always been a problem rarely settled to the satisfaction of all participating nations. Many "joint" and "combined" war and reconstruction agencies were then in existence. Processed copies of their more important records were or could be furnished member nations, but a United Nations Archives seemed a logical place for preserving the original files. Such a solution should not be forced, but it should be

<sup>2</sup> *American Archivist* 10 (January 1947): 9-24.

<sup>3</sup> Copies are available in the National Archives Library and also in the retired records of the National Archives and Records Service (Record Group 64) notably in Planning and Control Case 146-100 and in Extra-Federal Archival Affairs Case 147-E13. Both of these case files contain many other records relating to the establishment of the United Nations Archives and represent the basic source for this section of my paper.

available. The fourth category of records would include certain war records vested with such a degree of international interest that it seemed they ought to be maintained under international control and safeguards. Most obvious were the military records of the Axis Powers—the records of the German General Staff and their important commands, for example. We had learned of the extent to which German officers in training had been assigned to study World War I records in a sort of seminar for discovering why they lost last time and how they could win next time. Should we eliminate future opportunities for such studies? And what about the records of the Nazi Party? Such records should be in the hands of no single nation. Yet they should be preserved somewhere for the study of war crimes and the pathology of social organization.

Also in this document we elaborated on five “Essential Functions of a United Nations Archives,” including (1) participation in the appraisal and disposal of useless noncurrent records, (2) accessioning of records of enduring value as soon as they are not needed in operating agencies, (3) rehabilitation of accessioned records to the extent necessary and their maintenance under conditions favorable to their preservation, (4) systematic arrangement and description of records in custody, and (5) provision of reference service on them to international agencies, member nations, and scholars.

The “Proposal for the Establishment of a United Nations Archives” also listed certain “possible additional functions of a United Nations Archives,” such as advisory service in connection with the active records of operating agencies; research on backgrounds of current problems for the United Nations and affiliated agencies; technical advice on paperwork problems involved in carrying out peace treaties and international agreements; exchange of reproductions; and service in general as a center for the exchange of ideas, experiences, and skills among archivists of all countries. It was already recognized that some of these might well be responsibilities of “the proposed Educational and Cultural Organization of the United Nations” but that a United Nations Archives might still have contributions to make to these programs.

Although the above-described proposal was prepared and distributed several months before the United Nations Secretariat came into existence early in 1946 and may have been known to the Preparatory Commission meeting in London in the autumn of 1945, it is not likely that it influenced the establishment in the United Nations Secretariat of an Archives Section as part of a Documents Service, later joined with the Central Registry in a Communications and Records Service. A similar “archives unit” had, unbeknownst to the National Archives staff in Washington, existed both for the San Francisco Conference and for the Preparatory Commission. Their duties were the maintenance and control of “record copies” of all mimeographed official documents together with the original drafts. It was this Archives Section in the United Nations Secretariat that inherited the records of the San Francisco and London meetings and began similarly to preserve the records of the United Nations in operation.

Planning problems were naturally arising to trouble Arvid Pardo as “Acting Archivist of the United Nations” and on August 2, 1946, he came to Washington to talk them over with Solon J. Buck. Although Pardo was interested in archives, their administration was not his field and he realized that he needed professional help with both the work and the planning. The result was the selection of an employee of

the National Archives, Robert Claus, to be "Acting Archivist" for six months. Claus took over in the first days of October 1946.<sup>4</sup> He publicized the contents of the National Archives "Proposal for the Establishment of a United Nations Archives" within the U.N. Secretariat generally, and he was helped by resolutions passed by the Council of the Society of American Archivists at its annual meeting on October 25th calling for "the establishment by the United Nations, of an effective international archival agency with an adequate staff of professionally competent archivists."<sup>5</sup>

After careful consideration, a Secretary-General's Bulletin was issued on March 28, 1947, entitled "Functions of the United Nations Archives." It was drafted largely by Claus who drew liberally on his National Archives experience, the wording of the National Archives Act, and the National Archives "Proposal." It included the functions that the proposal had listed as essential to the United Nations organization itself, and it appeared to put the archival agency on a firm foundation.

Claus's appointment was at this time extended for two years, no permanent appointments having yet been made. It turned out to be the beginning, nevertheless, of over a quarter of a century of service for Claus in this important and influential position. One can read his own excellent accounts of developments that followed in his articles in the *American Archivist*, notably "The Archives Program of the United Nations" read before the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists in 1947, and "The Proposal for a United Nations Archival Agency," read before the Society at its annual meeting in 1969.<sup>6</sup>

### *An Archives Program for UNESCO*

Although in our proposal we had listed a number of "possible additional functions" for the United Nations Archives, we knew we were expecting a good deal from a secretariat established primarily to serve the agency itself. A number of affiliated specialized agencies were being created by the United Nations to carry out approved programs. The one that seemed most relevant to the interests of archivists was the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization which became familiarly known as UNESCO. The San Francisco Conference had outlined the place of UNESCO in the United Nations system, but its final design was worked out and a constitution adopted at the London Conference in November 1945. Actually it had a predecessor agency, the International Organization for Intellectual Cooperation, established by the League of Nations. UNESCO took over both the home and secretariat, located in Paris, of the International Organization for Intellectual Cooperation, and presumably inherited also much of its program

<sup>4</sup> The details of relations with the United Nations up to the time of Claus's appointment are in Planning and Control Case 146-100, cited in the previous note. This case was closed with Claus's appointment when the United Nations Archives was considered established. Continuing relations are detailed in documents to be found in Extra-Federal Archival Affairs Case 147-E13. There was a notice of Claus's appointment in the *Washington Star* for Sunday, October 6, 1946. He had joined the staff of the National Archives in 1937 and was at the time assistant chief of the Division of Interior Department Archives. He had an M.A. degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and was working on his doctorate in international law.

<sup>5</sup> This quotation is only part of the resolutions, which were published in *American Archivist* 10 (January 1947): 71-72. The resolutions were to be sent to Trygve Lie, secretary general of the United Nations, and also via the Department of State to the representatives of the United States in the General Assembly. There is no record that the assembly took any action.

<sup>6</sup> Published in the *American Archivist* 11 (July 1948): 195-202, and 33 (January 1970): 25-33. Claus retired from the United Nations Archives in 1971. Alf Erlandsson is the present archivist.



which had already included, as described in our proposal, certain international activities in the archives field.<sup>7</sup>

A United States National Commission for UNESCO, a quasi-governmental advisory agency, was chartered by Congress in 1946, and at its first meeting in September of that year this body had before it a document entitled "A Proposed Archives Program for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization," signed by Solon J. Buck as archivist of the United States. This document, although reproduced in many copies, has never been published either.<sup>8</sup> It was summarized by Buck in his "The Archivist's 'One World' " speech, but it presents the problems and background so well that it would seem at last to deserve being printed. Also it contains thoughts that are still pertinent, and proposals that still deserve consideration. The document is attached hereto as an appendix.

At the first meeting of our National Commission on UNESCO, this proposal was referred to its Round Table on Cultural Institutions, which fortunately happened to be presided over by Luther Evans, then Librarian of Congress but already a prominent member of our National Commission and destined later, 1953-58, to be director general of UNESCO.<sup>9</sup> Buck, although not a member of the National Commission, attended many of the Round Table meetings as an adviser, and spoke at the chairman's invitation. The Round Table's report gave much attention to the general subject of documentation and contained the two following paragraphs relating specifically to archives:

The Round Table believes that the development of archival services, though to a large extent a matter for local responsibility, is in the interest of maintenance, increase and diffusion of information which is one of the objectives of UNESCO. In particular, the development of such services is in the interest of the preservation of the materials of research and the truth of the historical record, and it is important furthermore for the advancement of the studies dependent upon these materials that they be readily and equally available to the scholars of all countries. Specifically, the Round Table is concerned that the archives of international bodies, for which there is now no continuing responsibility, shall at least be assured of permanent custody and availability.

The Round Table consequently recommends that UNESCO take the steps of promoting the formation of an international body of archivists which will make the development of archival service, exchange of personnel and general accessibility of archives its immediate and continuing concern, and of securing from such a body recommendations regarding the custody and service of the archives of international bodies.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Waldo G. Leland, "The Background and Antecedents of UNESCO" in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 90 (1946): 295-99; also Chapter 1 of Walter H. C. Laves and Charles A. Thomson, *UNESCO Purpose Progress Prospects* (Bloomington, 1957).

<sup>8</sup> No record has been found of the number of copies processed. However, in a memorandum to Buck dated September 27, 1946 (in Extra-Federal Relations Case 147-E4), I wrote: "I think the number of multilithed copies requisitioned should be 350. Our proposed foreign distribution will require between 100 and 150. We should have 75 to 100 for distribution at the annual SAA meeting and 40 or 50 for others who may want them for the Christmas [AHA] meeting in New York. There may be other requests from the State Department or Preparatory Commission . . . and there will be further distribution to staff members who are asking for copies . . . and some to others outside the National Archives. . . . We are already at work assembling a foreign mailing list."

<sup>9</sup> For a history of the first few years of this commission, see Howard E. Wilson, *United States National Commission for UNESCO* (New York, 1948), especially pp. 1-17 which deal with its membership and relations to our State Department, through which it must communicate to UNESCO. Membership of the National Commission consisted of elected representatives from 60 "national organizations" plus 40 "outstanding individuals" to be appointed by the Secretary of State. Although the American Library Association and the American Association of Museums were member organizations, the Society of American Archivists has never been.

<sup>10</sup> Department of State Publication 2726 (41 pp.) is the United States Commission for UNESCO's *Report on the First Meeting September 1946*.

Although much more general than the recommendations contained in our proposal, the report left the way open for almost any specific action that seemed desirable. These, in any case, were the instructions, advisory in character, that were taken by our delegates to the first General Conference of UNESCO which met in Paris, November 19 to December 10, 1946. UNESCO, it might be said, already had an aversion to many small separate programs, and probably for this reason the archives proposals were integrated with those for libraries and museums in a Subcommission on Libraries and Museums. Both museum and library groups had seen their programs drastically whittled, and their budget would be further reduced in Paris. Both probably would gladly have forgotten the archives proposal if it had not had the general support of leading librarians from the United States and Great Britain. In addition to Luther Evans one must mention Carl H. Milam, a long-time (1920-48) executive secretary of the American Library Association and soon to be (1948-50) director of the United Nations Library, who was at that time an adviser to the U.S. delegation at the Paris meeting. Also there was Edward J. Carter from England, who was already counsellor for libraries and museums for UNESCO.

The accepted report of the Program Commission of the Paris Conference fortunately contained the following paragraph:

UNESCO should encourage the creation of an international organization of professional archivists. It will deal, in collaboration with the organization, with questions of technique and administration, such as the exchange of personnel, the general accessibility of archives, the establishment and exchange of inventories, the reproduction of documents and the exchange of reproductions.<sup>11</sup>

This was truly a victory for the archivists. After discussions with Carter as counsellor for libraries and museums, Buck agreed to take the initiative in finding out what kind of organization was preferred by leading archivists throughout the world.

### *Establishing the International Council on Archives*

The letter that was drafted for the purpose of establishing an international organization in the early months of 1947 is printed in the July 1947 number of the *American Archivist*.<sup>12</sup> The letter proper, signed by Buck as archivist of the United States, was accompanied by three annexes, a "Suggested Statement of General Purposes," the "Suggested Basis of Membership and Representation," and "General Questions," fifteen in number. This letter was sent to over one hundred prominent archivists throughout the world. Also enclosed with each letter, for background, was a copy of "A Proposed Archives Program for UNESCO," and of Buck's "The Archivist's 'One World.' "

The preparation of our mailing list presented many problems. We desired to write to individuals, not to institutions or organizations. Buck wished to choose the leaders in each country and to address them by name as colleagues. The Committee for Intellectual Cooperation of the League of Nations had in 1934 published a one-volume guide to the archival establishments of Europe, but there had been many changes since then because of the war. A new edition of this guide and a guide to archival establishments in the rest of the world were two of the achievements espe-

<sup>11</sup> Published in the *Report of the United States Delegation with Selected Documents* (Department of State publication No. 2821, 1947), page 103. For selections of other references to archives in this report see the *American Archivist* 10 (April 1947): 210-11.

<sup>12</sup> *American Archivist* 10 (July 1947): 227-31.

cially hoped for from UNESCO or the organization of archivists to be created. Nonetheless, the National Archives Library had collected an astonishing quantity of foreign archival publications and journals containing many names. We cannot, in this article, go into all the problems of creating this mailing list, nor name the archivists, country by country, to which these letters were sent.<sup>13</sup>

We were interested at this stage in securing the personal views and reactions of leading archivists as fellow practitioners of a profession; but this, we learned, was difficult. Perhaps it would have been better had Buck signed his letter as president of the Society of American Archivists instead of as archivist of the United States. We should have reminded ourselves that in most foreign countries archivists are very conscious of their official positions and cannot divorce themselves from them. Replies were delayed not only because translations of our long enclosures were usually required, but also because consultations with superiors were necessary. In other instances replies were but partial, the recipient indicating that he had answered such questions as he felt free to answer. One wonders how, under conditions then existing in many countries of Europe, the archivists had the heart to consider such questionnaires at all. Many replies were in foreign languages, chiefly French, German, and Spanish; and the replies in English were thought by us to be not always in good English. There were problems of terminology, and that was another problem we hoped an international council on archives would take under consideration.<sup>14</sup>

All replies were in the affirmative to question number 1, "Do you believe an international archives organization should be established?" The first question upon which serious differences of opinion arose was number 3, which read: "What should be the basis of membership and representation? Should it be an organization of individuals? or institutions? associations of archivists? or some combination?" Latin American archivists were unanimous that the organization should be formed solely on the basis of representatives of archival institutions. Associations of archivists were nonexistent in that part of the world. The Dutch seemed to feel there was no need for individual membership as their very active association could probably represent both the archivists personally and local archival institutions not sufficiently interested to join a world organization.

The obvious next step was to study these and other differences, and prepare a draft constitution that could be put before a meeting of leading archivists if one could be assembled. The draft would no doubt have to be amended, perhaps even rewritten in part, but we hoped that something could be agreed upon and an organization established. UNESCO had already, at its first meeting in Paris, committed itself to help with such a meeting. But could it now provide funds from its reduced budget? It was hoped originally that such an organizational meeting could be held in the autumn of 1947, but exploratory conversations with our State Department indicated that it would be wiser to postpone it until the spring of 1948.

Meanwhile we started at the National Archives to work on a draft constitution. An interesting development was the appointment by UNESCO on June 4 of an

<sup>13</sup> Case 147-E14 of the series of "Extra-Federal Archival Affairs cases" in Record Group 64 (Records of the National Archives and Records Service) contains the mailing list, the replies received from foreign archivists, and an abstract of their answers to the questions asked in the three annexes mentioned as enclosures with Buck's letter.

<sup>14</sup> In a talk entitled "Planning of an International Archives Organization," at the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists at Glenwood Springs, Colorado, in September 1947, as chairman of the Society's Committee on International Relations, I analyzed the replies insofar as they had been received, but only about one-third of them were then available. An overall analysis has never been published, but is to be found in case 147-E14, referred to in the previous footnote.

American, Herbert O. Brayer, as "Consultant for Archives." Brayer, then archivist of Colorado, informed us of his appointment from the American Embassy in London where he was then stationed as director of a Cooperative Project for Research in Western Americana in Europe.<sup>15</sup> In his letter he added that in connection with this project: "I have visited every national archives in western and central Europe with the exception of Spain and Portugal. This includes Oslo, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Warsaw, Berlin, Frankfurt, The Hague, Brussels, Paris, Rome, Vienna, Budapest and Geneva." All of this seemingly had made an impression on Carter who, as UNESCO's counsellor for libraries and museums, felt he needed to find someone familiar with archives and archivists. Brayer reported that his appointment was "for no longer than ten months," and that he was to receive no salary, only payment of expenses when engaged on UNESCO business. His special assignment was to "prepare a suggestive program for submission by June 30th to the Executive Council," which he said he would want to discuss with us when he returned to the United States in July.

Brayer arrived in mid-July 1947, and we went over with him his "Suggested Outline for an Archives Program for UNESCO."<sup>16</sup> He then continued on to Colorado to prepare for the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists in September at Glenwood Springs. Several sessions at this meeting were devoted to international aspects of archival work, including a well-attended evening round table discussion of the proposed archival program for UNESCO. At its business meeting the Society adopted the following resolution:

That the Society endorses the archives program of UNESCO and requests support for this program on the part of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO and the U.S. delegation to the Second General Conference of UNESCO in Mexico City to the end that adequate funds for the execution of the program be budgeted.<sup>17</sup>

Brayer was elected vice president of the Society of American Archivists, and was authorized by its Council to represent the Society at the second conference of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, to be held in Chicago where the program to be taken to the Mexico City conference of UNESCO would be prepared. Brayer attended the Chicago meeting and reported no opposition to the proposed archives program. The continuing problem was that UNESCO's budget still did not permit undertaking the full program recommended by its Program Commission at the Paris meeting. The Mexico City meeting would furnish the answer as to whether funds would be made available to finance some kind of meeting of archivists, which in turn could create the desired international organization.

Luther Evans and Brayer took our proposal to Mexico City along with the resolutions passed at Glenwood Springs and Chicago, plus other supporting documents. According to all reports, Evans made an excellent statement on behalf of the archives program. As a result, the General Conference adopted the desired resolution instructing the director general of UNESCO to assist in the establishment of an international organization on archives in 1948 and providing a limited budget for

<sup>15</sup> Brayer to Holmes, June 5, 1947, in Extra-Federal Archival Affairs case 147-E4 (Record Group 64). The quotations in the remainder of this paragraph are from the same letter.

<sup>16</sup> A copy of this five-page document is in the case 147-E4, cited in note 15 above, as is a revision of seven pages which I prepared in August, and a copy of my letter of August 14 transmitting it to Brayer.

<sup>17</sup> *The American Archivist* 11 (January 1948): 51. For additional details regarding this meeting see Brayer's article, "The Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archivists," *ibid.*, pp. 115-19.

the purpose.<sup>18</sup> In May Director General Julian Huxley sent out formal invitations to selected member countries asking them to send official delegates to attend, as a committee of experts, a meeting to be held at UNESCO House in Paris on June 9th.

Who was at this meeting? Well, there were only two from the Western Hemisphere, Buck and Julio Jiminez Rueda, director general of the Archives of Mexico, unless we count as observers Herbert Brayer (who was designated as the reporter for UNESCO) and Major Lester Born of the U.S. Military Government for Germany, who was present at Buck's request because he knew archival conditions in Germany and German archivists had not been invited. From Europe we had seven major archivists, Charles Samaran, director of the Archives of France, who was selected to be chairman; E. Martin Chabot, also of the Archives of France; D.P.M. Graswinckel, director of the General Archives of The Netherlands; Vaclau Husa, councilor of the National Archives of Czechoslovakia; Hilary Jenkinson, deputy keeper of the Public Records Office in London; Emilio Re, director of the Archives of State, Italy; and Asgaut Steinnes, director of the Royal Archives of Norway. Also present at the invitation of the Secretariat, and the only woman at the meeting, was Phyllis Mander-Jones, director of the Mitchell Library, Sidney, Australia. Edward J. Carter and Arne J. Moller of Denmark, both of the UNESCO Library Section staff, also attended most of the sessions, as observers.<sup>19</sup>

The delegates had already been sent copies of the proposed constitution as drafted by Buck, Brayer, and myself; and it was adopted with only a single significant amendment, one providing for a more restricted membership. The name given to the new organization by the constitution was "The International Council on Archives." Resolving themselves into the first Constituent Assembly, the authoritative body of the Council, the delegates elected Charles Samaran as the first president. Vice presidents for each hemisphere had been provided for by the constitution. Jenkinson was elected for the Eastern Hemisphere and Buck for the Western. D.P.M. Graswinckel was elected the first treasurer and Herbert Brayer the first secretary general.

Since Brayer provided a good report on this meeting for the *American Archivist*, it seems unnecessary to go into further detail except to say that the assembly, upon invitation from the Archives Nationales of France, decided to hold the First International Congress of Archivists in Paris in the summer of 1950.

In planning for this First Congress we must give credit to the French who worked closely with UNESCO. In fact, the Direction des Archives de France set up a Secretariat of the International Congress, which handled not only planning but registration, accommodation, and travel details and correspondence. Much credit must go to Charles Braibant who had succeeded Samaran as archivist of France and was by election of the Constituent Assembly of the First Congress to succeed Samaran as president of the International Council of Archivists. It was then felt desirable that the president should still be close to UNESCO headquarters.

About three hundred and fifty archivists from thirty nations were registered at this First Congress. Only member countries of the United Nations could send official delegates to the Constituent Assembly, but archivists from other countries

<sup>18</sup> See Herbert O. Brayer, "Report on the Meeting of Professional Archivists Called by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, June 9 to 11, 1948, Paris, France" in *American Archivist* 11 (October 1948): 325-31.

<sup>19</sup> A photograph of these attendants is reproduced in *American Archivist*, 11 (October 1948): facing p. 325, as a kind of frontispiece to Brayer's report on the meeting.



could attend as individuals, and many did from Germany and Spain. The three official delegates from the United States to the Constituent Assembly of this First Congress were Wayne Grover who, having succeeded Buck as archivist of the United States, represented the National Archives; Margaret Cross Norton, archivist of Illinois, and Oliver Holmes, then chairman of the Society's Committee on International Relations, who were the two representatives of the Society of American Archivists. Buck, by that time from the Library of Congress, was present as a founder of the International Council and its vice-president for the Western Hemisphere. Brayer was not present, having resigned as secretary general to join the faculty of Northwestern University in Illinois. Lester Born, present by then as a staff member of the Library of Congress, was named secretary general *pro-tem* and later was chosen by the Executive Board as the second secretary general of the International Council.

Margaret Norton wrote for the *American Archivist* a very full and interesting article on "The First International Congress of Archivists, Paris, France, August 21-26, 1950," so no further summary is needed here.<sup>20</sup> She set an excellent precedent in that Lester Born similarly reported on the Second International Congress at The Hague (1953), Robert Bahmer on the Third International Congress at Florence, Italy (1956), Ernst Posner on the Fourth International Congress at Stockholm (1960), and Morris Rieger on the Fifth International Congress at Brussels (1964) and the Seventh International Conference at Moscow (1972).<sup>21</sup> Unhappily, no similar report by an attending American archivist can be found for the sixth congress, at Madrid (1968). But the above mentioned reports will help American archivists who have never before attended an International Congress on Archives to catch up on background. Let us help to make this first International Congress in the Western Hemisphere, of which we are the hosts in our Bicentennial Year, as much of a success as the others have been.

## APPENDIX

The National Archives of the United States

September 1946

### *A PROPOSED ARCHIVES PROGRAM FOR THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION*

#### I. THE PROBLEM

A large part of the documentation of human experience and human relations is to be found only in the unpublished archives of the organizations, governmental and other, that man has created for organized living.

A special reason for international concern for these bodies of records arises from the fact that, unlike published materials, they do not exist in duplicate. It follows that no one country can possess more than a part of the total archival heritage of mankind—usually the relatively small part that it has itself created. For access to the other parts it must depend upon the cooperation of other countries and the archivists of those countries. Such cooperation is vital to internationalism. Scholarship that feeds upon the archival resources of a single country cannot be otherwise than one-sided and nationalistic. The only antidotes are greater freedom of access to the originals in whatever country they may happen to be and an increase in the making and exchange of photographic facsimiles.

All of this, however, presupposes the preservation and efficient administration of the parts that compose the whole. The loss of an important body of records in any country is a loss to

<sup>20</sup> *American Archivist* 14 (January 1951): 13-32.

<sup>21</sup> *American Archivist* 16 (October 1953): 373-76; 20 (April 1957): 155-61; 24 (January 1961): 65-73; 28 (January 1965): 31-37; and 36 (October 1973): 491-512.

all countries—and it matters little in retrospect whether that loss be caused by an atomic bomb, unintelligent handling, or mere neglect. Archives, because they are not ordinarily duplicated, are especially vulnerable. Their defense in these difficult times will hardly be possible without the full and frank sharing of ideas, methods, equipment, and techniques among the archivists of all lands. Channels to facilitate that exchange were being created before the last war, but, despite a greater need, are not now functioning. A review of these pre-war efforts at cooperation will help in understanding the possible responsibility and role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization in this field.

## II. BACKGROUND CONSIDERATIONS

The first and only international Congress of Archivists and Librarians was held in Brussels in 1910. Dr. Waldo G. Leland, who attended, has stated that this Congress “permanently influenced archival conceptions and practices in the United States.” It had a comparable influence in many other countries, and its papers and discussions, printed in a volume of over 800 pages, are still recommended reading for students of archival administration. A permanent committee was set up to plan further international congresses of this type every five years, but the First World War prevented a second meeting on schedule. Subsequently the librarians withdrew from the committee, which then continued in existence only to represent the archivists. Plans were several times made for an international congress of archivists, the last time for one to be held in Italy in 1935, but it was not possible to bring any of these to fruition.

Attention was also given to archives in the quinquennial Congresses of Historical Sciences (Rome, 1903; Berlin, 1908; London, 1913; Brussels, 1923; Oslo, 1928; Warsaw, 1933; and Zurich, 1938). Usually one of the dozen or more sections was assigned to Archives or to Archives and the Auxiliary Sciences. It must be admitted that it was only as one of the auxiliary sciences of history that archives were considered in most of these meetings. The Brussels Conference of 1923 established the permanent International Committee of Historical Sciences, which, in turn, in 1929, created a Commission on Archives, which met annually for a number of years thereafter. The proceedings of this Commission and the results of its inquiries are to be found in the *Bulletins* of the International Committee of Historical Sciences. This Commission collected much useful information on archival holdings and regulations governing access to them in various countries, but its interests have always been those of the user and not those of the administrator of archives.

A third effort at international cooperation among archivists was represented by the Technical Committee of Archivists set up in 1931 by the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation, the operating agency of the League of Nations' International Committee of Intellectual Cooperation. This was to be a sort of advisory board of archival experts from different countries, which was to meet annually to draw up resolutions and plans for presentation to the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation. Its membership was limited to 9, and a tie-in with the older organizations was provided by the stipulation that one member was to be a member of the Commission on Archives of the International Committee of Historical Sciences and one a member of the old “permanent committee” that had continued after the Brussels Conference of 1910. This Technical Committee of Archivists was interested in all phases of archival activity and administration. It studied such questions as the international exchange of photographic facsimiles, the standardization of archival terminology, the durability of modern types of records, and the archivists' concern with motion-picture film. It prepared and published the *Guide International des Archives* [1934], which covered archival institutions in Europe. A proposed second volume to cover those of the rest of the world was never published. It was a very active committee for all too short a period. The fate of this committee is bound up with that of the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation and probably lies now in the hands of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

Another international organization that has given much attention to archives as an important phase of the larger subject of documentation is the International Federation for Documentation, an organization that goes back in its origins to the founding in 1895 of the old International Institute of Bibliography. The change in name in 1930 to International Federation for Documentation is indicative of its widening interests. This organization will hold its first post-war meeting in Paris, November 4-9, and its activities and interests will presumably, in some way, have to be tied into those of the United Nations Educational, Scientific,

and Cultural Organization unless it is to continue in competition in many fields of common interest.

All of these organizations are an expression of the rising desires and needs of archivists before the last war for closer international collaboration. The war itself has given rise to additional needs for common effort, some of them critical indeed, and the movement for closer cultural cooperation in the interests of permanent peace brings forth still other considerations that are pertinent to that goal.

### III. PRESENT DAY NEEDS

Archivists of all countries need to unite in consideration of the following major present day problems of the profession.

1. *The Preservation of the Archives of International Government.*—Included in this category are the archives of the United Nations and affiliated organizations, of the international organizations that the United Nations has displaced or absorbed in whole or in part, of temporary international war and reconstruction agencies, and of international congresses, conferences, and commissions. Relations between national archival administrations are no longer to be considered alone, but must be related to and integrated with the international structure in the interests of preserving the whole record. Understandings must be reached as to areas of possible overlapping and likewise as to areas for which no archival administration exists to assume responsibility.

2. *Rehabilitation of War-Damaged Archives.*—This includes the reorganization of archival administrations, the rehabilitation of damaged buildings or the construction of new ones, and the restoration and rehabilitation of archival holdings. Much of this work must be done by national and local governments, but, insofar as international cooperation and action toward this end is desirable and practicable, it should be organized preferably through channels that the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization can provide. There must at the very least be assistance in the exchange of information, technical and otherwise, that will permit this reconstruction to be modern in character.

3. *The Defense of Archives Against the Destructive Agents of Modern Warfare.*—Studies should be made of losses of buildings and archives in the last war to work out, in time to be of value in this reconstruction, principles of sounder building construction, principles of emergency evacuation, and other principles of protection against the hazards of war, including plans for making and preserving insurance copies of important archival holdings. There should be study also of the organized efforts of the armies of belligerent nations in the last war to protect the archives of occupied and enemy countries with a view to making more effective plans for such programs in case of future wars.

4. *Archives in the International Peace Settlements.*—Knotty archival problems arise in connection with changes of sovereignty, some of which are capable of causing serious international friction. These problems will be complicated by (1) changes in location and custody that have taken place and (2) destruction of significant material during the war. It usually requires the patient cooperation of archivists over a period of years to work out detailed solutions to problems that are rarely covered completely by clauses in peace treaties and perhaps cannot be covered therein in any adequate fashion.

5. *Problems of Dealing with Modern Records in Bulk.*—Archivists in all countries are now facing these problems, and the exchange of ideas, policies, techniques, and administrative experience in this field is vitally necessary if modern and recent records are to be properly handled.

6. *Handling Modern Types of Records.*—This is another area in which exchange of views and experience is seriously needed. Where do photographs, motion pictures and sound recordings fit into the archival picture, and what special facilities, equipment, and techniques are necessary for handling and preserving them. Archivists have not yet mastered the problems of preserving typescript and carbons nor the records produced by other modern methods of mechanical reproduction.

7. *Photographic Reproduction of Records.*—This is one of the most important and most rapidly changing fields of interest to archivists the world over. Its importance as a means of insurance has been mentioned. It is important also in connection with the problem of reducing bulk and of making records more widely available for use. In this field particularly archivists must keep up with advances and developments in cognate fields of documentation and work closely with leaders in those fields in developing and adapting new techniques.

8. *Promotion of a Definite Program of International Exchange of Photographic Facsimiles.*—Such a program should cover gradually but systematically all important records and series of records in the interests (1) of a broader scholarship and (2) the preservation of the contents of such records should the originals ever be destroyed.

9. *Promotion of Uniform Archival Terminology.*—The need for agreement in the use of archival terms has been noticeable in all international conferences of archivists and in all efforts to translate important archival literature. It should begin perhaps in an attempt to secure a dictionary of archival equivalents in the more important languages of the world, which would be a very useful working tool.

10. *Promotion of More General Agreement as to the Most Effective Finding Aids to Research in Archives.*—This means study and tentative agreement at least as to the place of general guides, inventories, catalogs, calendars, indexes, and the like, in archival economy and the relative priority they should have in the program of an individual institution.

11. *Cooperation in the Training of Archivists.*—The provision of better facilities for the training of archivists and archival technicians should be studied and encouraged. This should include the institution of channels for the international exchange of leaders and teachers and also for the international exchange of students.

12. *Cooperation in the Preparation of the International Guide and Similar Undertakings International in Scope.*—An up-to-date guide covering not only European archival institutions but those of the entire world is one of the most necessary post-war undertakings of the profession, and can only be performed under the auspices of an international agency that can take the place of the old International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation. A consolidated list of important archival losses of the war has also been suggested.

Many other areas of cooperation on the international level between archivists might be suggested and perhaps will be suggested. The important consideration at this time is the provision of a forum where these subjects can be presented and discussed and of a permanent office to serve as a center for the exchange of information and for the implementation of plans that have been approved and adopted. It is believed that in the future these must be provided by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and that there should be conscious recognition of this fact in the organization of that agency.

#### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. That the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization at its November Paris meeting take the necessary formal steps to call and hold at the earliest possible time, preferably in 1947, an International Congress of Archivists, at which leading archivists of the world can again renew their professional contacts, consider the emergency problems of their profession, and prepare specific recommendations to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization for a permanent international program relating to archives.

B. That the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization at its November Paris Meeting set up a provisional International Committee of Archivists to plan the agenda for the International Congress and to guide the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization activities with respect to archives in the interim, this International Committee to be reconstituted at the International Congress and made a permanent liaison agency between archivists and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

C. That the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization provide at its Paris meeting for a small but permanent unit in its regular organization to have responsibility for archives, the head of which shall be the permanent Executive Secretary of the International Committee of Archivists. This unit should be part of a larger unit or section to have responsibility for all aspects of documentation, including libraries, bibliography, publications, museums, and cognate fields of activity.

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