



## IUGS International Commission on the History of Geological Sciences (INHIGEO)

### "Anniversaries": INHIGEO, IGC 1968 and the Cold War, 50 years ago

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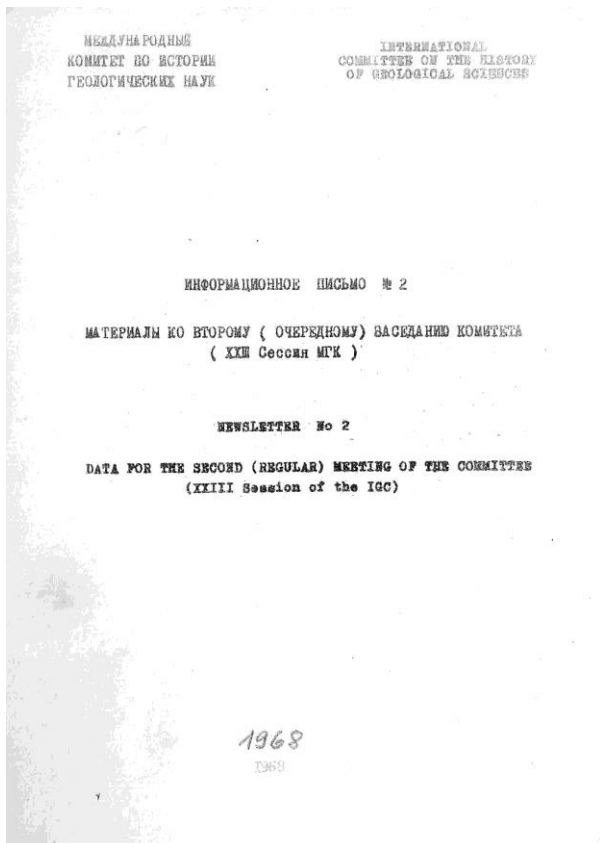


Figure A: INHIGEO Newsletter Nr 2, 1968.  
<http://www.inhigeo.com/annual.html>

Although the International Commission on the History of Geological Sciences has celebrated its foundation (1967) and its glorious 50 years of development in 2017, the founding of the INHIGEO had an interesting history before that time and a special background. It goes further back, to a time span that takes us back in the middle of the Cold War, when the world was divided into two zones of political influence. The first initiative came from the Russian geologist Vladimir Tikhomirov who was pursuing the objective of establishing the history of geosciences within the International Geological Community. A first step in these activities was successful under the umbrella of the USSR Academy of Sciences and other USSR institutions. The leap into the 21st IGC in Copenhagen was much less successful. Although Thikomirov provided a first proposal for the topic, this received no attention. Four further years of promoting the goal in the international networks helped to create a milieu of acceptance for the proposal that was announced at the 22nd IGC in New Delhi and approved by the “General Assembly” of the IGC on 22nd December 1964.

The location for the first “Constituent Assembly” was chosen within a Soviet Republic, not in the heart but rather at the western periphery of the Soviet Empire: as one of the smallest of 15 Soviet Republics Armenia showed a uniqueness in respect of its foreign policy with the diaspora in France, Lebanon and the United States. It was helpful, too, that the IUPHS Vice-president was A. T. Grigorian, a native of Armenia. For the first meeting thirty-five geoscientists from 15 countries visited Yerevan. The group was impressively international, but the Newsletter represented on a small scale the division of power in the Cold War. It was published in two languages: Russian and English.

ON THE AFFILIATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE  
ON THE HISTORY OF GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES

The transfer of the International Committee on the History of Geological Sciences (INHIGEO) from the International Geological Congress to the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), its task and membership were approved by the Council of the IUGS at the meeting in Prague on August 23, 1968.

INHIGEO became affiliated with the International Union of the History and Philosophy of Science (IUHPS). Affiliation was granted on August 29, 1968 by the General Assembly of the Union in Paris.

At the end of a long and difficult path when the 'Constituent Assembly' was due to be approved by the IGC in Prague 1968, the meeting was unfortunately affected by the shocking invasion of the Russian tanks on the streets of the city, on 20th-21st August. The movement of the "Prague Spring" was crushed with brute force and although the meeting could not take place as scheduled, the INHIGEO emerged from this incident, thanks to the work of the IUGS Council, which approved the membership of the INHIGEO without a regular business meeting on 23th August.

These explanations are based on articles from the following book, which was launched at the INHIGEO Anniversary meeting in Yerevan in 2017:

Malakhova, I. (2012). The phenomenon of Vladimir Tikhomirov. In: *INHIGEO Newsletter* 44: 54-61. <http://www.inhigeo.com/annual.html>.

Figure B: INHIGEO Newsletter Nr 3, 1969.  
<http://www.inhigeo.com/annual.html>

Malakhova, I. (2017). The founding of INHIGEO: documents and letters, with comments. In: Mayer W., Clary R.M., Azuela L.F., Mota, T.S. &

Wolkowicz S. (eds.), *History of Geoscience: Celebrating 50 Years of INHIGEO*. Geological Society, London, Special Publications, 442, 9-19.

Oldroyd, D. (2014). A brief history of INHIGEO. In: *INHIGEO Annual Record*, 46: 46-47.  
<http://www.inhigeo.com/annual.html>

Rudwick, M. (2017). Insiders and outsiders: INHIGEO seen from the sidelines. In: Mayer W., Clary R.M., Azuela L.F., Mota T.S. & Wolkowicz S. (eds.), *History of Geoscience: Celebrating 50 Years of INHIGEO*. Geological Society, London, Special Publications, 442, 55-62.

Schneer, C.J. (1995). The Geologists at Prague: August 1968. History of the International Union of Geological Sciences. In: *Earth Sciences History*, 14: 172-201.