

60 Jahre DVMLG

DVMLG

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The birth pangs of DLMPS

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Historical note

This note was written around 2010 at the request of Wilfrid Hodges, then the President of the *Division for Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science* (DLMPS), to explain the history of the institution on its website. It is included in this volume with minimal changes with the permission of the author. In 2015, the DLMPS changed its name to *Division for Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science and Technology* (DLMPST) and this also resulted in a name change for its mother organisation the *International Union of History and Philosophy of Science* (IUHPS) which now became the *International Union of History and Philosophy of Science and Technology* (IUHPST). Since this note predates these changes, the old names and acronyms are used.

Background

The DLMPS was born in 1955—but its delivery involved complications, many of them surprisingly modern and relevant today. This note provides a brief history.

Several international societies for logic, methodology and the philosophy of science were founded between 1945 and 1950; the most important one was IUPS, the *International Union of Philosophy of Science*.¹ Why was there such a need for large-scale organization after the Second World War? Logical groups existed already in pre-war times in Europe, but they were neither effective lobbies nor democratic associations. And in any case, logic and methodology were not recognized as independent disciplines, and sometimes seen as only semi-serious science. To achieve independence and status, two issues had to be resolved: one ideological, and one practical.

First, the ideology. The prominent Dutch and European logician-philosopher Evert Willem Beth (1908–1964) held that logic and philosophy of science were closely connected; it was bad to separate them. Moreover, only a coalition of the two could achieve independence and university-wide

¹English and French are the official languages of these organizations, and in the early days, the French names and acronyms were generally used; thus, *Union Internationale de Philosophie des Sciences*, abbreviated UIPS. In this text we use the English versions, however, which are more common today. For additional discussion of the *Neuordnung der globalen Wissenschaftswelt* in the 1940s and 1950s, cf. B. Löwe, *Grundlagenforschung der exakten Wissenschaften: die DVMLG und die Philosophie*, in this volume, § 2.

influence. If logic remains dependent on others, e.g., the mathematicians, then it will be in a marginalized and disdained position,² and contacts with philosophy of science and other sciences will be cut off.³ This was the reason for many people to avoid organizing within the International Mathematical Union (IMU). Only the already existing Association for Symbolic Logic (ASL) was a member of IMU. But on the other hand, nobody wanted to be dependent on the philosophers either, e.g., by joining the *Conseil International de Philosophie et des Sciences Humaines* (CIPSH).⁴ Beth was against every philosophical influence, and so was Tarski. The well-known historian of logic Bocheński stated: “We have to fight against both mathematicians and philosophers for its [formal logic’s] recognition.”⁵

Now the practical politics. An internal association of logicians, not tied to the somewhat America-centric ASL, offered a lot of advantages as a forum, including scientific congresses, journals and books.⁶ Then as now, international recognition translated into professorships, influence, and money from national governments.⁷ After World War Two, the international community founded large bodies like the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which collected many important organizations under its aegis; in particular, the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU). Recognition by ICSU, i.e., UNESCO, meant status, national funding, and even some direct United Nations subsidies. No wonder that many attempts were made to reach these flesh-pots of Egypt.

IUPS and IUHS

In 1949, a Belgian and a Swiss philosopher, Stanislas Dockx (1901–1985) and Ferdinand Gonseth (1890–1975), founded IUPS. They wanted institutional societies as members, and sought ICSU membership. To get the required scientific weight, they needed the ASL, but they hoped to do so at a low cost in voting power. Not every member of the ASL wanted IUPS membership, but Tarski and Church were supporters — they saw it as an improvement of the position of logic all over the world. Church wrote: “I have myself always been interested in an organization of international scope rather than one confined to the United States.”⁸ Even so, ICSU did not want small unions

²Tarski to Beth 13 August 1956, 18 December 1960, 30 May 1961; Heyting to Quine (President of the ASL) 17 June 1953; Reichenbach to Châtelet (President of the IUPS) 7 December 1952, Brouwer to Châtelet 20 March 1953.

³Beth to Destouches & Feys 8 May 1953, Beth to Rosser (President of the ASL) 21 December 1952.

⁴The DLMPs joined CIPSH in 2011.

⁵Bocheński to Quine (President of the ASL) 15 May 1953.

⁶Bocheński used in 1950, during negotiations with the president and secretary of ICSU, an issue of the JSL to show that logic is real science, and doesn’t belong to the humanities alone.

⁷Beth to the DLMPs Committee 13 January 1959, French version c. 1953.

⁸Church to Beth 14 April 1950.

like IUPS as members. Therefore, they asked the International Union of History of Science (IUHS)—already an ICSU member—and IUPS to unite. IUHS, and especially its president Petre Sergescu (1893–1954), did not like that, on the view that sharing means losing. But coerced by ICSU, they opened negotiations with IUPS.

Meanwhile there were changes in IUPS. The autocratic organization got a constitution and became more democratic. The pure logicians took control in 1952.⁹ Feys wrote in 1952:

With the elimination of prof. Gonseth, Dockx and Bayer from the committee, the fundamental difficulties to the adhesion of the ASL to [IUPS] are removed. [...] These three colleagues 1° considered [...] [IUPS] as a tool to secure advantages from UNESCO for the profit of organizations or ideas of their own. 2° [...] they were interested in rather literary forms of ‘Philosophy of Science’.¹⁰

And thus, the ASL became a member of IUPS in 1953.

But still there were negotiations with the unwilling IUHS. ICSU had a good solution: from 1955 on, it stopped the subsidy to IUHS. Another obstacle was removed by the death of Sergescu in 1954. IUHS surrendered, and the result in 1955 was the current International Union of History and Philosophy of Science (IUHPS), as we know it today. It was a union with two divisions, DLMPS for logic, methodology and philosophy of science, and DHS for history of science; each with its own council, and one governing committee for IUHPS as a whole.¹¹ The IUHPS immediately got entrance to ICSU.

The early years

Between 1955 and 1958, there was a period of consolidation, though occasional tremors shook the newly-formed coalition. In 1958 there was an international DLMPS congress in Brussels for a fresh constitution. As it happened, the secretary lost all minutes of the meeting. The European members Feys and Beth reconstructed the constitution unofficially in a back room, but passed it off as official afterwards. This relaxed style of management was frequently used by the Europeans, but it proved abhorrent to

⁹The new IUPS committee in 1952 consisted of Albert Châtelet (President, 1883–1960), Arend Heyting (1898–1980), Hans Reichenbach (1891–1953), Józef Maria Bocheński (1902–1995), Robert Feys (1889–1961), and Jean-Louis Destouches (1909–1980).

¹⁰Feys to Rosser (President of the ASL) September 1952. This was also the background for Tarski’s attack at a talk during the 1953 IUPS congress on Gonseth, and also for the “war” of already six years with Beth. Concerning Tarski, cf. A. Burdman Feferman and S. Feferman, Alfred Tarski, *Life and Logic*, pp. 250–252.

¹¹The 1955 committee for DLMPS consisted of: Jean Piveteau (President, 1899–1991), Destouches, Beth (also in the central committee of IUHPS); ASL was among the institutional members, and moreover all the national logical societies.

the more legalistic Americans. Tarski and Kleene were furious. Feys, Beth and others had to start all over again, and only after a series of juridical reconstructions, a compromise was reached. DLMPs installed a new committee,¹² and finally there was time for science.

¹²Stephen Kleene (President, U.S.A., 1909–1994), Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz (Poland, 1890–1963), Patrick Suppes (U.S.A., 1922–2014), Hans Freudenthal (The Netherlands, 1905–1990).