

**IFLA SEMINAR
PRESERVATION OF MAPS AND OTHER SPATIAL
INFORMATION
MOSCOW - RUSSIAN STATE LIBRARY
27 SEPTEMBER - 1 OCTOBER 1993**

History

On Wednesday 21 August 1991, in the middle of the 57th IFLA Conference in Moscow, during the Kremlin reception, Mr Volik, then Head of the Lenin State Library in Moscow and Mrs Natalja Kotelnikova, Head of the Cartographic Department in the Lenin State Library and Member of the Standing Committee of the Section of Geography and Map Libraries asked the Officers of this Section to design a workshop about the conservation and restoration of cartographic documents in Moscow.

The Section already held such « training workshops » in Netherlands, Jamaica and Malaysia. Within the framework of the *Manual for practical mapcuratorship*, designed and written by several members of the Section of Geography and Map Libraries for developing countries, these meetings were mainly conferences, discussions and practice about all the operations to be done in an institution dealing with maps and cartographic documents, from acquisition to conservation, through cataloguing, indexing and communication.

The official request dated 20 November 1991 asked for a kind of meeting slightly different from the Malaysia and Jamaica Workshops : preservation, conservation, storage, restoration of cartographic documents and other spatial information were stressed. The meeting was intended to be organised for Russian map librarians and people from « Eastern Europe » and Officers from the IFLA « Geography and Map Libraries » and « Conservation » Sections were needed.

During the last three months of 1991, the political situation changed very quickly in Russia and the Seminar was not easy to prepare ; many people with whom we were in contact changed but, from both sides, the will and a lot of hard work shew at evidence that the need for this meeting still really existed.

As the initiator of the project and the official partner with the Russian colleagues, the IFLA Section of Geography and Map Libraries invited the Section of Conservation to participate, but the answer came from the IFLA Preservation and

Conservation Core programme. Thanks to Mr Jean-Marie Arnoult, then manager of the IFLA PAC program, it was possible to establish contacts with the Regional PAC centre for Eastern Europe in Leipzig. Mr Wolfgang Waechter, Manager of this Regional centre in the Deutsche Bücherei, kindly accepted to participate to the Seminar and send some papers.

We have also to thank especially Winston Roberts, IFLA Professional Coordinator, who never spared his time and was a strong supporter of the project as well as Derek Law, Chair of the Special Libraries Division, David Clements and Sally Mc Callum who, as IFLA Officers from the Professional Board or the Executive Board, helped to make the meeting to be held.

In July 1992, the Seminar was scheduled to be held from 18 to 23 April 1993, and a pre-programme was published. In Moscow, Mrs Natalja Kotelnikova was very busy : in February 1993, the abstracts of 18 papers were available, translated in Russian and English. She was able to announce nearly 50 registrations to the Seminar. But, unlike the previous workshops, UNESCO could not help us for the organisation of the Seminar. Although the efforts of Winston Roberts who was very willing this meeting to be organised, we had to postpone it in order to close the budget. Several dates were proposed to Natalja Kotelnikova who chose the week between 27 September and 1 October 1993, called the « Women's Summer » because the weather is usually sweet and sunny in Moscow...

This 6 month period was used to put an end to the financial aspects of the meeting organisation. A lot of hard work from Moscow, The Hague and Paris, and a long meeting during the Barcelona Conference between all the people involved threw the remaining problems out. At last, thanks to the efforts of Ludmila Kozlova, in charge with foreign relations in the Russian State Library, Natalja Nikolaeva, Head of the Research Centre of Conservation and restoration of Documents in the Russian State Library and Natalja Kotelnikova, the Seminar on « Preservation of maps and other spatial information » was on its way. Housing problems were also solved in Barcelona : as the budget was obviously very close, the Russian colleagues made the proposal to rent a flat in a building situated near the Russian State Library.

The « official » IFLA team was built: from the PAC side, Mr Waechter designated his deputy Henrik Otto ; the Section of Geography and Map Libraries was represented by its Chairman. At last, as an expert for large size cartographic documents and globes, Alain Roger, chief restorator for large size documents in the Département des Cartes et Plans in the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris was invited.

Natalja Kotelnikova was now able to announce 61 registrations. These people came from Russia - mainly from Moscow and Saint-Petersburg - and from other Republics - (Latvia, Ukraine, Kazhakstan, Czechoslovakia, etc.). The problem of simultaneous translation was solved thanks to the good will of several staff members from the Russian State Library and several Russian students engaged for this purpose. The final announcement of the program was especially heavy...

The changing political situation in Moscow in this period made our Russian colleagues to bring a last minute change in the organisation of the meeting : as the building where we were intended to stay was considered too near from the town centre, we were informed on 24 September by Mrs Ludmila Kozlova that three rooms were registered in the Sputnik Hotel, on Lenin Prospekt, 40 minutes by metro far from the Red Square.

The plane left Paris on Sunday 26 September... we reached Moscow at 15.30. We met Natalja Kotelnikova and Henrik Otto, arrived from Leipzig 30 minutes earlier and we were shuttled to the hotel.

The Seminar

On Monday 27 September, the « Women's Summer » was absent : the Seminar began with a dark grey sky and a thin rain... two days later, it was 2°C under zero and the snow was falling!

Hosted in the Russian State Library - the former Lenin Library, still called « Lenin » by everybody, even in the street - the meeting was welcome by Mr Igor Filipov, Head of the Russian State Library and Mrs Natalja Igumnova, Deputy in the Russian State Library and vice-president of IFLA. Memories of the 57th IFLA Conference in Moscow are still very alive : Mr Filipov stresses the point that this Seminar is a good way for going on cooperation. Many colleagues met two years ago attend the meeting and it is satisfactory to consider that the theme of the meeting gathers so many high level professionals.

The Seminar gathered 61 people from Russia (Moscow and Saint-Petersburg), CIS Republics and Czechoslovakia, Germany and France. These people were mainly maplibrarians, archivists, chemists, engineers, cartographers and restorators. The agenda was very busy : 26 speakers and 6 visits were scheduled ; as a whole, the Seminar was of a very high professional interest. Unlike the previous meetings organised by the Section, this Seminar was less a training workshop than a meeting place to exchange experiences where questions were numberless and discussions endless about mass deacidification processes, encapsulation, « splitting » technique, use of polymers, proper restoration

techniques, materials to be used, digitalisation, storing places, conditions for conservation, etc. A simultaneous translation assumed by students was available in order to make communication easier and to allow discussions between Russian and non-Russian speaking people. During all the week, the sessions were very busy and shew a great interest from all the participants.

During the week spent in Moscow, we had the opportunity to visit the Russian State Library from the top to the bottom, the Cartographic Department in this Library, the State Library of Foreign Literature, the Russian Archives of Ancient Acts, the laboratory for microfilming and digitalizing in this institution, the Research Centre of Conservation and Restoration of Documents situated outside the Russian State Library and the cartographic agency « Cartografia », the ex-GUGK we were not allowed to visit during the 1991 IFLA Moscow Conference. These visits shew a real ability and wit from people in charge with the conservation and restoration of cartographic documents, but also a tragic lack of technical means and materials.

During these visits and discussions, it was possible to see the real link existing between chemists and restorators, although the latter profession has no real and legal status or existence in this country, which led the Russian colleagues to write a professional resolution about the lack of official training for map restorators in their country. We could see a high level craft in the restoration of books (atlases are also books...) but, due to an important lack of technical means and materials, this craft can hardly be transposed and used for large-size documents. In this situation, Alain Roger's paper about the restoration of globes, illustrated with 80 slides, and his answers to many questions about large-size cartographic documents may be considered as very important.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, the Seminar was of a remarkable professional level ; it gave a meeting place for people involved in problems of the same kind and allowed a very rich discussion and information ; it gathered people from different countries and created professional contacts between them. The professional resolution discussed in Moscow and brought back to the IFLA Headquarters could be the beginning of a following action through the PAC Core program. The Seminar was held in a hard political situation, although it has to be said that the events never held up the meeting... except on one point : as it is unthinkable to stay a week in Moscow without attending a ballet, our colleagues had scheduled a performance of « Nutcracker » on the evening of the day we visited the cartographic agency ; when we reached the gate of the Kremlin, we were welcome by soldiers equipped

with brand new Kalashnikov machine guns ! Times are changing : two years ago, we could not visit the GUGK - cartography is still a sensible matter...- but we had a performance of « Romeo and Juliet » ; in 1993, it was possible to visit the cartographic agency but the ballet was not allowed... Our colleagues proved their optimism : in fact, two days later, we attended a performance of « Gisele » in another theatre!

On Saturday 2 October, the Seminar was over and our colleagues scheduled a visit of Moscow out of the « official » tours ; at the same time, tyres were burning on Arbat Street and stones were thrown on Smolenskaja Square, as we saw on TV at evening... On Sunday 3 October, on our way to the airport, the temperature was very sweet, the weather was very fine, the sky was blue, the Russian country shew marvellous autumn colours, it was the real beginning of the « Women's summer », military trucks and light tanks were going to Moscow on the other side of the road...

Proceedings

The « IFLA » papers by Henrik Otto, Alain Roger and Pierre-Yves Duchemin have been published in the *Journal of the Russian State Library*. As all the papers have been translated into Russian and English, and as they are, as a whole, of a good quality level, it was obviously interesting to issue the proceedings of the Seminar. It is why this special issue of INSPEL is devoted to this meeting.

Pierre-Yves Duchemin
Bibliothèque nationale de France
Direction des collections spécialisées
58 Rue de Richelieu
75084 Paris Cedex 02
France