

Chapter 4

1957–1961

President: Henri Gastaut

In retrospect, this can be seen as a period of great importance to the Federation and its Journal, of increasing maturity and expertise, perhaps springing from the comradeship and understandings of the meeting in Oosterbeek and certainly spurred on by the leadership of Henri Gastaut (Figs. 4.1 and 4.2). (A secretary once wrote his name as Gusto — mistaken or misheard but wholly appropriate.) An inhibiting factor was the very small size of the budget, \$2490 from four years subscriptions, which was not enough to cover the expenses of the executive officers, small though they were: better times were in sight by the end of the period.

Five further societies were admitted to the Federation during the period: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Israel, Poland and South Africa, bringing the total to 25.

In Brussels it was proposed to set up a Committee on Terminology and this was later appointed. At first efforts to bring it into action were not very successful but an independent attempt by Dutch workers was brought to the notice of Gastaut by Magnus and Storm van Leeuwen and proved to be the starting point for more productive efforts; a “Proposal for 1958” was circulated and formed the basis for discussion at a meeting on the EEG of Tumours at Wassenaar, The Netherlands, in 1959. Those present were not exactly the members of the Committee but that did not matter and many useful ideas were exchanged, leading to the “Proposal of 1959”. Finally, after endless correspondence on fine

points of detail a “Proposal for 1960” resulted which, after editing, was published in the Journal (1961, 13: 646–650) as a “Preliminary Proposal for an EEG Terminology”.

For a number of years Gastaut, with the energetic support of Robert Naquet and others, had conducted an annual “Colloque de Marseille” in the early autumn (the 25th and last was held in 1980). These were not part of the Federation’s activities but they increasingly attracted an international audience and in October 1960 the opportunity was taken by most of those closely concerned with the running of the Federation to meet for two days in Marseilles to discuss the organization of the Advanced Course and the Congress to be held in the following year. The main topic, however, was the Constitution, the deficiencies of which were becoming more and more apparent. As a consequence of this meeting a “Committee on Amendment of the Statutes” was set up consisting of H. Gastaut (Marseilles), Grey Walter (Bristol), M.A. Brazier (Boston), W. Storm van Leeuwen (Leyden), C. Henry (Hartford), O. Magnus (Wassenaar) and H. Petsche (Vienna), with W.A. Cobb (London) as chairman. It fell to the last to draft all the proposals and to collate the voluminous and often contradictory opinions expressed by his colleagues.

The administration of the Federation, as required by the Constitution of 1951 (Appendix 2), was by an Executive Committee consisting of “the President, three Vice-Presidents, the Secretary, the

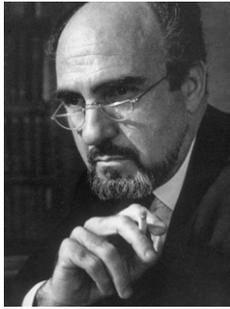


Fig. 4.1. Henri Gastaut of Marseilles, first Secretary and third IFSECN President.

Treasurer, all elected by the General Assembly, in addition to one representative from each of all the national societies who will be elected annually by his national society” (Statute V). The General Assembly, meeting only once in four years, was “composed of all the officers of the member societies” (Statute VI).

Thus at this time, if every society played its part, which was not always the case, there were 25 representatives of societies in the Executive Committee plus the six officers, elected by the

General Assembly, 31 in all. Despite the fact that Statute VII permitted one of the members of the Committee to call a meeting at any time, this was clearly impossible and physical meetings could only take place at the times of Congresses, far too long an interval for effective administration. Equally, consensus by correspondence was immensely time consuming and expensive. In practice the day-to-day affairs of the Federation fell more and more into the hands of the officers.

The solution arrived at was to limit the Executive Committee to the elected officers, substituting the Past-President for the three Vice-Presidents, and adding the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal to create the closest possible liaison between it and the Federation. The old Executive Committee was renamed the Council, interposed between the Executive Committee and the General Assembly, voting by post on proposals put to it by the Executive and meeting before the General Assembly at Congresses.

Apart from requiring each society to elect a delegate the Federation rightly made no attempt



Fig. 4.2. From left to right:

- Robert (Bob) Schwab of the Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, where he and M.A.B. Brazier organized the business side of the Journal.
- Robert (Bobby) Naquet, assistant to Gastaut in Marseilles, ubiquitous figure at the Colloquia, Secretary 1961–1969, President 1977–1981.
- Henri Gastaut of Marseilles. Dynamic leader of French EEG, Convener of the International Federation 1949, Secretary 1949–1957, President 1957–1961.
- Otto Magnus of Wassenaar, The Netherlands. European co-editor of the Journal with Storm van Leeuwen, 1957–1961. Organizer of the Advanced Courses in Marseilles, 1961 and Salzburg, 1965.

to interfere in the organization of the societies. Thus “all the officers” might be as many as a society pleased, which was felt to be inequitable. Accordingly, the General Assembly was defined as the Council and three officers, or their specified alternates, of each Member Society.

With the addition of a definition of voting rights (Statute VIII), of the Fiscal Period which fixed the term of officers and committees (Statute IX), and the setting up of a Nomination Committee (Statute XI) to conduct elections the above changes provided a workable constitution as democratic as possible within the limits set by general meetings only at four yearly intervals.

As will be described in the next section on the Journal, the Federation had suddenly become the possessor of significant capital and the potential of an appreciable annual income. It was essential to regularize the finances and protect them, so far as possible, from taxation. Statute XIV and its associated Bye-Laws set out the new financial framework.

At this time the titles of the Member Societies, with very few exceptions, mention only the EEG and this restricted interest is clearly shown by the contemporary Society Proceedings in the Journal, which rarely refer to topics other than EEG and cerebral electrophysiology. This limitation was felt by some, particularly Gastaut and Cobb, to be inimical to the healthy future of the Federation. Today most laboratories are of “Clinical Neurophysiology” and few restrict their interests to the EEG alone, but in 1960 there was considerable resistance to the idea of deliberately expanding the scope of the Federation, despite the second part of its title. The problem was of immediate consequence because electromyography and electroneurography had arranged a meeting to be held in 1961 in Pavia and there was talk of setting up their own Federation. The solution arrived at, of giving EMG its own Commission within the Federation and direct representation in the Executive, was to prove highly controversial, though finally accepted by all the members of the committee and later by the General Assembly.

Since the Statutes could only be changed at four yearly intervals it was thought desirable to add to them a set of Bye-Laws which could be changed at any time with the postal agreement of the members of the Council. The new Statutes and Bye-Laws were published later with the Proceedings of the General Assembly (Journal, 1962, 14: 935–952).

1. The EEG Journal

The circulation of the Journal continued to increase, to 2800 by the end of 1960, and so did the number of submitted papers, resulting in an alarming publication delay, despite the printing of 850 pages in 1959 and 960 in 1960. An instruction to authors to shorten their papers to not more than 4000 words and six figures was published (Journal, 1959, 11: 438), though with little noticeable effect. In spite of a deficit in 1958 of \$11,000, largely due to the printing of back issues, the account was in balance again by the end of 1959. Jasper declared that it was necessary to increase the subscription to \$13. It is noteworthy that after 10 years of operation the Journal had never been able to pass on any profit to the Federation, which had been the hope at the founding meeting of the latter in 1949. However, this was about to change.

In his report on 1958 Jasper announced the resignation of Pierre Gloor from the Montreal office and his own intention to resign at the end of 1961. He thought that the Journal should be handed over to a “reputable international publishing house”. During the following year there was much exploration and discussion of a possible publisher and of a new editorial structure, since the “American” office would soon be vacant and in Europe Magnus and Storm van Leeuwen wished to resign.

The possibility of publishing in Europe was favoured by some on the grounds that it would be less expensive and also that it would favour the much prized international character of the Journal. A large majority of contributors and of

subscribers were American and it was feared that, if the Editor-in-Chief and the publisher were also American, the claim to be international might be hard to sustain. The first mention of Elsevier occurs in a letter from Cobb to Jasper in December 1959.

However, in April 1960 Jasper reported that negotiations with The American Institute of Biological Sciences in Washington were far advanced. Why they fell through is not apparent from the correspondence, though the problem mentioned in the previous paragraph may have been one factor. At any rate, in September 1960 Jasper concluded a remarkable contract with the Elsevier Publishing Company of Amsterdam, whereby the Federation would retain control of the editing of the Journal and receive one-third of the profits, without liability in the event of loss. Furthermore, Elsevier bought the whole stock of back issues of the Journal and the Supplements for rather more than \$30,000. Thus, in an instant the fortunes of the Federation were transformed. Issues in future were to be bimonthly and the first under the new imprint appeared in January 1961, with a very modest foreword from Jasper under the heading "Letter from the Editors".

Meanwhile, Jasper had been persuaded to remain for a while longer as Editor-in-Chief and Cosimo Ajmone Marsan became "Editor for the Western Hemisphere and the Far East". Not long after this Otto Magnus resigned, leaving Storm van Leeuwen alone as "Editor for Europe and the Middle East". Things did not work out too well at first and in a letter of August 1961 Jasper says: "We should not have changed the editorial board at the same time as the publisher."

Another publishing effort of this period should be mentioned, though at the time it had no direct connection with the Journal. Books on EEG were few, incomplete and partially out of date and it was felt that the Federation should produce a comprehensive text as part of its educational commitment. The two Frenchmen, Gastaut and Rémond, had been much impressed by the story behind a highly successful French mathematical text which

had been apparently written by Bourbaki; apart from being that of a 19th century French general this name was unknown to mathematicians. It transpired that it was a pseudonym for a team of writers who had all corrected each other's texts until something near perfection had been achieved.

Accordingly, although discussions had begun some months before, the *éditeur fictif* came into being in July 1960 under the name of Fiseeg, and his component parts were Jasper, Walter, Gastaut, Brazier, Cobb, Fischgold, Henry, Magnus, Rémond and Storm van Leeuwen. Much as we all approved of the plan, by the time many letters had been exchanged to establish the chapter headings, their contents and their authors, the initial impetus had been lost and no one could find the time or energy to begin the serious business of writing. The project lingered on for at least two years before quietly dying, though it was to be revived again under another name some years later.

2. The Fifth International Congress, Rome

Though it was not strictly part of the Congress it is proper to mention here the Advanced Course in EEG which was held immediately beforehand. This had been conceived in Brussels and Otto Magnus had been charged with its organization, assisted by Willem Storm van Leeuwen. As soon as Marseilles had been chosen as the site it was obvious that Gastaut and Robert Naquet should join them to form an organizing committee.

Through the good offices of Gastaut the Faculté de Médecine and the Cité Universitaire were made available, making it possible to run the course very inexpensively; in fact 80 of the 420 participants, from 40 countries, were technicians. They were, as it turned out, holding their first international meeting.

The course, from August 28 to September 2, 1961, was opened by three doctors *honoris causa* of the University of Aix-Marseilles in colourful academic robes and tall hats. It consisted of lectures in the mornings and EEG interpretation

sessions in the afternoons, with ample time to enjoy the pleasures of the Provence. It was voted a great success.

Planning for the congress program had begun two years before with a poll of Member Societies, which attempted to find from them the most favoured topics and structure. In October 1960 the officers and some other members of the Federation met the Italian organizers (there was no formally constituted Organizing Committee as yet) to draw up the program. They were Prof. Gozzano, Dr. Vizioli and Dr. Ricci, President, Secretary and Treasurer, respectively.

The Congress was held in the Palazzo Pio of Rome in the week of September 4 and at the same time as the Neurological Congress. The inaugural ceremony was appropriately splendid and numerous dignitaries had their say in grandiloquent phrases.

The meeting of the Executive Committee arranged to take place before the General Assembly was an object lesson on how not to do such things. It was held during lunch in a crowded restaurant, with waiters constantly moving around the tables, with the only window open to the heat and noise of the Via della Conciliazione, and with some 20 members speaking French or English, in most cases not their native languages.

At the General Assembly the Treasurer pointed out that expenditure had been rather more than income and he proposed a more rational system of contributions from the Societies, based on the numbers of their members.

Initially it was agreed to pay \$5 per 10 members, amounting in all to about \$850 per year. The Societies had also been asked to contribute \$2 per head to support the Congress and this was to continue. The new wealth provided by the sale of the Journal was, for the present at least, to be regarded as a fund for the support of the Journal and any other publications of the Federation.

The new Constitution was explained and discussed without engendering any great heat. The approval of the General Assembly is recorded as being unanimous. Three distinguished electromyographers were then proposed to form the EMG Commission. They were Fritz Buchthal (Denmark), I. Hausmanova (Poland) and Ed Lambert (USA); these names were to prove controversial, not for any personal reason, but because they were not all members of member societies; at the time they were accepted without demur.

Although strictly speaking the new Constitution would not be in force until after the Congress an attempt was made to act according to it in the election of the officers who would form the Executive Committee. A Nomination Committee had been set up under Grey Walter, the immediate Past-President. Its proposals of Mary Brazier as President, R.G. Naquet as Secretary and W.A. Cobb as Treasurer (for a second term) were accepted. The new style Executive Committee thus consisted of the above with Jasper (Editor-in-Chief), Gastaut (Past-President) and Buchthal (EMG Commission).