

Sixth Congress of the International Society of Hematology

After almost two years of unremitting preparation, the Sixth Congress of the International Society of Hematology convened in Boston during the week of August 26, 1956. Participating were some 1500 hematologists from all over the world, including seventeen from the "Iron Curtain" countries and as many more from Japan. There was a comprehensive program covering the whole field of hematology, in effect a panorama of hematology in 1956. This was aided by a scientific exhibit of some 80 topics and a technical exhibit presenting the newer instruments, techniques, and drugs. For relaxation, there was a large social program and a Ladies' Program. Perhaps of greatest importance was the emphasis upon face-to-face contacts between scientists of different nations and political groupings. The mutual understanding and ensuing respect which came about from these informal contacts was a gratifying thing to see.

The meetings, scientific and technical exhibits, and some of the social events, were held at the headquarters hotel, the Somerset, with secondary headquarters at the nearby Harvard Club. Registration began on Sunday the 26th, actual meetings on Monday the 27th. These continued through Saturday, September 1. The last day of the Congress—devoted to immunohematology—was held in conjunction with the Sixth Congress of the International Society of Blood Transfusion and the American Association of Blood Banks.

THE MEETINGS

Plenary sessions were held each day—from Monday through Saturday. In the afternoon of every day except Wednesday, three to four simultaneous sessions were held, followed by Panel Sessions. In all, some 450 papers were presented at the various sessions.

Monday, August 27

The plenary session was convened by Dr. William Dameshek, the President, with representative distinguished hematologists sharing the platform. The first session was devoted to *Leukemia*, hematology's No. 1 disease. Papers were presented on *Incidence and Etiology* by Shimkin, Latarjet (Paris), and Joseph Beard (Duke University), with discussion by Steven Schwartz and Furth. President-Elect G. Di Guglielmo gave a special lecture on "Acute Erythremic Disease." *Metabolism of the Leukemic Process* was discussed by William Valentine and S. P. Martin, with John Rebeck opening the discussion. *Therapy* was discussed by Sir Lionel Whitby (Acute Leukemia), E. E. Osgood, and Sidney Farber, with Joseph Burchenal and Joseph Hill opening the discussion. It was apparent from the above that the viral concept of the etiology of leukemia had become advanced considerably. Whitby stressed the necessity of thinking *beyond* the present-day destructive types of chemotherapy for leukemia. Osgood's figures demonstrated a distinct lengthening of the life-span in chronic leukemia when this was treated by carefully controlled x-ray or radioactive isotope therapy. Farber discussed the new Chemotherapy Program of the National Institutes of Health.

In the afternoon, simultaneous sessions were held on *Leukemia, Incidence and Etiology* (Chairman: Jacob Furth); *Hemorrhagic Disorders, Fibrinolysis* (Chairman: Sol Sherry); *Anemia, Deficiency Disorders* (Chairman: M. M. Wintrobe); *Nucleonics, Polycythemia* (Chairman: L. R. Wasserman). A panel on the therapy of Leukemia closed the day. Unfortunately, nothing new in the treatment of this dread disease was advanced.

In the evening, the Official Congress Reception and Cocktail-Supper was held at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, an impressive setting with its beautiful halls, painting, and statuary, and an orchestra playing.

Tuesday, August 28

The plenary session was devoted to *Nucleonics* under the general chairmanship of Eugene Cronkite (Brookhaven National Laboratory). The use of radioactive isotopes for tagging

was discussed by Joseph Ross, Clement Finch (Iron), Sheila Callender ($\text{Co}^{60}\text{B}_{12}$), and Carl Moore. Harmful Effects of Radiation were stressed by Court Brown and Mole of England, with Cronkite discussing the Acute Radiation Syndrome in Man (Marshall Islands Fall-out) and Watanabe, of Hiroshima, the experimental production of leukemia in animals with the use of radioactive isotopes. E. Reinhard (St. Louis) discussed critically the matter of radioactive isotope therapy.

Simultaneous sessions were held on Leukemia, Metabolism (Chairman: J. Rebeck); Nucleonics, Radioactive Isotopes in Tagging (Chairman: R. H. Mole); Hemorrhagic Disturbances, Platelet Factors (W. H. Seegers); and Reticulo-Endothelial System (in conjunction with the Reticulo-Endothelial Society), (Chairman: C. A. Doan).

The evening was free, and many house parties were held.

Wednesday, August 29

The plenary session was devoted to the *Presidential Address* which stressed the changing eras in hematology, the rapidly advancing costs of investigation in the field, and the interdependence of science and scientists throughout the world. The first biennial *Henry M. Stratton Lecture*, with an award by the Society through Mr. Stratton, was given by Professor Jan Waldenström, of Malmö, Sweden, and dealt with the Hyperglobulinemic Purpuras. This was followed by a session on *Spleen and Hypersplenism*, with talks by William H. Crosby (Washington), Motulsky (Seattle), Baldini (Genoa and Boston), Dammin (Boston), Swisher (Rochester, New York), Carl Smith (New York), and C. A. Doan (Columbus). Many new studies and some advances relating to the spleen, made in conjunction with radioactive techniques and physiologic experimentation, were presented.

In the afternoon, the entire Congress left en masse for the "North Shore" of Boston and a New England Clambake followed by a concert at famous Castle Hill. Mme. Latarjet, of Paris, the wife of one of the Congressists, was the hit of the concert, as she played some extraordinarily delicate selections on the concert grand.

Thursday, August 30

The plenary session on this day featured the *Hemorrhagic Disorders*, including the Hemophilias (Brinkhous, North Carolina; Köller, Zürich; Fantl, Australia), Platelet Factors (Jürgens, Switzerland; Seegers, Detroit; Deutsch, Vienna), Fibrinolysis and Fibrinopenia (Astrup, Copenhagen; Soulier, Paris; and Ratnoff, Cleveland, with Sol Sherry opening the discussion).

The afternoon sessions featured Leukemia, Therapy (Chairman: J. Burchenal, New York); Nucleonics, Radioactive Isotopes in Tagging—Iron (Chairman: C. A. Finch, Seattle) and Cobalt (Chairman: R. F. Schilling, Madison); Hemorrhagic Disorders, Hemophilias (Chairman: B. Alexander, Boston); The Hemoglobinopathies (Chairman: H. Lehmann). The untimely death in July of Karl Singer, the announced chairman of the Hemoglobinopathy session, was memorialized by Lehmann. The day was concluded by a panel session on the Course and Therapy of Polycythemia Vera. At this session, two important statements were brought out: one by Heilmeyer indicating that the plasma of four cases of polycythemia contained an erythropoietic stimulating factor; the other by Stroebel that 15 per cent of the cases of polycythemia receiving radioactive phosphorus actually developed acute leukemia. Whether this could be balanced by better therapeutic results than with venesection therapy or by better statistical figures of longevity was still debatable.

Friday, August 31

The Plenary Session of this day was devoted to the Anemias. *Deficiency Anemias* were discussed by William B. Castle, Boston (Pernicious Anemia—A Thirty-Year Progress Report); Tom Spies, Birmingham, Alabama, and Ramon Suarez, Puerto Rico (Sprue), and Ronald Girdwood, Edinburgh (B_{12} -Folic Acid Relationships). *Erythropoietic Factors and Bone Marrow Failure* by Albert S. Gordon (New York), Heilmeyer (Germany), and Chalmers (London); *Hemoglobinopathies* by James Neel (Ann Arbor), Wolf Zuelzer (Detroit), and Hermann Lehmann (London).

Afternoon simultaneous sessions were devoted to *Erythropoietic Hormone* (Chairman:

Albert S. Gordon). Gordon had gathered together a highly integrated group of papers, followed later by a panel to discuss this important new development. *Leukemia, Miscellaneous* (Chairman: Lawrence Berman, Detroit), featuring histologic and marrow culture data, *Immunohematology, Hemolytic Anemia* (Chairman: Lawrence Young, Rochester, New York), featuring auto-immune disorders. In addition to the panel on erythropoietic hormone, another dealing with the complex matter of the terminology of the rapidly growing numbers of "abnormal" hemoglobins was held with Neel as chairman.

In the evening, the official Banquet was held, attended by 600 delegates and their wives. This was preceded by a large cocktail party at the Harvard Club given by Lederle Laboratories, Foreign Division (Dr. F. C. Ottati, Director). Brief addresses were made at the Banquet by the President, Past President Sir Lionel Whitby, praising chiefly the local Congress Committee, Past President Chevallier of Paris, and President-Elect Di Guglielmo of Rome. The latter's address may well be the shortest speech on record, "A rivaderei a Roma!" The President's address follows:

BANQUET SPEECH

1. The management of an International Congress is a difficult task, but I must say a highly stimulating and rewarding one—especially if it has been successful, as I am told this one has been. There is nothing I know of more satisfying to the spirit than for a group to work together as a team towards a well-defined goal—in this case, a great Congress. We are, of course, glad that the task is well-nigh completed, but I for one must say that it is also a bit saddening, because the enthusiasm and the unity of a great effort will soon be over, and there will inevitably come with it a sense of great "let-down."

2. It is not only an emotional thing to run a Congress but a very enlightening one. We have learned about business matters, about hotels and hotel keepers, about budgets and clambakes and concerts and concertizers, about electricians and sound men, about interpreters and public relations people, about human nature, often in the raw. These two years since the Paris Congress have seen the separation, as we say it in this country, of the "men from the boys," of the workers from the shirkers. We have learned matters of protocol from our foreign delegates, who take their Congresses much more seriously than we Americans are apt to do. We have learned a little more about our Government, and have come to grips on more than one occasion with the difficult problems that exist in certain rather rigid bureaucratic circles. Most of these apparently insoluble problems have happily been settled, especially since running a Congress in this country is surely much easier than in most others, because everything here is much easier; supplies and machinery of all sorts are readily at hand, and of course we have here the enormous benefits of a well-trained secretarial staff.

3. The end-results of such a Congress in terms of good-will and international amity can hardly be assessed, but I am sure that all of you have learned—as I did last winter in traveling about the world (the *New England Journal of Medicine* has referred to me as "travel-stained Dameshek")—that doctors from foreign lands and with different ideologies are, after all, human beings like the rest of us, dedicated to the study of disease and how it can be controlled or conquered. May this Congress aid to at least a slight extent the cause of world peace.

Saturday, September 1. (Joint Meeting with the International Society of Blood Transfusion)

The theme of the Plenary Session was "Immunohematology", 'Auto' Type. *Hemolytic Anemias* were discussed by John Dacie (London), Sabine Fillitti-Wurmser (Paris), and F. L. J. Jordan (Utrecht, Holland); *Leukopenias* by Jean Dausset (Paris), P. A. Miescher (Basel, Switzerland) with Stuart Finch (New Haven) opening the discussion; *Purpuras* by W. J. Harrington (St. Louis), and Jean Bernard (Paris), with Ernest Witebsky (Buffalo) opening the discussion. The inevitable discussion as to whether "auto"-immune disorders were actually due to "auto" antibodies took place, with Witebsky, taking the negative side. This recurrent debate has probably resolved itself to a question of semantics. There can be no question that a substance derived in the individual's own body is attacking one or another of his own cells. This is certainly an anti-body if not an *antibody*. Whether it is essential to fulfill the exact, perhaps too rigid, criteria for antibody, requiring (a) exact knowledge of antigen and (b) ability to reproduce this experimentally is uncertain.

Afternoon simultaneous sessions were held on *Immunohematology*, Platelets and White Cells (Chairman, James L. Tullis, Boston); *Anemia*, Bone Marrow Failure, Metabolism (Chairman: Carl Moore, St. Louis); *Hemorrhagic Disorders* (Anticoagulants, Miscellaneous, (Chairman: Irving S. Wright, New York); Hemolytic Disease of the Newborn (Chairman: L. K. Diamond). The afternoon was completed by a spirited panel discussion

on platelet and white cell antibodies, featuring the present-day uncertainty regarding platelet antibodies and their demonstration in idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura.

At the business session of the Congress held on this day, Prof. Di Guglielmo was elected President for the ensuing two years. The next (1958) Congress is to be held in Rome. Prof. S. Katsunuma, of Nagoya, Japan was elected President-Elect and Tokyo, Japan, named as the site of the 1960 Congress.

The Scientific Exhibits, which were universally conceded to be of unusual merit, received a great deal of attention. The following prizes were awarded:

Excellence of Presentation:

First Prize: Colin S. Vorder Bruegge and L. W. Diggs (Washington, D. C. and Memphis, Tenn.): "Vascular Oclusive Disease Lesions and Sickle Cell Disease"

Second Prize: Miguel Layrisse and Tulio Arends (Caracas, Venezuela): "The Diego Blood System"

Honorable Mention: V. P. Collins, C. T. Teng, and W. D. West (Houston, Texas): "Radio-iron Tracer Studies"

Originality of Work:

First Prize (Double Award):

F. Reimann (Istanbul, Turkey): "The Impact of Iron Deficiency on a Whole Population"

and

Edmund Klein, Sidney Farber, Izaak Djerassi, and Pearl Arnold (Boston, Mass.): "Clinical Use of Lyophilized Platelet Material"

Honorable Mention: (Double Award)

Sheila Callender (Oxford, England): "Hereditary Factors in Pernicious Anemia"

and

J. Lawrence Oncley, D. G. Cornwell, and D. Gitlin (Boston, Mass.): "Chemistry and Metabolism of Plasma Lipoproteins"

Special Mention: Jacob Shanberge (Boston, Mass.): "Hematologic Philately"

The best motion picture was adjudged to be that of Dr. Marcel Bessis, Paris: "Electron Microscopy of Normal and Leukemic Leukocytes." Honorable mention was awarded to Dr. K. Hiraki, Okayama City, Japan, for his film presentation: "Observations on the Blood Cells and Their Clinical Applications."

Under the leadership of Mesdames J. L. Oncley, Chairman, and W. Dameshek and J. L. Tullis, the *Ladies' Program* attracted much favorable attention.

It was the universal consensus that the Congress was a scientific, social, and political success. The scientific papers were in general of high merit; there was relatively little "re-hash"; many new thoughts were expounded; discussion was usually ample; and the necessarily brief time limits for papers were ordinarily kept. The plenary sessions allowed all the Congressists to convene together in the morning and to maintain their general interest in the hematologic field, even though they might have centered their work almost exclusively on a specific field of hematology. The numerous simultaneous sessions were necessary because of the large numbers of papers submitted, but by the device of "scrambling" (suggested originally by Dr. Erwin Deutsch of Vienna), it was possible for a worker, say in the hemorrhagic field, to go to all the different sessions in that field; which were held on separate days. Papers without exact relationship to the program, and those lacking sufficient merit were read by title—to be included (if thought advisable) in the *Proceedings Volume*, to be published in 1956.

The social events, both official and private, were numerous and varied. It is probably true, as some have stated, that when the scientific events of a Congress are forgotten, what stands out are the often distinctive social gatherings, which do so much to establish friendships among people of diverse racial and political backgrounds. This was ever-stressed—largely unconsciously—at this unusually happy Congress, occurring, it so happened, at a relative lull in the stresses and strains which are now unfortunately with us again. Five Russians, five Czechs, five Poles, and two Romanians were at the Congress, and all joined

in the various activities. The Russian delegation was headed by Fedorov and was considerably embellished by the attractive young woman physician, Natasha Perevodchikova. The Polish delegation was headed by Professor Tempka, of considerable hematologic stature for many years with Professors Fleck, Kowalski, Trojanowski, and Kowarzyk. The Czech delegation was headed by the well-known and urbane Milos Netousek. The Romanian delegates were only slightly related to hematology proper. It was evident that the "Iron Curtain" delegates were composed of doctors like other doctors and although they aroused considerable attention wherever they went, they differed in no wise from their American colleagues, especially if they put on (as some of them did) American clothes. It seemed to everyone that all these individuals could not fail to profit from their American experience, and it was wonderful to see how the Americans, once they got over the first shock of associating with people from Communist countries, took him in stride and exerted the customary American friendship and hospitality.

The Russians, Poles, Czechs and Romanians petitioned to join the International Society of Hematology, and their petitions were granted. It seemed apparent that the Congress was contributing its bit to international amity, although it is also apparent at this writing (November, 1956) that such amity may have but little influence on those who ultimately control the destinies of a given country. A few quotations from some of the letters received bearing on this point are the following:

(American):

"To me the most impressive attribute of the Congress was the pervading spirit of fellowship. Often the most rewarding achievements are intangible."

"I was especially impressed with the genuinely friendly atmosphere and with the sincere spirit of cooperation that existed among the large groups of international participants. Our politician friends could certainly take a lesson from meetings of this kind on the methods for establishing amicable relations among the peoples of many lands."

(Foreign):

"I am glad to say that I will leave this country with new and fresh forces devoted not only to the further development of medical sciences and hematology, but also to all mankind and humanity. I feel that by the work performed at our Congress, we have contributed in a certain way to the mutual understanding of people all over the world."

Some statistics of the Congress follow:

Total Registration: 1,759

Physicians 1078

Non-Physicians (Wives and children, technicians, secretaries, nurses, technical exhibitors, others) 681

The countries represented included the following:

Argentina, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Guatemala, Hawaii, Holland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Lebanon, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Romania, El Salvador, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, U.S.S.R., Venezuela, Wales, U. S. A.

A few words on expenditures. The expenses of an international gathering are necessarily much larger than those with delegates from a single country. Translators, multi-lingual translation equipment, the need for multiple languages in programs, etc., add greatly to the cost (by at least the factor of 25 per cent). In addition, it was thought essential to offer financial aid to as many foreign hematologists as possible. This required a large expenditure of time and effort. Direct endowments and gifts were made by Governmental and pharmaceutical sources, with other gifts from industry, some of them unconnected with the medical profession. The program book of some 600 pages cost approximately \$8000. Eventually, the income (and expenditures) for the Congress exceeded \$100,000.