

## **CAS and ICCEES**

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As the Canadian Association of Slavists (CAS) celebrates its fiftieth anniversary, I can say that my involvement has come full circle. At the start of my academic career in 1969, becoming a member in the association was an important aspect of my professional development, especially the opportunity to interact with the leading scholars in the field, people like Adam Bromke, Carter Elwood, Bohdan Bociurkiw, H. Gordon Skilling, to mention some of the leading social scientists, and many others. Giving a paper at the annual CAS meeting was an expectation that I enjoyed, even if I dreaded at times the comments or reactions to my papers.

Sometime in 1979, Adam Bromke of McMaster University contacted me about the possibility of my taking over the publication of the newsletter of the International Committee for Soviet and East European Studies (ICSEES) that had been published in Glasgow. Adam Bromke had been one of the founders of ICSEES and the leading organizer of the first World Congress of Soviet and East European Studies in Banff in 1974. Although that was unsuccessful, it would seem that the effort I put into it made me a candidate to replace Don Karl Rowney of Bowling Green University in Ohio as secretary of ICSEES at the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Congress of Soviet and East European Studies in Garmisch-Partenkirchen in September 1980. Adam Bromke's term as president of ICSEES was also coming to an end and, as a Canadian presence on the executive of ICSEES was sought, I was, of course, excited at the prospect of serving in an international scholarly organization.

The CAS executive approved my nomination by Adam Bromke and I was duly elected secretary of ICSEES at the world congress in Garmisch-Partenkirchen in 1980 and re-elected at every congress since. My involvement in ICSEES (which changed its name from committee to council in 1988 and again from International Council for Soviet and East European Studies to International Council for Central and East European Studies – ICCEES - in 1993) was to some degree at the expense of further involvement in CAS. I considered myself, as secretary of ICSEES/ICCEES, as a sort of international civil servant since CAS had two representatives on ICSEES/ICCEES. A decision by CAS in 1995 to elect only one representative on ICCEES paved the way for my becoming automatically the second representative (according to the Organizational Rules, Canada is entitled to two representatives on ICCEES).

I am still secretary of ICCEES and also one of the two CAS representatives (at least until 2005). Had it not been for CAS and my initial involvement, I would never had this extraordinary experience to serve in an international organisation in our field and to be so immersed in it, and not just through my research and publications. I thank CAS for approving my nomination and especially Adam Bromke for giving me this opportunity twenty-five years ago.

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