

13th



Summary of Decisions  
 taken by the  
 Executive Committee of the International Astronomical Union  
 at its meeting in Paris,  
 September 4-6, 1951

The President opened the meeting on September 4, 1951, at 11 A.M. .

The following took part in the meetings: B. Lindblad (President, G. Abetti (Vice-President), V. A. Ambartsumian (Vice-President), A. Danjon (Vice-President), R. Fraser (Liaison Officer, ICSU-UNESCO), A. A. Nemiro (Astronomical Council, Academy of U.S.S.R.), J. H. Oort (late General Secretary), M. Orjewski (Astronomical Council, Academy of U.S.S.R.), Sir Harold Spencer Jones (late President), F. J. M. Stratton (General Secretary, ICSU), B. Ström<sup>g</sup>ren (General Secretary), O. Struve (Vice-President), G. Tiercy (Vice-President).

The Agenda of the meeting were as follows: -

1. President's report
2. Question of next General Assembly
3. Symposia in 1952
4. Question of Draft Report
5. Question of Assistant General Secretary
6. Financial report
7. Question of budget 1952
8. UNESCO grants 1951, 1952, 1953
9. Activity of Nominating Committee
10. Cooption of German Astronomers
11. Question of Joint Commissions
12. Question of International Computing Center
13. Discussion of Nomination for President and General Secretary at next General Assembly
14. Any other business

The decisions are summarized below, arranged in the order indicated by the agenda (which differs somewhat from the order in which the questions were actually discussed).

1. The President's report is attached, Appendix A.

2. Question of next General Assembly. In his report the President referred to the postponed General Assembly as the most important question, and made a statement concerning this question which is part of the report (cf. Appendix A). Professor V. A. Ambartsumian made a statement which is given in Appendix B (A Statement of the Soviet Delegation concerning the reasons which brought to failure the convocation of the VIIIth General Assembly of the IAU in Leningrad in 1951), cf. also Appendix C (V. A. Ambartsumian's Statement made at the Executive Committee's Session on September 5, 1951). Professor Ambartsumian put forward a proposal to the effect that the next General Assembly should take place in Leningrad in the first half of August, 1952.

A discussion followed in which the members of the Executive Committee with the exception of Professor Ambartsumian expressed agreement with the President in the question of the postponed General Assembly. Sir Harold Spencer Jones stated that he was of the opinion that so long as the present tension exists it would be better not to have a General Assembly in either the U.S.S.R. or the U.S.A.. A meeting in Leningrad would be better at a later time. In the discussion it was proposed that a General Assembly be held in 1952 in a smaller European country. This proposal was accepted by the Executive Committee with the votes of all members except Professor Ambartsumian, who voted for the General Assembly being held in Leningrad.

Professor G. Abetti on behalf of the Italian National Research Council extended an invitation to hold next General Assembly in Rome in September, 1952. Voting on this proposal took place at the end of the meeting. The Executive Committee decided to accept the invitation, all members voting for the proposal, with the exception of Professor Ambartsumian who voted against it.

3. Symposia in 1952. It was decided to organize two Symposia during the General Assembly in September 1952, and Committees for preparing the Symposia were appointed:

Symposium on Stellar Evolution. Committee: Ambartsumian, (Chairman), Schatzman (Secretary), Bondi, Struve.

Symposium on Astrometry of Faint Stars. Committee: Zverev (Chairman), Blaauw, Heckman, J. Jackson, Nemiro, Shane, Vyssotsky.

It was decided to organize in the form of an extended meeting of the commission on Astronomical Instruments (Commission 9, President A. Couder) a Symposium on Astronomical Instrumentation.

It was further decided to hold a Symposium on Radio-Astronomy, and the following organizing Committee was appointed: Van de Hulst (Chairman), Hagen, Laffineur, Lovell, Pawsey. It was decided to explore the possibility of holding this Symposium in connection with the URSI General Assembly in Australia in August, 1952.

It was decided to plan a Symposium in 1953 on Coordination of methods of Galactic Research. The following organizing committee was appointed: Oort (Chairman), Baade, Bok, Fehrenbach, Lindblad, W. W. Morgan, Parenago.

Finally it was decided to approach the IUTAM with a view of holding a second Joint Symposium on Problems of Cosmical Aerodynamics, with emphasis on the electrodynamical aspects of the problems, the Symposium to be held in 1953.

4. The General Secretary reported on the progress that had been made so far in the preparation of the Draft Report for the next General Assembly. The Executive Committee decided that the Commission Reports should be published as soon as it was possible.

5. Question of Assistant General Secretary. The General Secretary repeated his wish to resign, and stated that his work at Yerkes and McDonald Observatories did not leave him sufficient time for the duties of General Secretary. The President

asked the General Secretary to continue until the time of the next General Assembly, and suggested that an Assistant General Secretary be appointed. Professor Ambartsumian stated that he thought it would be best if the General Secretary resigned. The Executive Committee decided in favour of the President's proposal, and further decided that Professor P. Th. Oosterhoff, Sterrewacht, Leiden, Netherlands, should be asked if he would be willing to serve as Assistant General Secretary until the time of the next General Assembly.

6. Financial report. The financial status of the IAU was reviewed. The situation with regard to payment of subscriptions from adhering countries is on the whole satisfactory. A number of arrears have been paid. As long as the IAU receives financial support from UNESCO to the same extent as now, the financial situation will be satisfactory, but the possibility of a reduction in UNESCO support in the future must be kept in mind in estimating the financial strength and possibilities of the IAU.

7. Question of budget 1952. With regard to the budget for 1952, the Executive Committee decided to adopt annual grants in the same amounts as voted by the 1948 General Assembly for the years 1949-51. The adhering countries would be informed that the unit of subscription was the same in 1952 as in the previous year, or 500 gold francs. At the recommendation of the President of Commission 23, Carte du Ciel, M. J. Baillaud, the Executive Committee decided to increase the special grant of 6859 dollars (1949-51) to Commission 23, by an amount not to exceed 3600 dollars for the publication of the Oxford Catalogues. In the discussion the hope was expressed that the IAU will be at least partially reimbursed through UNESCO grants in 1952 and the following years.

With regard to the International Time Bureau, 1952, the Executive Committee agreed to put at disposal the amount needed for the operation of the Bureau, the amount that the IAU would have to put at disposal out of its own resources to be determined when the amount of the UNESCO grants, 1952 (International Time Bureau

and publication of the Bulletin Horaire) would be known, and subject to the condition that the IAU contribution (own resources) should not exceed the figure stated in the budget (\$4409).

8. UNESCO grants 1951, 1952, 1953. The situation with regard to UNESCO grants 1951, 1952, and 1953 was reviewed. For 1951 the IAU has received the following

UNESCO grants:

A. International Latitude Service	\$ 1,000
B. International Time Bureau	3,200
C. Publications	
1. Ephemerides of Minor Planets in 1951	1,000
2. Heliographic charts of the photosphere in 1951	350
3. Synoptic charts of the chromosphere in 1951	900
4. Name List of Variable Stars for 1951	250
5. Ephemerides of Eclipsing Binaries for 1951	350
6. Quarterly Bulletin on Solar Activity in 1951	2,000
D. Symposia on:	
1. Problems of Astronomical Instrumentation, ) to be held in Stockholm in 1951 )	3,850
2. Astronomical Problems of Radio-Astronomy ) to be held in Stockholm in 1951 )	
E. General Assembly of the Union to be held in Leningrad in 1951	
1. Transportation expenses of the Official of the Union and of the Presidents of 39 Commissions of the Union	3,000
2. Transportation expenses of young astronomers invited by the Union to participate in the General Assembly	2,000
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	\$17,900

As a consequence of the postponement of the General Assembly, 1951, it was necessary to ask UNESCO for vicerelements of grants D1, D2, E1 and E2, as follows:  
D1 and D2, \$3850 for the Symposia to be held in 1952, subject to freedom to change the title. E1, \$1200 for travel expenses, meeting Executive Committee, September,



1951, and \$1800 for travel expenses of the Officials and Commission Presidents of the IAU, General Assembly, 1952. E2, \$2000 for travel expenses of young astronomers General Assembly, 1952.

For 1952 UNESCO grants had been applied for according to the decisions made by the Executive Committee of the IAU in September, 1950. In view of the postponement of the General Assembly, 1951, it would now be necessary to submit a somewhat modified request, grants 1952, to UNESCO through the Executive Board of ICSU. It was agreed to make the following changes: Publications, delete printing costs \$2000, Symposia 1951, and add the amount to Carte du Ciel. Delete Symposia, \$5000.

The question of UNESCO grants for the International Time Bureau and the International Latitude Bureau was discussed, the question having been discussed also at the recent General Assembly of the IUGG. It was agreed that from 1952 the IAU would apply for the entire UNESCO grant for the Time Bureau, while the IUGG would apply for the entire UNESCO grant for the Latitude Bureau (cf. also item 14 of this summary).

With regard to applications for UNESCO grants 1953, the Executive Committee decided that an application should be made for grants, as follows:

International Time Bureau	\$ 4,000
Symposia	3,000
Publications	10,000
Meeting of the Executive Committee	<u>1,000</u>
	\$18,000

If the situation would be such that a UNESCO grant for Exchange of Astronomers (Commission 38) could be applied for, then a grant of \$2500 for this purpose should be included, and the request for publications grant reduced to \$7500.

Professor Ambartsumian abstained from voting on UNESCO questions, as U.S.S.R. is not an adhering country of UNESCO.

9. Activity of Nominating Committee. The Executive Committee agreed that the Nominating Committee should start its activity well ahead of the time of the next

General Assembly (i.e. early in 1952), according to the plan decided upon at the meeting of the Executive Committee in September, 1950.

10. Cooption of German Astronomers. After Germany became an adhering country the President of the Astronomische Gesellschaft (which is the National Committee of Astronomy, Germany) sent a list of suggested names for cooptions into the various Commissions of the IAU. The Executive Committee decided that the names be forwarded by the Executive Committee to the Presidents of the Commissions in question for their consideration, the question of cooptions thereafter being treated by the standard procedure.

11. Question of Joint Commissions. The Executive Committee discussed a proposal to form a Joint Commission of ICSU on Meteorites, the IAU to be the mother Union. The Executive Committee decided not to take any action on this matter at the present time.

The Executive Committee discussed general questions concerning the Joint Commissions of ICSU, and decided to submit the following recommendation to the Executive Board of ICSU for consideration at its meeting in October, 1951, concerning a revision of paragraph 5.3 of the proposed Rules for Joint Commissions, namely:

Paragraph 5.3 as it stands reads:

"A Joint Commission may continue in being for three years, counted from the date of the first session, without reference to the Executive Board. It then rests with the Executive Board to decide whether or not the Joint Commission should continue its work for at least a further period of three years."

and it is proposed to add:

"If so, it shall be mandatory for the Unions concerned to ensure adequate rotation of membership, representative of the latest advances in technique covered by the Joint Commission in question."

12. Question of International Computing Center. Professor Danjon and Professor Oort who had been present as representatives of the IAU at a meeting of experts, organized by UNESCO, on the question of an International Computing Center, gave a report on the meeting. It was agreed that a small Committee should be formed which

was to follow developments in this field as far as they are of general interest to the IAU. P. Couderc, W. Eckert, S. Rosseland, and D. H. Sadler were nominated as members of this Committee.

13. Discussion of Nomination for President and General Secretary at next General Assembly. The question of Nominations for President and General Secretary at the next General Assembly was reviewed briefly and in general terms, but discussion was postponed and no decisions made at the meeting. It was decided, however, that the Executive Committee at the next General Assembly would nominate Professor E. Rybka, Wroclaw, Poland, for Vice-President.

14. Any other business. The Executive Committee approved a request from the National Committee of Roumania that the subscription of this country be reduced to 2 units.

Professor Woolley, President, Commission 40, wishes to resign. It was decided that if Professor Woolley insists that he wishes to resign, Dr. J. L. Pawsey, Australia, be asked to function as Acting President. Professor Neugebauer, President Commission 41 also wishes to resign. If Professor Neugebauer insists on this wish, Professor H. Dingle, England, would be asked to function as Acting Chairman. Finally Professor Spitzer, Acting President, Commission 3, has informed the Executive Committee that he finds it necessary to resign. No new nomination was proposed in this case, and if no satisfactory solution is found, the Commission would be dissolved and become a Sub-Commission of Commission 5.

The General Secretary reported that although the IAU has considerable deposits in banks in New York and Cambridge, England, in the past years these have been largely committed. Now, however, it would appear safe to transfer an amount of the order of \$10,000 - \$15,000 to saving accounts in order to earn the corresponding interest. It may be necessary to draw on the funds in question in the future if UNESCO support is appreciably reduced, but such a situation would not develop very suddenly. The Executive Committee authorized the General Secretary to transfer an



amount of the order mentioned in saving accounts.

In connection with the new arrangement (cf. item 8 of this summary) according to which the IAU will apply for the entire UNESCO grant for the Time Bureau, while the IUGG will apply for the entire UNESCO grant for the Latitude Bureau. The Executive Committee decided in favour of a proposal to form a Joint Supervisory Commission (IAU and IUGG) having learnt that the IUGG is also in favour of this plan. The membership of the Joint Supervisory will be as follows:

Joint Supervisory Commission

Time Bureau:	President, Sir Harold Spencer Jones
	Secretary, M. F. Moreau
	Members, 2 members to be nominated by the IUGG
Latitude Bureau:	President, to be nominated by the IUGG
	Secretary, to be nominated by the IUGG
	Members, Mr. P. Sollenberger, Sir Harold Spencer Jones

In closing the meeting President Lindblad made the following statement:

"In closing the session of the Executive Committee of the International Astronomical Union we thank most cordially our colleague and host, M. Danjon, Directeur de l'Observatoire de Paris, for the most excellent way in which he has arranged this meeting in this magnificent place where we always assemble so willingly, and for all the kindness he has shown us here.

The great number of questions which we have had to consider shows the vitality and importance of our Union. It is my privilege as president of the Union to express my thanks to all who have participated here.

I wish to say a few words to our Russian colleagues, to Dr. Ambartsumian as well as to his associates, Professor Nemiro and Mr. Orajewski. We ask Dr. Ambartsumian to convey to the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union our deep respect and gratitude and we thank him for the cooperative spirit with which he has taken

part in our meeting. We hope that he is convinced about our very deep wish to cooperate with our colleagues in the Soviet Union. For my own part I hope most sincerely that the Academy of the Soviet Union will not be too disappointed with us and that it will invite us again when the present international tension has ceased. It is my sincere hope that we shall then have the opportunity to see the astronomical development and the fine astronomical institutions in his great country.

We extend also our most sincere thanks to Professor Abetti and through him to the Research Council of Italy for their kind invitation to hold the meeting in 1952 in Rome. I hope that this General Assembly will be in all successful and that it will contribute effectively to the international cooperation in our science. "

Meeting of the Executive Committee  
of the  
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APPENDIX A

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In opening the session of the Executive Committee of the International Astronomical Union I have the pleasure to express our deep gratitude to M. Danjon, Directeur de l'Observatoire de Paris, for his great kindness to receive us here at the Paris Observatory for this meeting. I have the pleasure to greet all the members of the Executive Committee welcome to our meeting. We are happy to see here also Professor Stratton, General Secretary of the ICSU, Dr. Fraser, Liaison Officer ICSU-UNESCO, Professor Nemiro and M. Orajewski, representatives of the Astronomical Council of the Academy of the USSR.

A happy incident since our last meeting is that Germany has now joined the Union, with the Astronomische Gesellschaft as adhering organization.

We have before us a series of important agenda, I may mention those concerning the publication of the Draft reports and the various financial questions.

The most important question, however, concerns the postponed General Assembly. On account what has been written about this question I may be allowed to make the following statement.

Up to the first days of last December I believed that it would be possible to carry through our plans for the General Assembly in Leningrad as scheduled. In December the general international atmosphere got so troubled that according to my experience about the opinion in various countries we must ask ourselves seriously if not the participation to be expected would sink below what is permissible for a successful meeting, in fact below that is worthy of our hosts and of our Union. This is the only point of view that has carried weight with me as president, and which

I have expressed in my letters to you and to the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union. I communicated my doubts to the General Secretary early in December at Copenhagen and consulted members of the Executive Committee who represented the big Western Countries. I was of course sure that the participation of astronomers in the Soviet Union would be fairly large, and we did not want to alarm our hosts if this was not necessary. The opinions expressed confirmed entirely my own doubts. I then sent out a general enquiry to all members of the Executive Committee, and after receiving replies from an overwhelming majority I wrote at once to the Academy of Sciences a proposition in the matter.

There have appeared two pamphlets in the matter, of which I think that we need to consider only the one issued by the Astronomical Council of the USSR. The comments on the role played by the General Secretary and myself are entirely false. I think that we both care as much as anybody for cooperation in science between all countries.

Neither the General Secretary nor I has taken orders by anybody and no government has taken action in the matter directly or indirectly.

As I have said before I have asked for necessary information relevant for the question of participation, which was the only matter which really interested me as president of the Union.

If the Executive Committee considers that I have acted unwise or with undue haste and officiousness in the matter, I shall be happy to lay down the burden which I must confess the presidency has become during the last year.



Meeting of the Executive Committee  
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APPENDIX B

A STATEMENT OF THE SOVIET DELEGATION CONCERNING  
THE REASONS WHICH BROUGHT TO FAILURE THE CONVOCATION  
OF THE VIIIth GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE IAU IN  
LENINGRAD IN 1951

Mr. President,

Gentlemen, Members of the Executive Committee.

As a member of the Executive Committee of the International Astronomical Union who voted against the postponement of the VIIIth General Assembly of the IAU which was to be held in Leningrad in 1951 I deem it necessary to make the following statement.

The time elapsed since the decision taken by the Executive Committee of the IAU pertinent to the postponement of the Congress has completely confirmed the opinion of those, who regarded such a postponement as unadvisable and the reasons given in support of the postponement as groundless and unsound. Indeed, there were no political events within the period in question which could prevent convening the said General Assembly in Leningrad.

The convocation of the international congresses, conferences and symposia on various subjects which took place at that time in a number of countries were not influenced by "the tension in the international situation;" just on the contrary it was conducive to the development of mutual collaboration of scientists of different countries.

It is difficult even now, post-factum, to find, with the best will in the

world, any justification for the postponement occurred. I am absolutely in the dark about the real motives which brought to such a decision. I can only suppose that some external factors which have nothing to do with sciences played here their decisive role.

The true reason for the postponement of the Congress is possibly the fact that the governments of some countries and especially that of the United States would not like to give their scientists the permission to visit the Soviet Union. If that is how it is we would like the American astronomers to be placed in such conditions which would enable them in future to collaborate more closely with scientists of other countries and to have free access to international congresses and conferences. In any case the difficult situation in which the American astronomers may find themselves as a result of such measures cannot but evoke our sympathy.

In witness of the fact that the postponement of the Congress was absolutely groundless, I can refer not only to all the Soviet Astronomers' opinions expressed in the recently published communication of the Astronomical Council of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, which I now have the honour to offer for distribution among all the participants, but also to the letters, received from many astronomers of France, England, Holland, Poland and some other countries.

I hope that we shall be able to fully realize the mistake made and to avoid in future such actions, which can stand in the way of fruitful collaboration between astronomers of different countries.

Taking into account the hope, expressed early this year by our esteemed President, Professor Lindblad in his letter to the Astronomical Council that it may be possible in future to hold a General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union in the U.S.S.R., and considering that the decision previously taken by us with regard to the place of the convening of the Congress remains in force, the Congress should be held in Leningrad. I put forward a proposal to the effect that the Congress should take place in the said city in the first half of August, 1952

Notwithstanding some disappointment in connection with the fact that the

preliminary work performed by the Academy last year has yielded no result, the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union has complied with the wish of the Soviet astronomers and agreed to take care of all the arrangements for the Congress on the same terms as stated in 1951.

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APPENDIX C

V. A. Ambartsumian's Statement made at the  
Executive Committee's Session on  
September 5, 1951.

Returning to the question of the place and time for the VIIIth General Assembly I must state, that I have not heard any serious arguments against its convocation in Leningrad.

It has been put forward here, that a considerable part of the Western astronomers would refuse to participate if the General Assembly takes place in the Soviet Union. However, this opinion was not borne out by facts.

On the contrary we have many evidences, showing that astronomers of all countries are strongly in favour of the Congress being held in Leningrad, in accordance with the IAU Executive Committee's unanimous decision.

I could refer to the letter from 15 astronomers of France, Holland and other countries, of April 6, 1951, to all the members of the Executive Committee, in

which they are decisively protesting against the postponement of the Congress in Leningrad.

It is well known that many astronomers of Poland, Czechoslovakia and other countries have joined in this protestation. (The letters of Polish astronomers of June 15, and that of Czechoslovakian astronomers of July 27).

It is my duty to inform you that the Astronomical Council of the U.S.S.R. receives many letters from Denmark, England and other countries expressing astronomers' great disappointment in the decision of the Executive Committee concerning the postponement of the meeting of the IAU.

It is worthwhile mentioning here that many astronomers intended bringing members of their families on a visit to Leningrad.

What is the reason of declining the invitation of the Soviet Union - the invitation which was already accepted at the previous meeting of Executive Committee and has an absolute priority as compared with any other invitation? Such an action means nothing else but discrimination against one of the countries-members of the IAU.

But we know that true international cooperation and friendship in science is possible only on the principles of equality between all countries, and it cannot be based on the discrimination of some of them.

To decline the invitation of the Astronomical Council of the U.S.S.R. - means to throw the IAU into the flames of political passions, which would in no way contribute to the progress of our science.

Taking into account all these circumstances, I call upon the E.C. to indorse the proposal to hold the Congress of the VIII General Assembly in Leningrad in August, 1952.

We have also been told about the possibility of political pressure upon the participants of the Congress in Leningrad. I should like to know what are the grounds for such suppositions?

Could anyone give concrete examples testifying that political pressure has



been brought to bear on scientists who have visited the Soviet Union? It is widely known that a number of major international scientific congresses had been held in the Soviet Union, such as the International Physiological Congress, the International Congress of Geology, and numerous other conferences and symposia, yet who could provide a single instance of political pressure having been exercised at these conferences. It is impossible to cite any such instances, for the simple reason that they do not exist.

Therefore all statements about the possibility of political pressure do nothing but mislead the public opinion and are being circulated in scientific circles for definite political reasons.

Here indeed is what can be cited as a glaring example of political pressure being brought to bear on a large group of scientists striving for international cooperation.