

International Congresses

THE CONGRESS OF 1950

The AMS has been concerned with several international congresses. At the International Congress of 1936 in Zurich, the invitation from the United States to the Congress to convene in America in 1940 was accepted. It was planned to hold it in the interval 4–12 September 1940 in Cambridge, MA, at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The Society was to be the entrepreneur.

The following appointments were proposed by the Nominating Committee and approved by the Council:

President:	G. D. Birkhoff
Organizing Committee:	W. C. Graustein (chairman), G. D. Birkhoff, G. A. Bliss, G. C. Evans, J. R. Kline, Solomon Lefschetz, Øystein Ore, R.G.D. Richardson, M. H. Stone, J. L. Synge, J. D. Tamarkin, J. M. Thomas, Norbert Wiener
Editorial Committee:	Einar Hille (chairman), F. D. Murnaghan, P. A. Smith
Financial Committee:	Marston Morse (chairman), J. L. Coolidge, M. H. Ingraham, H. B. Phillips
Secretary:	R.G.D. Richardson.

Arrangements went forward through 1937 and on into 1939 in the expected manner. However, the attack of Germany on Poland on 1 September 1939, with the declaration of war on Germany by Britain and France, altered plans abruptly. At the Council of 6 September 1939, Professor Graustein, speaking for the Organizing Committee, proposed suspension of activity, postponement of the Congress to a more favorable time, and the appointment of an Emergency Executive Committee to announce postponement of the Congress

at a time that it should determine and to take the initiative for resumption of activity. Moreover, invited speakers were to be notified immediately both of the possibility of postponement and of the termination of invitations to speak in the event of postponement. These proposals were adopted, as were proposals aimed at conserving the contributions and pledges of funds for the Congress when it was rescheduled.

The Emergency Executive Committee consisted initially of G. D. Birkhoff, W. C. Graustein, Einar Hille, M. H. Ingraham, J. R. Kline, Marston Morse, R.G.D. Richardson, and M. H. Stone. With the death of Birkhoff and of Graustein, T. H. Hildebrandt and D. V. Widder were appointed.

At the Council meeting of 26 April 1946, when World War II was over, the Emergency Executive Committee, of which Morse was then chairman, reported that "it was interested in the revival of plans for the Congress only if that Congress could be an open Congress to which all mathematicians would be invited, irrespective of national allegiance." The committee was of the opinion that 1948 was too soon but that 1950 should be explored as a date for holding an open Congress.

The motion that established the Emergency Executive Committee had stipulated that when its recommendation to proceed with a Congress was adopted it should be automatically discharged and that the original committees of the Congress should be reactivated. The Council, in approving the report of the committee, amended its previous action so that officers and committees of the Congress were to be appointed and the Emergency Executive Committee automatically discharged.

At the Council of 26 April 1947, the invitation from Harvard University to hold the Congress of 1950 there was accepted.

On 28 February 1948, a nominating committee under the chairmanship of Professor D. V. Widder recommended officers and committees for the Congress as follows:

Secretariat:

Secretary: J. R. Kline

Associate Secretary: R. P. Boas

Editorial Committee: Salomon Bochner (chairman), Einar Hille, P. A. Smith, Oscar Zariski

Financial Committee: M. H. Stone (chairman), J. L. Coolidge, M. H. Ingraham, John von Neumann, W.L.G. Williams

Organizing Committee: Garrett Birkhoff (chairman), W. T. Martin (vice chairman), G. C. Evans, J. R. Kline, Solomon Lefschetz, Saunders Mac Lane, R.G.D. Richardson, J. L. Synge, Oswald Veblen, J. L. Walsh, D. V. Widder, Norbert Wiener, R. L. Wilder.

The committee stated that it had tried insofar as possible to use the membership of committees as planned for 1940. Deaths, retirements, and personal preferences required some changes. The committee further stated that there was no urgency in designating the President of the Congress and proposed to postpone action. Contrary to the minutes of the Council, the Proceedings of the Congress state that the president designate was chosen in early 1948. The Council approved the recommendations of the committee.

The personnel of the organizing committee changed in several respects prior to the Congress. Richardson died in July 1949. Synge resigned when he left the United States to assume a new position at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Dublin in 1948. Those added to the committee were A. A. Albert, J. L. Doob, T. H. Hildebrandt, Marston Morse, and Hassler Whitney.

The Organizing Committee established four permanent subcommittees and three temporary subcommittees, involving forty-five people. There were subsequent small changes in the committees of the Congress. L. M. Graves was appointed chairman of the Editorial Committee, replacing Bochner, who resigned. A. E. Meder, newly elected treasurer of the Society, was added to the Financial Committee.

A substantial problem facing the Organizing Committee was that of visas for foreign mathematicians who would not ordinarily be eligible under the Ninth Proviso of Section 3 of the Immigration and Naturalization Law of 1918 as amended in 1940. A test case was that of Laurent Schwartz, who had previously been denied a visa. The committee reported that its efforts appeared to be successful. In particular, Professor Schwartz did attend the Congress and gave an address by invitation of the Organizing Committee. Moreover, he received one of the two Fields Medals.

The operation of the Congress of 1950 was rather different from that of the model that has subsequently evolved. For example, the Organizing Committee handled such matters as selecting and inviting hour speakers and appointing a Committee on the Award of the Fields Medals, matters that more recently have been the domain of the International Mathematical Union rather than any local committee.

The Congress was held from 30 September through 6 August 1950. The elected President of the Congress was Oswald Veblen.

The attendance consisted of:

American and Canadian members	1429
American and Canadian associates	539
Members outside U.S. and Canada	271
Associates outside U.S. and Canada	63
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There were also 248 members who in fact did not attend. Thirty-nine countries in addition to the U.S. and Canada supplied members. Every state in the U.S. except South Dakota was represented.

There is a brief report on the Congress in the *Bulletin*, 57 (1951), 1–10. The official report of the Congress consists of two volumes titled *Proceedings of the International Congress of Mathematicians of 1950* and published by the American Mathematical Society in 1952. One is the report of activities and the invited addresses and the other is the contributed papers.

The budget of April 1950 for the Congress called for income of \$104,000, with an estimated 1100 members at \$15.00 and 500 associates at \$7.50, and for expenditures of \$101,516. Room and Board for 225 foreigners for nine days at \$6.00 per day accounted for an expenditure of \$12,150. Not appearing anywhere in this budget is the contribution of Harvard University in services and space.

Inasmuch as the attendance was much larger than the figures used in the budget, there was a substantial surplus. The balance sheet of 30 November 1950 (then the end of the fiscal year) showed that there was cash on hand from the Congress of \$45,531.48. Of course there were still outstanding obligations, including the commitment to publish the two volumes of the report. The fund was not kept completely separate. In 1951–1952 there was a deficit in Society operations that was made up by authorization of a transfer from the Congress fund of \$13,000. It was further authorized in 1952 to set up a small fund to publicize the Congress of 1954 in Amsterdam and to close out the remainder of the fund, which came to \$20,417.59, into surplus.

The terms under which the International Mathematical Union operated had expired before the Congress of 1936, so that the invitation of the United States to hold the 1940 Congress went directly to the 1936 Congress. The 1950 Congress was simply the postponed 1940 Congress and the International Mathematical Union had not been revived.

In 1947 the Society asked the International Council of Scientific Unions to sponsor a meeting of mathematicians in connection with the meeting of UNESCO in Mexico City in November 1947 to discuss plans for the establishment of the International Mathematical Union. When this sponsorship was not forthcoming it was decided to postpone the question until 1950, when the

Congress was in session. A subcommittee consisting of M. H. Stone (chairman), J. R. Kline, and Marston Morse was appointed to plan for a meeting of representative mathematicians just prior to the Congress to discuss the question of the Union. Stone reported at the Council of 1 September 1949 that progress had been made in the appointment of nearly a dozen national committees to consider the problem. At the Council of 29 December 1949, the Policy Committee reported that a subcommittee had been conducting negotiations with national committees of other countries to the end that a conference aimed at formation of a new International Mathematical Union would be held in New York during the three days preceding the Congress of 1950. The meeting was in fact held on 27–29 August 1950 at Columbia University. Statutes and bylaws were adopted. An international ad interim committee was established and the Union was to be declared in existence as soon as ten national committees declared adherence and adopted the statutes and bylaws.

ICM 86

As early as 1980 it was suggested to the Society by the International Congress Office of the U.S. Department of Commerce that the Society invite the International Mathematical Union to locate the International Congress of Mathematicians of 1986 in the United States. After discounting the motivation behind the suggestion, the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees (ECBT) did think that the idea of holding the 1986 Congress in the United States had merit. Observing that it was the place of the U.S. National Committee for Mathematics (USNCM) to initiate such action, Richard S. Palais, chairman of the Board of Trustees, speaking for the ECBT, brought the matter to the USNCM with a favorable recommendation.

In March 1981 the USNCM and representatives of the National Research Council met with representatives of the Association for Symbolic Logic, the Institute of Mathematical Statistics, the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics, and the American Mathematical Society.

The following motion was approved:

Contingent on the acceptance of financial responsibility for the 1986 Congress by the American Mathematical Society, the U.S. National Committee for Mathematics recommends that an invitation be tendered to the International Mathematical Union to hold the 1986 International Congress of Mathematicians in the United States.

A Site Selection Committee was authorized. Its membership was William J. LeVeque, convener, and H. Hope Daly, both appointed by the USNCM,

Paul T. Batemen, appointed by the AMS, and F. Reese Harvey, appointed by the USNCM.

The Department of Meetings adapted its site selection procedures for joint meetings to the problem of a suitable location for ICM 86. The site inspection at the University of California, Berkeley was conducted in July 1981 by H. Daly and E. Pitcher for the Site Selection Committee with the cooperation of Morris W. Hirsch, incoming chairman of the Department of Mathematics. Following the recommendation of the committee, an invitation was solicited from the University of California and was issued by Chancellor I. M. Heyman. It was accepted by G. D. Mostow for the USNCM. The National Academy of Sciences then issued the invitation to the IMU, which approved in Warsaw in 1982.

From the moment that the holding of the Congress in the United States appeared likely, the secretary was insistent that it be handled by a separate corporation. The Board of Trustees agreed to do this and the ICM 86 corporation was established in 1983 as a Rhode Island non-profit membership corporation with the Trustees of the AMS as its members and five of them as directors along with an executive director. Dr. Jill P. Mesirov, who was assistant executive director of the Society, became executive director of ICM 86 and continued in that capacity after her term as assistant executive director of the Society ended. H. Hope Daly was the Congress manager and Lee Ann Lima the business manager.

There was a Steering Committee consisting of Andrew M. Gleason, chairman, John W. Addison, Jr., Yousef Alavi, Peter J. Bickel, Hirsh G. Cohen, H. Hope Daly, Solomon Feferman, Leon A. Henkin, Shirley A. Hill, Richard M. Karp, Linda Keen, Jill P. Mesirov, Henry O. Pollak, Kenneth A. Ross, Hugo Rossi, and Shmuel Winograd.

The Local Arrangements Committee was made up of John W. Addison, Jr., chairman, Mary Ann Addison, Henry L. Alder, Lenore Blum, William G. Chinn, Ginette Henkin, Irving Kaplansky, Robion C. Kirby, Eugene L. Lawler, Calvin C. Moore, Robert Osserman, P. Emery Thomas, and Anthony J. Tromba.

The Committee on Special Funds was composed of Richard D. Anderson, chairman, Gerald L. Alexanderson, Morton L. Curtis, Susan J. Friedlander, David Gale, Andrew M. Gleason, Daniel Gorenstein, Jill P. Mesirov, K. Brooks Reid, executive secretary, Alice T. Schafer, and Albert R. Stralka.

There was an Advisory Board consisting of George E. Brown, Jr., Edward E. David, Jr., Gerard Debreu, Marvin L. Goldberger, Ira Michael Heyman, Brockway McMillan, I. M. Singer, and James M. Vaughn, Jr.

The Public Information Committee had as its members Donald L. Albers, Yousef Alavi, director of publicity, Gerald L. Alexanderson, advisor, William

G. Chinn, Jane M. Day, Ronald L. Graham, advisor, Peter J. Hilton, Lester H. Lange, and Jean J. Pedersen.

It is not intended to develop an account of the Congress itself beyond this indication of structure and Society involvement. The Program Committee, which invited major speakers, was a committee of the IMU. The acceptance of abstracts and the scheduling was done by Kenneth A. Ross and Hugo Rossi. The president of the Congress was Andrew M. Gleason, who also edited the *Proceedings*.

The Society advanced money for start-up costs of ICM 86 and was reimbursed with payment of some interest. The Society did work for the Congress in the form of sale of services. The Congress had diverse and substantial expenses, including payment to the Society for production of the *Proceedings* and their distribution to members of the Congress. There was income from grants, registration fees, and contributions, including one of \$43,000 from the Society. The budget was on the order of one and one-quarter million dollars. When all was over the Congress had debts of about \$140,000 and assets consisting chiefly of the copyright to the *Proceedings* and a stock of printed volumes. The Society assumed the debt and ICM 86 turned all of its assets over to the Society. It will not be clear for several years what the Society can realize from the sale of additional copies of the *Proceedings*.