



1950



STORIES



ICN TODAY



Tuberculosis and Polio

Poliomyelitis and Tuberculosis were the focus of nurses' care in some countries in the 1950s. In 1950, an ICN group visited Denmark on a fact-finding mission for nurses interested in Tuberculosis care and Tuberculosis treatment, especially in relation to the prevention of Tuberculosis and to BCG vaccination. The trip was supported and facilitated by the Danish Nurses Organization. Visits took place to various institutions in Zealand, included field visits to sanatoria for children and adults suffering with Tuberculosis and to seaside hospitals. This visit was organised following ICN's Exchange of Nurses Committee Resolution accepted by the Grand Council in Stockholm, which recommended that consideration should be given to arranging group journeys to study health conditions. (ICN 1950)

In 1959, ICN's Deputy General Secretary, Gwen Buttery attended the 15th International Tuberculosis Conference held in Istanbul, Turkey at which 62 countries were represented. This was the first time ICN had been invited to attend. There was an agenda proposal to create a new section within the International Union against Tuberculosis for nurses and social workers. It was hoped that the aim of eradication of the disease would be achieved through more nurses being drawn into the Union's activities by closer cooperation with ICN. Buttery addressed the conference remarking that a new section was not needed but that the Union could introduce its aims by fostering closer links with ICN, the recognised nursing organisation. Because of this ICN intervention, the Union proposed that nurses be included to serve on the Unions Technical Committee where appropriate (De Jong 1958)

Nurses in membership with ICN and working on WHO programmes continued to care for children with Poliomyelitis. In 1958, nurses worked on the WHO programme *the Plight of Poliomyelitis in the Middle East-WHO Support (1955-57)* that had been set up for children suffering from Poliomyelitis. These children were being cared for by trained physiotherapists in a Lebanese centre for the rehabilitation of handicapped children in order to help polio victims regain the use of their limbs, through hydrotherapy. WHO assisted this project during 1956 and in the early part of 1957. Ellen Broe, FNIF's Frist Director, visited Lebanon in 1958, where she learned about how children suffering from Poliomyelitis were being taken care and of and the need for national and international study and research to master this disease. WHO facilitated the exchange of information between researchers studying the Polio virus and who were trying to develop vaccines to prevent this merciless disease.

ICN (1950) Grand Council of the ICN meeting in Stockholm: Resolution No 15: Recommended consideration should be given to arranging group journeys to study health conditions *The International Nursing Bulletin* (1950) Vol VI (1):22)

De Jong F (1958). New outlook for long term Tuberculosis patients *International Nursing Review* (1958) P.. 48.



World Health Organization

Strengthening ICN Relationship with WHO

During the 1950s, ICN relationships were strengthened with governmental organisations and NGOs including WHO. Representation continued at meetings in the UN Headquarters with the support of the American Nurses' Association. Close contact continued with the Nursing Section of WHO and a relationship was established with the ILO relating to the conditions of nurses. This collaboration culminated in 1959 in the ICN report *Employment and Conditions of Work of Nurses* which was sent to ICN member nurse associations in 63 countries.

In 1949, in the first year of WHO's existence, its staff numbered 400, representing 41 nationalities and recorded membership of 57 countries. Most of those countries were suffering from the Influenza epidemic. Authority for field work had been transferred to regional offices and, while large scale planning of field operations remained in WHO Headquarters in Geneva, operational field operations were based in New Delhi, for the South East Asia region, in Alexandria for the Eastern Mediterranean region, and in Washington for the Americas region. Other regional offices were being created in Europe, Africa and the Western Pacific areas. WHO also maintained an Epidemiological Intelligence Station in Singapore.

WHO had been an interim organisation up to then, carrying out essential duties mainly inherited from the League of Nations. The WHO Expert Committee on Maternal and Child Health requested that mass immunisation campaigns against Diphtheria, Whooping Cough and other childhood diseases, that were causing high mortality, be carried out in each country. The first international medical research was undertaken in Copenhagen in connection with BCG vaccination in Europe and elsewhere. Tuberculosis surveys were being conducted by WHO in 10 Eastern Mediterranean countries and in Central and South America. Malaria control projects had begun in Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. On the basis of worldwide statistical analyses compiled by WHO, the world's death rate had reached its lowest figure in recorded history. (WHO 1950)

The Second Assembly of WHO met in Rome, in June 1950, during which it instructed the Director-General to appoint an Expert Committee on nursing which would meet during 1950. Two nurses were appointed to WHO headquarters secretariat in Geneva, during July and August 1949, and preparations were made for an early meeting of the committee in 1950. Daisy Bridges, Executive Secretary of ICN, was co-opted on to this committee.

Expert Committees played an important role in WHO's reporting to the Assembly and thus providing advice on the technical aspects of health problems. ICN and the League of Red Cross Societies had official relationship with WHO and it was envisaged that further work would be undertaken to establish co-operative relationships on the exchange of activity between these organisations. (Baggallay 1950) From 20-26 February 1950, the Expert Nursing Committee met in Geneva and recommended that measures to alleviate the worldwide shortage of nurses be undertaken and that studies at national and international levels on the factors preventing the recruitment of nurses should commence. Competition for places, salaries, living conditions, and customs and practices were mentioned as possible causes. The study group should include psychologists and sociologists. Governments should also be encouraged to consider minority group and immigrants. Daisy Bridges was ICN's representative on this committee (ICN 1950)

The fourth WHO Assembly opened in Geneva on 7 May 1951. ICN, being in official relationship with WHO since 1948 as an NGO, was represented by Bridges and Marjorie Duvillard, Director of Le Bon Secour School of Nursing, Geneva. During the Assembly, the WHO Director-General reviewed the progress of the organisation over the previous year and called for particular attention to be paid to venereal disease control, anti-malarial projects and the expansion of maternal and child health services. Following the plenary session, the Advisory group discussed undergraduate medical education, training of public health personnel and training of auxiliary personnel. (ICN 1951)

In 1951, the international meeting of the ICN Board of Directors was held in Brussels to discuss the Terms of Agreement between ICN and WHO. Delegates from 21 member countries were present. In the Terms of Agreement, already signed between ICN and WHO, ICN had agreed to carry out a Study of Advanced Programmes for Nursing Education throughout the world, and to make findings available to WHO as well as to its own members. The study was being undertaken by the FNIF, under the direction of Ellen Broe, its director. Other matters discussed related to the International Refugee Organisation. Since June 1950, ICN had assumed responsibility for the Displaced Persons of Nurses Professional Register which had been taken over from the International Refugee Organisation under the guidance of Alice Sher.

The fifth World Health Assembly opened at the Palais des Nations, Geneva on 5 May 1952 and was attended by the ICN Executive Director, Gwen Buttery, and by Madame Germaine Vernet, President of the Association of Suisse des Infirmières et Infirmiers Diplômés. Dr. Brock Chisholm, WHO Director General, on presenting the Annual Report, which covered the activities of the organisation during 1951, spoke on the need for all assisting governments to mobilise as economically and as efficiently as possible the resources needed to raise the health standards of their people. He spoke about WHO developments during its third full year of work that included the introduction of directing and coordinating authority and decentralisation which had begun in 1949 and that had then been completed and on how the co-ordinating role of WHO had placed huge unforeseen strains on the organisation. (ICN 1952)

At the ICN tenth Quadrennial Congress in Petropolis, Brazil in July 1953, the relationship between WHO and professional nursing was presented by Lyle Creelman, one of the first WHO official nursing representatives to attend an ICN Congress. She succinctly outlined the commencement of nursing in WHO confirming that, at the first meeting of the World Health Assembly in Geneva in 1948, there was a long discussion on the role of nursing and the need for well qualified nurses in the development of health services. She continued by confirming that, at the following meeting in 1949, the resolution was passed establishing an Expert Committee on Nursing, and that two nurses who had already been appointed to the Headquarters Secretariat had been appointed to the Expert Committee in the Public Health Administration and Maternal and Child Health Sections. Later, a nursing section was set up within WHO with Olive Baggallay as the Chief.

Creelman acknowledged the valuable contribution and support of ICN during meetings at which ICN clearly stated the desire of nurses to assume their responsibilities in the field of international health as it had been one of the first non-governmental agencies to receive relationship with WHO and had the right through representation to speak for professional nursing and to attend as observer meetings of WHO Regional Committees. 30 nurses from 12 countries sat on the WHO Nursing Advisory Panel at that time, which was chaired by the Executive Secretary of ICN. (73) This collaboration signified that progress was being made between ICN and WHO that would lead to improving working relations in future decades.

WHO (1950) WHO Highlights of 1949, *The International Nursing Bulletin* (1950) Vol VI (1): 6-7

Baggallay, O. (1950) Nursing in the WHO. *The International Nursing Bulletin* (1950) Vol VI (1):9.

Second Assembly of the WHO (1950) Baggallay, O. (1950) Nursing in the WHO. *The International Nursing Bulletin* (1950) Vol VI (1):9

ICN (1950) Measures to alleviate the world-wide shortage of nurses *The International Nursing Bulletin* (1950) Vol VI (2):7.

ICN (1952) The Fifth World Health Assembly, Palais des Nations, Geneva *The International Nursing Bulletin* (1952) Vol VIII (2):2).



1950



STORIES



ICN TODAY



ICN TODAY

Tuberculosis and Polio (see story for background)

Today, more than 3.5 million people with tuberculosis go undiagnosed and untreated each year. Many of those missed will either die or be placed on inappropriate treatment –many will not be treated and continue to infect others in their communities. Furthermore, nearly half a million will be diagnosed with multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) which is more difficult and more expensive to diagnose and treat. Major efforts are needed to close this gap and nurses on the front lines play an important role in detecting, diagnosing, and treating these patients.

ICN's TB/MDR-TB Project which ran from 2005 to 2019 helped to build global nursing capacity in the prevention, care and treatment of TB. This was achieved by training experienced nurses to cascade information to nursing colleagues and other health workers with the purpose of making improvements to patient care delivery. The practice-oriented nature of the training programme enabled nurses to improve the implementation of policies and guidelines relating to TB and MDR-TB using a patient-centred approach. The project was part of the Eli Lilly MDR-TB Partnership. The training courses are run in countries with a high burden of TB and MDR-TB where ICN has a strong working relationship with the national nurses association.

The ICN TB/MDR-TB Project trained 2,224 nurses through the Training for Transformation (TFT) courses in 17 countries in Africa, Asia, and the Russian Federation. These nurses in turn rolled out the training to more than 166,000 nurses, doctors, allied health workers and community members – which equates to each nurse training approximately 76 additional people.





1953



STORY



AUDIO



Gerda Höjer, Daisy Bridges and Ellen Broe

Tenth ICN Congress, Petropolis, Brazil

The tenth Congress was held at in Petropolis, near Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 12-17 July 1953 and was hosted by the Brazilian Graduate Nurses Association. A total of 1,307 nurses from 46 countries attended the Congress. In her welcoming address, Glete de Alcantara, President of the Brazilian Graduate Nurses Association, noted that it was the first ICN Congress to be held in Latin America. Following this, an official address was given by Dr. Jurandir Lodi, representing the Ministry of Education and Health. At the opening ceremony, eight national nurses' associations were admitted to membership of ICN: the Sri Lankan Nurses Associations (Ceylon at that time), the National Order of Nurses of the Congo, the College of Nurses of Chile, the Nurses Association of Jamaica, the National Association of Nurses of Luxembourg, the Nurses Association of Northern Rhodesia (Zambia today), the Pakistan Nurses Federation and Trinidad & Tobago Registered Nurses Association.

Topics discussed at the Congress sessions were the educational work of ICN, new trends in curricula for schools of nursing, teaching and supervision of auxiliary personnel, new trends in medical treatment and the work of the ICN nursing services committee. Also discussed were acceptable standards of nursing service, with particular reference to Tuberculosis nursing and the relationship between WHO and professional nursing. Gerda Höjer of Sweden retired as ICN President and Marie Madeleine Bihet was elected President for the next quadrennial with the Watchword "Wisdom". She presented at the final session of the Congress, where she voiced her opinion that the student nurse must convince herself on entry to nursing that she was being prepared for a humanitarian profession and one which had already gained real status. She went on to say that it was important that the student was made aware that professional progress depended largely on the strength of professional association.

The Grand Council met and discussed policy matters. Of interest were the staff issues and better accommodation for ICN, both seen as important for its growth. The Chairman of the Nursing Service Committee reported on the result of a *Study of Nursing Needs and Resources*, as these related to professional nursing service. She reported that the demand for nurses had increased throughout the world because of improvements in hospital and public health facilities, the building of new hospitals and the care provided at an earlier stage of mental illness. She also reported that nursing must cooperate with the agencies delivering services in order to ensure maximum contribution in the care of the aged and infirm. However, she noted that there was a shortage of young people entering nursing due to the lowered birth rate in the years prior to the Second World War. Of particular interest to nurses also was *The International Code of Nursing Ethics* that had been unanimously accepted by the Grand Council, prior to the 1953 Congress. The *Code* was later printed and 500 copies were distributed to schools of nursing worldwide. The *Code* was later translated into languages of many ICN members. (ICN 1953)

ICN (1953). ICN X Quadrennial Congress, Petropolis, Brazil *The International Nursing Bulletin* (1953) Vol IX (1):24-5).





1953



STORY



AUDIO



Tenth ICN Congress, Petropolis, Brazil



Gerda Höjer, Daisy Bridges and Ellen Broe

The tenth Congress was held in Petropolis, near Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 12-17 July 1953 and was hosted by the Brazilian Graduate Nurses Association. A total of 1,307 nurses from 46 countries attended.

At the opening ceremony, eight national nurses' associations were admitted as ICN members. Topics discussed at the Congress sessions included the educational work of ICN, new trends in curricula for schools of nursing, teaching and supervision of auxiliary personnel, new trends in medical treatment and the work of the ICN nursing services committee.

Also discussed were acceptable standards of nursing service, with particular reference to Tuberculosis nursing and the relationship between the World Health Organization and professional nursing. Marie Madeleine Bihet was elected President for the next quadrennial with the Watchword "*Wisdom*".

The Grand Council met and discussed policy matters. It was noted that there was a shortage of young people entering nursing due to the lowered birth rate in the years prior to the Second World War. Of particular interest to nurses also was "*The International Code of Nursing Ethics*" that had been unanimously accepted by the Grand Council, prior to the 1953 Congress. The Code was later printed and 500 copies were distributed to schools of nursing worldwide. It was also translated into the languages of many ICN members.





1954



STORY



ICN
TODAY



Florence Nightingale. Credit: Wellcome Collection. CC BY

International Nursing Review Celebrates Florence Nightingale

With the April 1954 edition, *The International Nursing Bulletin*¹ assumed its former title – *The International Nursing Review*¹ – by which it was known from 1929-1939. It was significant that this change coincided with the centenary celebrations being held in 1954 to honour Florence Nightingale and her work at the Barrack Hospital in Scutari. It was the impetus of war that gave her the opportunity to make far reaching nursing change in Crimea but her own inspiring, unwavering efforts made her remembered. This year marked 100 years since she went to Crimea and 44 years since her death. She had the vision to see the value of nurses and nursing into the future, and beyond the boundaries of her own country and why she is remembered as one of the greatest nurses of all time”.

ICN (1954) “New Name for Journal” *International Nursing Review* 1954 Vol 1(1) Editorial: 3.

¹*The International Nursing Bulletin* first appeared following the ICN Quadrennial Congress in Atlantic City in 1947 and has been published quarterly each year since then. The *Bulletin* publication activities were temporarily suspended in 1939.





1954



STORY



ICN
TODAY



ICN TODAY

International Nursing Review Celebrates Florence Nightingale (see story for background)

Florence Nightingale continues to be an inspiration to nurses today. In 2020, the bicentennial of her birth, we will celebrate the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife. This same year the first WHO *State of the World's Nursing* Report will be published. ICN is supporting a variety of activities in 2020 to mark this important year including a Bicentennial Conference – [Nightingale2020](#) – to be held in London in October 2020.





1957



STORY



AUDIO



Participants at the 1957 ICN Congress in Rome

11th ICN Congress, Rome, Italy

The Congress held from 27 May – 1 June, at the Palazzo dei Congressi, Esposizione Universale Romana, was hosted by the Italian Nurses' Association and was attended by 3,000 nurses from 57 national nurses associations. Donna Carla Gronchi, wife of the President of the Republic, had given her patronage to the congress and His Holiness the Pope received all Congress participants in audience at St. Peter's. The Congress was opened by ICN President Marie Bihet, who along with delegates enjoyed the parade of nurses in national dress. Congress discussions centred on different aspects of nursing, including responsibility for nursing administration and the principles of administration applied to nursing education and nursing service. A paper titled *The Principles of Nursing Administration* was presented by E.F.L. Brech, a consulting specialist in administration. Agnes Ohlson ([read more](#)) from the United States was elected the new ICN President for the period during the meeting of the Grand Council held prior to the Congress. She was given the Watchword "Inquiry".

In August 1958, a visit to Austria was undertaken by Alice C. Sher. She attended the meeting of the European League for Mental Hygiene in the University of Vienna; the 11th annual meeting of the World Federation for Mental Health, in the University of Vienna; the annual meeting of the Trained Nurses' Association of Austria in Obertraun and visits to hospitals, schools of nursing, child welfare centres and a visit to the Hungarian refugee camp in Traiskirchen. Her programme was planned by Strobal, President of the Trained Nurses' Association of Austria and Neugebauer, Executive Secretary. The programme enabled her to become better acquainted with the training and working conditions of nurses in Austria. (ICN 1958)

ICN President. Agnes Ohlson, visited headquarter staff in Geneva prior to the official visit to Ottawa, Copenhagen, Boston and New York. Ohlson addressed the tenth Anniversary Conference of the Association of Nurses' in the Northern Countries; the 50th Anniversary Convention of the Canadian Nurses' Association in Ottawa; and conferences of national importance in the United States. Gwen Buttery visited South Africa and addressed many meetings. Ellen Broe addressed the eighth Middle East Medical Assembly in Beirut and also visited Jordan. Following this, she presented at the Congress of the Northern Nurses Federation in Copenhagen.

In 1958, the Trained Nurses Association of India celebrated its Jubilee. The association began as the Association of Nursing Superintendents which was founded in 1905, at Lucknow, India. The first committee officers included nine European nurses holding administration posts in hospital. The first President was W. H. Klose, Hon Secretary, Burne and Hon. Treasurer Fawcett. As nurses had expressed interest in joining the association, at the annual conference in Bombay in 1908, a trained nurses' association was formed which was inaugurated in 1909. In 1922, following the merger of the two associations the Trained Nurses' Association of India was formed. Since its inception the association had concerned itself with member problems, personnel issues and the raising of nurse education. The TNAI Jubilee Conference at Hyderabad in 1959 was attended by nurses from the region, Burma, Thailand, Lebanon and Pakistan. (ICN 1952)

In 1959, Ellen Broe, Executive Director, participated in a Study Conference, sponsored by the South Pacific Regional Group of ICN member countries in Wellington, New Zealand from 11-15 May. This conference was attended by participants from 12 countries in the region including a large contingent from New Zealand. Arrangements were made by the New Zealand Registered Nurses Association. En-route, Broe stopped off to visit ICN member nurses' associations in Boston, New York, Toronto, Vancouver and the Fiji Islands, arriving in Auckland for the Study Conference, the title of which was *The Present needs for a Satisfactory Nursing Service*. Broe presented in addition to WHO Regional Office Nursing adviser, Lily Turnbull. (ICN 1959)

For the first time in 1959, a field visit was undertaken to Latin America by ICN's Frances Beck, during which she visited 10 countries in the area. Many other such professional visits were made by headquarter staff during this period. By invitation of the Ministers of Health and the national nurses' associations visits were made to Poland and Yugoslavia, thus taking steps to bring back the nurses of those two countries into closer contact with their colleagues in ICN.

The Board of Directors met in Helsinki in July 1959 under the auspices of the National Council of Nurses of Finland and met with the Minister of the Interior. The American Nurses Association undertook responsibility to attend UN meetings. A pamphlet on the *Basic Principles of Nursing Care* was approved for publication. A new economic and social welfare division was formed in order to improve the economic and social conditions of nurses. Celebrations took place during this meeting to celebrate the 60th anniversary of ICN.

ICN (1958) Visit to India by Miss Alice C. Sher *International Nursing Review* pgs 80-84)

Smith C A (1952) *Nursing in Pakistan*. *International Nursing Bulletin Winter*. pgs 13-14. *Notes from Archives (1954)*

Ellen Broe, Executive Director, participated in a Study Conference, sponsored by the South Pacific Regional Group of ICN Member Countries in Wellington (1959) *International Nursing Review* 1960 February:21.





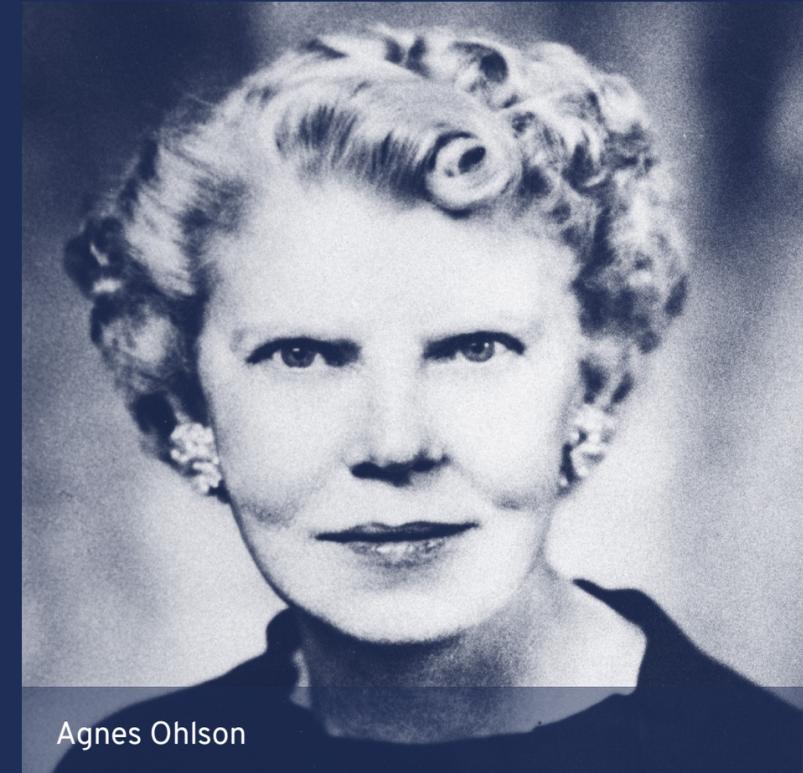
Agnes Ohlson

Agnes Ohlson (1902-1991) graduated from Boston's Peter Bent Brigham Hospital School of Nursing in 1926. For the next five years, she held various nursing positions at hospitals in Massachusetts. In 1931, she received a bachelor of science degree from Teachers College, Columbia University, and was employed as director of nursing at Waterbury Hospital in Connecticut. While in this position, she held office on the board of directors of the Connecticut Nurses Association and was recommended for appointment to the Connecticut State Board of Examiners for Nursing in 1935. The following year, Ohlson became permanent secretary and chief examiner for the board and remained in that position until she retired in 1963. During that period, she earned a Master's from Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut.

Troubled by disparities in the testing of candidates for registered nurse licensure in Connecticut and elsewhere, Ohlson requested the American Nurses Association to convene a meeting of state board representatives from across the country. This eventually led to the creation of the first national qualifying examination for nurse licensure in the U.S. Ohlson played a vital role in developing the State Board Test Pool Examination which became the accepted testing model for all states..

Between 1950 and 1958, she held the office of secretary followed by the office of president of the American Nurses Association. In 1957, she was elected president of the International Council of Nurses.

American Nurses Association (2019). Agnes K. Ohlson (1902-1991) 1996 Inductee ANA Hall of Fame. Available at: <http://ojin.nursingworld.org/FunctionalMenuCategories/AboutANA/Honoring-Nurses/NationalAwardsProgram/HallofFame/19962000Inductees/ohlsak5558.html>



Agnes Ohlson





1957



STORY



AUDIO



11th ICN Congress, Rome, Italy



Participants at the 1957 ICN Congress in Rome

The 11th ICN Congress was held from 27 May – 1 June 1957, at the Palazzo dei Congressi, Esposizione Universale Romana. It was hosted by the Italian Nurses' Association and 3,000 nurses from 57 national nurses associations attended.

Donna Carla Gronchi, wife of the President of the Republic, had given her patronage to the Congress and His Holiness the Pope received all Congress participants in audience at St. Peter's.

Congress discussions centred on different aspects of nursing, including responsibility for nursing administration and the principles of administration applied to nursing education and nursing service. A paper titled *The Principles of Nursing Administration* was presented. Agnes Ohlson from the United States was elected the new ICN President with the Watchword "*Inquiry*".

(Image: Nurses at the Rome Congress, 1957. Left to right: Dr Ruth Freeman, President of The National Health Council and the National League for Nursing; Katherine Kendall, US Public Health Service nurse; and Myrtle Coe, University of Minnesota School of Nursing)

