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Fiftieth anniversary of the “Cahiers”

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FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE "CAHIERS"

by *Andrée C. EHRESMANN*

RESUME. Brève histoire des "Cahiers" depuis leur création par Charles Ehresmann en 1957, suivie de l'index de tous les articles publiés jusqu'à maintenant.

1. First Volumes

Fifty years ago, in November 1957, Charles Ehresmann decided to regularly publish papers of Topology and Differential Geometry, in particular papers written by people participating to his newly created Paris Seminar, and possibly Theses. Initially he thought that the series of Seminars of the Institut Henri Poincaré (IHP) would be an ideal setting for that, and the Volume I of the "Cahiers" is published in this roneo series, under the title "Séminaire de Topologie et Géométrie Différentielle" 1957-58 (often abbreviated in Séminaire Ehresmann). However the Director of the series was Paul Belgodère who wanted that the papers correspond exactly to the lectures given in the seminars; and he did not accept theses which required a number of supplementary reprints (for administrative purposes). Charles, who called himself an anarchist, could not accept such a rule which he found without meaning, and a clash was unavoidable (it occurred about my own 3rd cycle thesis).

So he looked for an other publication process allowing for more freedom of content. Wandering in the different IHP offices, he discovered a unused Varityper. He knew this kind of machine because the proceedings of the "Colloque de Topologie, Strasbourg" he had organized in 1954 were composed on such a machine. The problem was to find a secretary able to compose the texts, since it was a long and difficult task: to be justified, each line had to be typed twice so that the machine might compute the width of the spaces between the words, and a new font was to be used for italics, indices, mathematical symbols and so on. Charles finally persuaded the CNRS to pay a secretary for this work, and volumes II (1959-60) to VIII were printed by the Paris Centre Pédagogique.

The diffusion was restrained to the people Charles met (in particular the participants to his seminar) and to a deposit in a specialized Paris bookstore. To indicate that the papers were less and less connected to the lectures given in the seminar, the title was gradually changed, up to the title "Cahiers de Topologie et Géométrie Différentielle" in Volume VIII (1966).

2. A quarterly periodical

During the printing by Dunod of his book "Catégories et Structures", Charles spoke of the "Cahiers", and Dunod proposed to print and diffuse them as a quarterly periodical. Thus from Volume IX (1967) on, the "Cahiers" have had 4 issues a year, with their still used blue cover. A change of secretary forced delays in the composition, so that no issue was published in 1970; that explains why the volume published in this 50th year is only numbered XLVIII.

In 1972, Dunod merged with Bordas who found that the "Cahiers" had not enough subscribers to be commercially interesting. So we decided to take care ourselves of the diffusion process, which I am still assuring. In 1975, a new problem occurred. When we moved to Amiens after Charles, aged 70, had to retire from the Université Paris VII, the CNRS refused to renew the secretary who composed the texts, and we had to compose them ourselves. Luckily the replacement of the Varsity by an electronic typewriter, and later on by a computer much facilitated the process.

After the death of Charles in 1979, I became the Director of the "Cahiers". In 1981-83 in addition to the regular issues (mostly devoted to the proceedings of the Conference organized in Amiens in Charles' memory in 1980), I published as Supplements the 7 volumes of

"Charles Ehresmann: Oeuvres complètes et commentées".

From Volume IX on, it was indicated that the "Cahiers" "publish original papers in Mathematics, the center of interest being the Theory of Categories and its applications, specially in Topology and Differential Geometry". To stress their categorical flavour, René Guitart suggested to add the word "Catégoriques" in the title, and from Volume XXV (1984) the title became "Cahiers de Topologie et Géométrie Différentielle Catégoriques". Moreover an Editorial Board was formed with several foreign

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mathematicians. Soon after, the composition process was simplified by asking authors to supply a file and a laser printed copy of their papers.

3. The "Cahiers" on Internet

Since 1989, a collaboration has been established with the electronic journal "Theory and Application of Categories": each year we mutually publish the other journal's table of contents, so that the "Cahiers" are referenced in the T_{AC} site

<http://tac.mta.ca/tac/cahiers/>

A specific internet site has been created (by J.-P. Vanbremeersch) for the "Cahiers" in 1999

<http://perso.wanadoo.fr/vbm-ehr/CT>

containing the index of all the papers already published and the English abstracts of the papers published since 1999.

The next move in production will be the free internet access to all the complete articles (1 year after their paper publication), on the NUM-DAM site. Already the 7 first volumes (under the title "Séminaire Ehresmann") can be accessed on the site:

<http://www.numdam.org/numdam-bin/feuilleter?j=SE&sl=0>

Soon Volumes I to XLVIII (the index of which are given hereafter) will also be freely available.

What will be the future? I sometimes think of suppressing the paper version and transforming the "Cahiers" in an electronic journal. Readers are encouraged to let me know their reactions to this idea...

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