

From the scientific life

Early days of the International Commission on Trichinellosis (1958-1972)

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ABSTRACT. Herein we describe the origin of the International Commission on Trichinellosis more than 60 years after its foundation. We attempt to clarify previous debate over the founding presidents and particularly the role of Polish parasitologist, Zbigniew Kozar. Seminal and core proceedings of the Commission published in *Wiadomości Parazytologiczne* and other records were used to advance this goal. An early regional commission initially held in Budapest, Hungary at the Hungarian Meeting of Parasitologists was devoted to trichinellosis and was presided over by Kozar from 1958 to 1960. However, the official formation of the Commission did not occur until 1960 during the 1st International Conference on Trichinellosis held in Warsaw, Poland, where Witold Stefanski was elected president. During the 2nd International Conference on Trichinellosis, which was held in Wrocław, Poland, Samuel E. Gould was elected president until his untimely death in 1970. Zbigniew Kozar was secretary general from 1960 to 1972. Beginning with the 3rd International Conference held in Miami, Florida, USA in 1972, the activities of the Commission and the Conference became better documented.

Keywords: International Commission on Trichinellosis, International Conference on Trichinellosis, history, Zbigniew Kozar, Samuel E. Gould, Witold Stefanski

More than 60 years after the foundation of the International Commission of Trichinellosis (ICT), debate has emerged over its founders and particularly its first presidents and the role of the famous Polish parasitologist, Zbigniew Kozar. This short note attempts to clarify the origins of this Commission. Several documents were used for this purpose: 1) a discussion about trichinellosis published in the Proceedings of the First International Congress of Parasitology, Rome, Italy (21–26 September 1964); 2) a copy of a typed letter dated from the 13th of November 1961 signed by Z. Kozar and W. Stefański (this copy is kept by Dr. Christian Kapel); and 3) several extracts of ICT “Organizational Problems” published in *Wiadomości*

Parazytologiczne, the journal of the Polish Parasitology Society.

Foundation of the International Commission on Trichinellosis (ICT)

In the Proceedings of the First International Congress of Parasitology (1964), Z. Kozar recalls the early days of the ICT noting “...*the necessity of international collaboration in the field of trichinellosis*” appeared [1] and that “*the first attempt in this direction is represented by the International Commission in Budapest, created in 1958 and limited at that time to only a few countries of the Middle Europe; I had the honour to be its*



Figure 1. The presidential table at ICT 1. From left to right: B. Schwartz (USA), K.I. Skryabin (USSR), Z. Kozar (Poland) and W. Stefański (Poland). Picture published in *Wiadomości Parazytologiczne* (1960).

president". This latter sentence introduced some confusion and led those who read it to conclude that Z. Kozar was the first president of the ICT. In a chronicle devoted to Kozar on the 25th anniversary of his death, Grabda (1997) mentioned the role of Polish scientists in the creation of several international commissions during this 1958 meeting [2]. The founding countries of this early commission on trichinellosis were Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary and the USSR; a few months later, they were joined by Yugoslavia. Interestingly, the Commission was created exactly one century after the discoveries of Virchow (1859) and Zenker (1860) who characterized the life-cycle of *Trichinella* and its pathogenic effects [3,4]. In 1960, this early regional commission organized the "...1st International Conference ... in Warsaw with the participation of 150 specialists from 19 countries; a new commission has come into being with the representatives of USSR, USA, France, German Federal Republic and Poland". During this 1st International Conference (Fig. 1), officers were nominated to an "International Council" composed of an honorary president (K.I. Skryabin, USSR), a president (W. Stefański, Poland) and a secretary (Z. Kozar, Poland). In addition, an "Executive Committee" was created and composed of a chairman (B. Schwartz, USA), a vice chairman (S.E. Gould, USA), an assistant to the chairman (F.I. Kruidenier, USA) and several other members (R. Lehmsick, West Germany; I.W. Orlov, USSR; J. Guilhon, France). The constitution of this early commission (ICT) necessitated several meetings of the members of the board: Neuchâtel (1961), Paris

(1962) and Hannover (1963). The ICT possessed no budget but benefited from funds provided by the Polish Parasitological Society. In the report of the Committee on Resolution of the International Conference, it was recommended to form "...a permanent committee to be known as the International Commission for the Control of Trichinellosis". The proceedings of the 1st conference were published as supplements to several issues of *Wiadomości Parazytologiczne* and as a special volume (see Table 1). Kozar mentions in his 1964 paper that the Commission "entered in contact with international organizations proposing studies on certain problems, as for instance infectivity and pathogenicity of strains of *T. spiralis* coming from various regions of the world, or such as evaluation and standardization of serologic diagnostic methods". Kozar adds that "A close cooperation of all persons interested in trichinellosis is our goal." and that "the activity of the Commission...is fairly manifold" [1]. As soon as 1962, contacts were taken to affiliate the ICT with the World Federation of Parasitologists (WFP) and the International Union of Biological Sciences [5]. Although originally planned for 1966 in Ann Arbor (USA), the 2nd International Conference finally took place in June 1969 in Wrocław (Poland). In the proceedings of this 2nd conference, a collection of Rules and Regulations of the Commission was accepted and new officers were elected: President S.E. Gould (USA), Vice President I.V. Orlov (USSR), and Secretary General Z. Kozar (Poland). A new executive committee was also selected and included I. Cironeanu (Romania),

Table 1. ICT Presidents and General Secretaries, location and publications of the ICT-conference over time

Years	President	Secretary General	Year and place of the ICT-conference	Proceedings (editors)
1960-1969	W. Stefański (international council) B. Schwartz (executive committee)	Z. Kozar	1960, ICT1, Warsaw (Poland)	PWN-Polish Scientific Pub., 1962, 344 pages (Kozar)
			1969, ICT 2, Wroclaw (Poland)	A collection of extended abstracts
1969-1972	E. Gould († 1970)	Z. Kozar († 1972)	1972, ICT3, Miami (USA)	ISBN0700224610 (Kim)
1972-1976	J.E. Larsh	Z. Pawłowski	1976, ICT4, Poznań (Poland)	ISBN78606978 (Kim, Pawłowski)
1976-1980	Z. Pawłowski	M. Stankiewicz	1981, ICT5, Noorddwijk aan Zee (Netherlands)	ISBN0906544041 (Kim, Ruitenber, Teppema)
1980-1984	W.C. Campbell	M. Stankiewicz	1984, ICT6, Val Morin (Canada)	ISBN 0887060919 (Kim)
1984-1988	J. Ruitenber	M. Stankiewicz	1988, ICT7, Alicante (Spain)	ISBN8400069854 (Tanner, Martinez-Fernandez, Bolas-Fernandez)
1988-1993*	C.W. Kim	W. Kocięcka	1993, ICT8, Orvieto (Italy)	ISBN8890002808 (Campbell, Pozio, Bruschi)
1993-1996	F. van Knapen	W. Kocięcka	1996, ICT9, Mexico (Mexico)	ISBN9701809645 (Ortega-Pierres, Gamble, van Knapen, Wakelin)
1996-2000	K.D. Murrell	W Kocięcka	2000, ICT10, Fontainebleau (France)	Parasite, 2001, 8, S1-S296 (Dupouy-Camet, Boireau, Murrell)
2000-2004	E. Pozio	C. Kapel	2004, ICT11, San Diego (USA)	Vet Par, 2005, 132, 1-202 (Zarlenga)
2004-2007**	J. Dupouy-Camet	C. Kapel	2007, ICT12, Plitvice lakes (Croatia)	Vet Par, 2009, 159, 193-369 (Gajadhar)
2007-2011	R. Gamble	C. Kapel	2011, ICT13, Changchun (China)	Vet Par, 2013, 194, 99-225 (Rosenthal, Zarlenga)
2011-2015	A. Gajadhar	K. Nöckler	2015, ICT14, Berlin (Germany)	Vet Par, 2016, 231, 1-153 (Nöckler, Pozio, Gamble)
2015-2019	J. van der Giessen	K. Nöckler	2019, ICT 15, Cluj-Napoca (Romania)	Vet Par (in progress)
2019-	K. Nöckler	B. Scandrett	To be determined	To be determined

*this ICT conference was planned for Dubrovnik (Yugoslavia) but due to civil war it was postponed and organized in Italy;

**this ICT was re-scheduled to prevent overlapping with the EMOPs meetings organized by the European Federation of Parasitologists; †: date of death

R. Lehmensick, (West Germany), J.G. Steele (USA), and W. Stefanski (Poland). Although both an international council and executive committee had co-existed for the first several years, this distinction disappeared in 1969 with the adoption of the Rules and Regulations for the ICT [6,7]. In

addition, the assembly and organization of a list of members from each interested country (1 to 4 members per country) was discussed and the 3rd International Conference on Trichinellosis was planned for Miami, Florida USA, to be organized by S.E. Gould. Unfortunately, two sad events impaired



Figure 2. Proceedings of the International Conference on Trichinellosis have been published as a collection of abstracts or research papers presented at the conference in a dedicated volume; initially as a book (ICT1-ICT9), more recently as a special issue of scientific journals (ICT10-ICT14).

the organization of the 3rd ICT; S. E. Gould passed away unexpectedly in 1970 at the age of 70, and Z. Kozar died shortly thereafter in 1972 at the age of 54 [8].

The 1972 3rd International Conference on Trichinellosis in Miami

Finally, the 3rd conference was held in Miami in 1972, lending credence to the real international relevance of the ICT. In the absence of Gould and Kozar, the conference was organized by a Committee composed of J.E. Larsh (executive director), W.C. Campbell (secretary), C.W. Kim (program director), D.D. Despommier (coordinator) and L.S. Blair (associate coordinator). New officers were elected, J.E. Larsh as president and W.C. Campbell as secretary general, and the proceedings were published in an *in-8* format until the 10th conference when well-recognized, scientific journals became the new format. Beginning with the 1972 meeting, the ICT became a more efficiently run international scientific organization, convening every 4 years except for the 1993 and 2007 conferences. The proceedings of these conferences

were regularly published either as special volumes (Fig. 2) or as special issues of scientific journals (*Wiadomości Parazytologiczne*, *Parasite*, *Veterinary Parasitology*). Since its inception, the ICT has been managed by 15 presidents and seven general secretaries (Table 1). Four Polish scientists (veterinarians and physicians) held the position of General Secretary from 1960 until 2000 (Kozar, Pawłowski, Stankiewicz and Kocięcka). Of note, in the earlier years of the society, the “Proceedings of the International Conference on Trichinellosis” (selection of research papers presented at the conference) were distinct from the “Proceedings of the International Commission on Trichinellosis” which were regularly published in *Wiadomości Parazytologiczne* until 2001.

The crucial role of Kozar as Secretary General of the ICT (1960–1972)

The report written by Z. Kozar (1970) that encompassed most of his time as secretary of ICT (1960–1969) is particularly interesting and provides a real snapshot of the main challenges regarding trichinellosis during those years [9]. This report is

subdivided into seven parts: Background, Affiliations, Conferences and meetings, Publications, Maintenance of permanent contacts among the persons interested by trichinellosis, Advice to international organizations, governmental or other agencies and Initiation and propagation of special studies. The Rules and Regulations of the ICT were also published in the pages that followed in that same issue of *Wiadomości Parazytologiczne*. The topics of the special studies to be initiated, according to Kozar's report, were the following: worldwide occurrence of the parasite, strain differences, human disease, pathogenesis and host parasite relationships, therapy, and standardization of immunological methods. All these topics have been discussed and debated for years by the ICT and the standardization of immunological methods remains an important issue even today, 60 years after the foundation of the ICT [10]. Kozar concludes that "...the recent years have witnessed increased concern in trichinellosis, this being evidenced by numerous publications. The activity of the Commission is certainly among the factors contributing to this fact."

Conclusions

As stated by Campbell (1974) "Dr Kozar was the moving force of the International Commission on Trichinellosis and its two first international conferences" [8]. Kozar presided over a seminal meeting of a handful of scientists that floated the idea of a Commission; however, the ICT as an entity was not officially established until 1960. Kozar was also instrumental in organizing the first International Trichinellosis Conference in 1960 during which the first official president was elected. Thus, it is somewhat disingenuous to assign recognition of the inception of this Commission only to the first elected president, Witold Stefanski. Although Kozar never officially presided over the

ICT, he should also be lauded for his role as a key architect in the formation of the Commission.

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