

WORKING PAPER ON THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOVEMENT

The purpose of this working paper is to outline the history of the world student movement, to assess its present position and the nature of the problems confronting it, and to discuss future possibilities.

Pre-World War II

After the first World War, part of the tremendous movement towards internationalism was the Confederation Internationale des Etudiants (CIE) which was the first international student movement in the world. It was mainly composed of Western European National Unions of Students, which had grown up as a part of a syndicalist (trade unions, professional associations etc) movement in Western Europe. CIE was mainly concerned with practical matters and practical co-operation such as travel and bilateral contact between National Unions of Students.

However, with the growth of fascism and nazism in Western Europe and as one of the results of the 2nd World War, the CIE broke down completely. When the nazis occupied Brussels, they confiscated the files of the CIE, thereby snuffing out the life of the 16 year old student organisation.

Post-World War II

After World War II, students in Europe became more and more convinced that international student cooperation and understanding were necessary and indispensable for peace and human welfare. Regardless of the countries from which they came, students were all filled with the hope that the war should not take place again and that they, as students and student leaders, were determined to do whatever they could, nationally and internationally, to see that student unions and organisations played their part in shaping a world where university education could take place and where mankind could live without fear of war. They began this task without any experience and in the spirit of an experiment. They had different political points of view, different national points of view, but were united by the idea that students had to co-operate internationally to prevent the devastation of war which they had themselves only so recently witnessed. Because this was their hope, they were ready to disregard political differences, to compromise on what they thought were technical matters. In 1946, the World Student Congress was called in Pargue. This Congress was intended as a preparatory meeting for the establishment of an international students' union and was attended by 300 students from 38 countries. The congress decided to form an International Union of Students (IUS) with a central secretariat and an executive committee with officers who could speak on behalf of the organisation.

1946 - IUS
founded

However, even at this stage it was apparent that the majority of the participants in the Congress were more concerned with putting across one particular political ideology than with prompting student unity. The executive committee

was elected and controlled by the majority, and furthermore, since the IUS was a Union, the decisions of the majority were binding on the minority, and the executive committee was empowered to make statements on behalf of all National Unions which were members of the IUS.

It was unfortunate that, even very early in its history, the IUS had a tendency to be dominated by one ideological line. The reasons were various - for one thing, voting in the IUS at that time was proportional. This meant that the Soviet Union, as the largest member organisation, had proportionately more votes than many of the other member organisations combined. Furthermore, since after the 2nd World War, the National Unions were weak in number of countries, one had the situation where the IUS Credentials Committee, dealing with India and Italy, attempted to force the Italian and Indian student delegations to accept, with full voting powers, minority student organisations. When the majority of delegations refused to accept this, it was made clear to them that there would be no place in the IUS for them.

Defection from the IUS

Towards the end of the 1940s when the IUS had been in existence for some years, the political differences which had existed from the outset became clearer and some disappointment and disillusionment with the existing structure was felt. There were a number of reasons for this disillusionment. The first was the stand taken by the IUS on a number of political matters, national and international. An example was the complete silence of the IUS on the coup d'etat in Czechoslovakia, where students who had demonstrated against the Communist take-over were arrested and imprisoned. Not only was the Czech student demonstration fired on, but all student groups and the National Union of Students were dissolved and certain professors and students were banned from the university. Yet the IUS Secretariat refused to condemn the action of the Czech authorities in suppressing the demonstration.

The most serious of all these political crises was the YUS Yugoslavia issue. Serious ideological differences between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia during 1947-8 led to the exclusion of Yugoslavia from the Comintern and to the cutting off of all Soviet aid to Yugoslavia. This was immediately followed by the exclusion of the People's Youth of Yugoslavia (YUS), a full member of the IUS, from the IUS, by the executive committee, which now replaced early cooperation with enmity by calling the People's Youth "fascists". The expulsion was, quite clearly, motivated by ideological differences, but was also unconstitutional, in that the executive committee itself expelled the People's Youth from the IUS, which was beyond its scope of authority.

In addition, a number of organisations were dissatisfied with the IUS simply because, during its existence, despite a number of resolutions taken on specific situations, the IUS had not been able to provide a practical programme of benefit to member organisations, and for many of these National Unions of Students, the primary purpose in joining an international organisation was to give something to, as well as to receive something from, international cooperation. These were the three main reasons for the spread of dissatisfaction.

Four elements facilitated control of the IUS by pro-Soviet element: (1) the permanent location of the headquarters in Prague, (2) affiliation with the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), (3) the requirement that the member National Unions carry out all the decisions of the IUS governing bodies, and (4) the granting of extensive policy-making powers to an executive which would run the IUS with a free hand between Congresses.

As disillusionment with the IUS gained ground, a number of special meetings were called to try to improve the situation. It should be mentioned that optimism, the hope of trying to change the world, existed for several years and that students, although dissatisfied with the IUS, hoped that by voicing their disagreement, they could effect changes within the organisation. However, this became more and more difficult as the intransigence of the IUS leadership grew, and a number of National Unions decided to try other means of achieving their aims and ideals. Although many of the organisations which took the initiative disaffiliated from the IUS, there was no organised walk-out from the IUS. The defection from the IUS took place over a number of years; for instance although a number of organisations came together in 1950 at the first International Student Conference (ISC) many of the founders of the ISC were members of the IUS up to 5 years later. The ISC was not necessarily seen at that time as an alternative to the IUS; rather it was seen as an organisation which could perhaps satisfy some of the crises and hopes which had not been fulfilled by the IUS.

Formation and Development of the ISC

1950 -
new student
movement

A number of national unions, on the initiative of three Scandinavian national unions, came together for the first time in 1950 in Stockholm, to discuss a new means of student cooperation. 17 Unions, mainly from Western Europe and North America and including YUS Yugoslavia, attended this Conference. At the first meeting, heated discussions took place concerning the structure of what became the ISC. Strong opinion was expressed in favour of a new organisation with an executive body, with executive powers and with officers, comprising a structure which could be an alternative to the IUS. A large majority, however, because of their experiences in the IUS, wanted a structure where everything was decentralised, where only the national unions of students had any powers, where no centralised body existed which could in any way take upon itself powers which had not been given to it by the national unions of students.

Hence the meeting decided not to establish a new organisation, but rather to create a much looser form of cooperation which would enable national unions of students to participate in a conference which could have no binding effect, no executive and no standing policy.

This structure, which existed only for a year, was that of international cooperation based upon delegated responsibilities to national unions of students. The basic idea was that each Conference was to come together without any control force, being only a grouping of national unions of students. Practical work, which was supposed to meet the needs of the student community, was given to national unions by the Conference as delegated responsibilities. One national union, eg, might be asked to organise a seminar, another to prepare a list of student hostels.

It must be realised that the original motivating force behind the Conference was, in part, the reaction of all the Western European National Unions to the blatantly political exclusion of Yugoslavia, in part a desire to see a new non-partisan political cooperation built up which would avoid the pitfalls that the IUS seemed to have fallen into, and which they believed could be organised in a way that would avoid the bitterness that had resulted from the IUS' partisan politics. This cooperation they believed, could be based on a structure, rather than a movement; a structure which would avoid the problems of the IUS by concentrating on practical activities and avoiding political engagement completely. Thus, eg, they believed it would be possible for such ideologically disparate national unions as YUS Yugoslavia and NUSEWNI Great Britain to sit together to plan cooperation.

1951 -
COSEC
founded

The 2nd ISC took place in Edinburgh in 1951 and was the first occasion when national unions had the opportunity to present to the Conference their delegated responsibilities. Partly because most Unions had not really been efficient in carrying out their tasks, and partly because it was felt that this procedure involving so much overlapping and extra expense was wrong anyhow, the question at the 2nd ISC was again whether or not some central structure should be organised which would assist National unions in carrying out their delegated responsibilities. The result of the 2nd ISC was the creation of the Coordinating Secretariat of National Unions of Students.

The decision to establish the Secretariat was taken only after long discussions, by a slender majority of 3 votes. The main reason against having such an international secretariat was the fear resulting from the experience with the IUS. A number of National Unions foresaw a danger in having their rights and powers taken over by an international secretariat which might later become a different body. The majority, however, felt that it was possible to legislate against these possible dangers and insisted that if National Unions of Students wanted some practical results of cooperation, they had to have somebody who could work fulltime on the problems of the international student community. It was, therefore, decided to set up an international secretariat which did not have policy-making powers, but which could assist national unions in meeting the needs of their students. Together the Conference itself and the Secretariat could, if people wanted it, be the framework for a worldwide students cooperation and not only on a limited scale.

1953 -
(i) Africa
Asia Latin
America
join

The 3rd ISC which took place in Copenhagen in 1953, was significant for a number of reasons. Although there had been representatives at the first two ISCs from other continents other than Europe, the real impact of a wider student participations was first felt at the 3rd ISC. A number of African and Asian countries came for the first time and for the first time also, a significant number of Latin American national unions was represented. The participation of the representatives from African, Asian and Latin American countries brought a number of new problems which to a large extent were unknown to the previous participants. The whole question of the impact of colonialism on higher education was one which students at the 3rd ISC had never before had the opportunity to discuss.

(ii)
Define
National
Union

The other significant happening at Copenhagen was that for the first time, not only the ISC but in the entire history of the international student movement, a meeting of national unions tried to define what a national union is. It was generally agreed that to be recognised as a representative national union of students, the executive organ should be freely elected by the students in the country concerned. It was argued at the time that if one wants to establish a structure which will be a worthwhile meetingplace for every national student organisation in the world, one cannot insist that the officers and executive be freely elected, because it is a fact that in a number of countries they are not. Although it was realised that this was a basic problem, it was also realised that a truly representative student movement cannot be built unless students are allowed to elect their representatives. Further, there was insistence that representation from other parts of the world should be by representatives of the students of those countries and not of their governments or bodies outside the universities. This part of the definition has been kept ever since.

1964 -
(i) Increasing awareness political social problems

To the 4th ISC in Istanbul, Turkey in 1954 came a great number of student organisations from outside Europe, particularly African and Latin American organisations who believed that, through the ISC, they might advance the solution of some of their national problems, many of which could be called political. These National unions were not interested in international student identity cards, or guides for student hostels and restaurants - they were not at the moment very much interested in international student exchange; their problems were not to obtain scholarships to study, but to get into the university without documents giving political opinions. These problems were different from those of most of the European countries which had up till then been discussed by the ISC.

(ii) Formation of Research Committee

At this Conference, it was felt that if students in faraway countries are to be supported in a situation of a national character involving political, social and economic problems, it was necessary for those who were asked to support them to know the facts. If a resolution of support is to have any meaning, it must reflect a position based upon facts and with a full understanding of the background situation. For this reason, the Research and Information Commission was set up. This Committee was created because it was realised that the problems facing students in any country were the practical problems which the ISC had to solve.

1955 -
new programmes

The Birmingham Conference in 1955 (which NUSAS was meant to attend, though it did not because its delegates was refused a passport), saw the birth of a world wide COSEC/ISC programme. Up to that time, the actual programme as regards the number of seminars meetings and publications was very limited, but at the time of the Birmingham Conference, the ISC was strong enough to establish a meaningful programme. It was at this Conference that the magazine The Student, was established. The Information Bulletin was then existing as a mimeographed sheet, but after the ISC, became a regular publication. The first international student delegations were established to promote understanding between different parts of the world about conditions in the countries visited and the countries from which students on the delegations came.

1956

The 6th ISC took place in Ceylon in 1956. This NUSAS attended. The major problem facing that Conference was Algeria, which, although it was a national situation, became of direct importance to the whole future of the ISC. UGEMA Algeria applied for status as a national union of students and got it. But they also asked for support in their fight for independence for Algeria.

(i)
ISC accepts
political
respons-
ibility

This was the first time that the Conference was asked directly by a national union participating in it to support the struggle for independence of a specific country. The crux of the matter to be discussed was whether or not independence is a pre-requisite for higher education. This was a major political question and marked the dividing line between the old days of the ISC and the new phase.

(ii) Indep-
endence a
pre-requ-
isite for
higher
education

It should be made clear that no students participating in the ISC ever felt one could dissociate oneself from politics. The tradition however, in many countries was that as far as political problems are concerned, the student may express his opinion through a political party in his country but as far as international student cooperation is concerned, he must have a mandate to express any political opinion because he was representing students of all political opinions.

The Ceylon Conference was significant for two reasons: First, because its result, as expressed there and at following Conferences, was that no problem of a political character raised by students can be disregarded by the ISC; and secondly, because it was held that independence is indeed a prerequisite for a really free and full higher education. The important result of the whole debate was that it was the first time at any international student meeting that an opportunity was given for discussion of all the defects, political, social and economic, of higher education and of society as a whole, and the role which student associations and international student organisations should have in relation to them. At the 1957 ISC in Ibadan, Nigeria, a resolution on Algeria, which went even further than the one of the year before, was passed without much difficulty.

At this time, a number of significant problems were posed from outside the ISC. The IUS had proposed the establishment of joint projects with the ISC. This was rejected because it was felt that it was not possible to have joint projects between the two organisations, not simply because of their different structures - the one being an organisation with executive body and officers, the other being a framework with a central technical agency - but also because there were basic differences of opinion, many grounded on principle, between groups belonging to the two structures. The ISC felt there had first to be a solution to basic problems of difference of attitude and approach before one could embark on technical cooperation.

Another problem was that of success. The ISC had increased more than four times since it had started with 17 national unions. As more and more students gathered together from all over the world, the things they had in common became fewer and fewer. These differences of opinion and approach resulted in the Conference becoming almost paralysed at certain stages in "majorities" and "minorities" though their composition was changing all the time.

The 9th ISC was held in Switzerland. The major problems facing that Conference was one of trying to solve the problems caused by the existence of two structures within the international student movement. At the 8th ISC in Peru in 1959, it had been proposed and the resolution had been adopted, that a Round Table conference be held prior to the 9th ISC where national unions, regardless of their affiliation to one or other international structure, could come together to discuss some of the basic difficulties that divided them. However, the Eastern European countries did not attend the conference and it was in this respect a failure. The 9th ISC had then to discuss ways of trying to solve these problems to which no real solution has so far been found, and to which no solution which works has yet been found. This is discussed in more details at a later stage in this paper.

Changing Concepts Within the ISC

What does the ISC stand for? To answer this question, one must examine the various phases of the changes which the ISC underwent.

The first ISC in 1950 was in a way meeting under the shadow of the IUS, the participants reacting to many policies of and specific activities undertaken by the IUS. Therefore they were basically concerned with what had happened in the 3 or 4 previous years and the 1st ISC therefore took a very clear political decision as to what it would not become. In reaction to the fact that the IUS had become an organisation serving openly as an instrument of the UCCR and its allies, some participants wanted the ISC to become an anti-communist organisation. This point of view was overwhelmingly rejected at the ISC. But having made this decision the ISC did not go further and define what it would stand for. The sovereignty of a national union of students was defined as an absolute concept with the implication that every decision in relation to politics could only be taken by National unions of students themselves; international student cooperation therefore could be nothing more than a sum total of these actions. Obviously a sum total as such would still have to find some common denominator. Instead of defining a common policy for international student cooperation, they were emphasising the absolute sovereignty of each national union of students to take up, both nationally and internationally, a certain kind of policy. This trend continued later, and only recently has the futility of this become apparent.

The major political decision taken at the 1st ISC excluded the possibility of this structure ever becoming a "western" structure in the future. Secondly, the decision to exclude for the time being consideration of what the ISC stood for in terms of political philosophy, meant that the unions gathering at the ISC could only discuss questions which were practical in nature, which were related to activities taking place nationally, and where, because it was considered useful to exchange ideas and experiences with others, the unions were prepared to come together and discuss. The emphasis was not so much on international cooperation as such, but on the benefits that international cooperation could provide to what was basically national activities. If, for instance, the student press in one particular country was engaged in a certain method or technique of production, by drawing attention to this it was hoped that the student press in another country could be improved. This the concept of practical cooperation was related in some way to the lack of a clear-cut and open political objective set for the Conference, and it meant basically a mechanism to provide benefits to the national unions themselves.

This process, of course, changed in many respects as the ICS grew, as more unions from areas outside Europe started participating in it, and as they began to bring to the ISC problems with which they were concerned and on which they wanted other national unions to take action. But in doing all this, the ISC acted always very cautiously and only in stages. In these earlier years, the ISC reacted quite admirably and adequately to situations which arose in different countries and different continents and took action which seemed to fulfil the specific demands made upon it. It did not, however, attempt at any time to evolve for itself a basic position from which all these specific actions could be taken. The concept of the "students as such", the reluctance to get involved in questions which did not relate to the functions of students within the university community or at a broader level in the content of higher education, was also a part of the unwillingness of the ISC to make a fundamental assessment of the concepts which were brought before it. The Conference met the very urgent, the very specific needs presented before it at a particular time, but failed to adopt at any given point a basic philosophy which would underline logically and consistently all its actions.

Definition
of ISC

At the 9th ISC, the situation changed for the first time. A new bases of Cooperation was presented which went much further than any of the previous ISCs in defining what the ISC wanted to do, what it stood for, what it was aiming at. But although representing a remarkable departure from the previous positions of the ISC, in that it attempts for the first time to define in concise and precise terms what the ISC is, it did not go as far as it might have in really defining the positive aspects of the aims of the Conference. It certainly defined in very clear terms what the ISC stood against—imperialism, colonialism, dictatorship, social injustice, totalitarianism. It also defined the concept of students rights and responsibilities in clearer terms than ever before in its history. It accepted the responsibility of students to their countries and the role they could play in this context. But having gone so far, it did not define what exactly the role of the student in society does entail, or what was its concept of this role. It is not enough to say that since a particular phenomenon represents an injustice, therefore it should be removed. That is the negative part of the task. The other part is to define what would happen once the phenomenon were changed. What would happen if totalitarianism were to be eliminated or if the dictatorship in any given country were to be removed? Do we have a philosophy of economic and social development which can be pursued once national independence has been attained? The Bases of Cooperation of the 9th and 10th ISCs did not go far enough in defining the principles to be followed. An invaluable positive contribution on the aims and objects which students, in their role in the university community, in their role in society, and in their role in international affairs, should follow, was made at the 14th International Student Seminar in August 1963 at Leysin, Switzerland, in the Declaration of Leysin. For the first time this Declaration suggested a positive philosophy for the ISC.

1963 - a
positive
philosophy
for the
ISC

1964

The 11th ISC was held in June, 1964 at Christchurch in New Zealand. The conference was significant because it accepted the recommendations of the Declaration of Leysin, and for the first time a Charter of the International Student Conference was unanimously adopted. From this charter the ISC now derives its essential ideals and structures. The preamble to the Charter reads as follows :

"We, the national unions of students and national delegations

- deriving our strength and inspiration from the millions of students who form our constituents,
- committed to encourage and defend the democratic student movement throughout the world, since only through dynamic, united and independent action can students fulfil their role as conscience of society in the vanguard of political, economic and social progress,
- committed to the principle that the student community and the national unions of students are integral parts of society and share a common destiny with it,
- convinced that cooperation amongst representatives of independent democratically organised student associations, based on commonly shared and universally applied principles is the most effective means for students to defeat oppression in all its forms and to build together a free university, a free society and a peaceful world embodying the hope for mankind set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
- hereby establish this Charter of the International Student Conference which will determine and guide the actions of its organs and members in the framework of the conference."

In terms of the new Charter the supreme policy making body of the International Student Conference is a Conference of delegates representing member national unions of students. The Conference is held every two years and at that time receives and considers reports from the various ISC organs on policy, programmes and finances for the preceding inter-conference period,

Membership in the ISC is divided into two basic categories : members and associates. ISC members are national unions of students which have ratified the Charter and which give evidence of their support for the charter in their actions and statements. Members have a right to participate in ISC programmes and to speak and vote at the Conference itself. An associate status is provided for student organisations which meet the structural requirements of a national union of students and which demonstrate their commitment to the ISC and its programmes. Associates may take part in ISC programmes and may speak at the Conference. In addition, other national, regional or overseas students organisations which show interest in the work of the ISC may be invited to attend the Conference as observers.

The most important structural change in the ISC came with the establishment of the ISC Secretariat which is located in Leiden, The Netherlands. The Secretariat consists of the Secretary-General and a number of Associate Secretaries, all elected by the Supervision Committee of the ISC. The Supervision Committee of the ISC is elected by the Conference and is composed of 11

member organisations. It is charged with reviewing the work of the ISC Secretariat and preparing a report for submission to the Conference. The Committee meets four times between the Conferences and is the sole authority for interpreting the Charter during the Inter-Conference period. The new structure of the ISC allows for the Secretariat to initiate new programme and issue statements on various questions always basing its actions and statements on the principles of the Charter. In all its activities, the Secretariat is responsible to the Supervision Committee.

At the NUSAS Student Assembly in July 1965, a resolution was unanimously adopted to apply for full membership status in the International Student Conference. This membership was granted to NUSAS and NUSAS attended the 12th ISC which was held in August, 1966 in Nairobi as a full delegate.

Many of the difficulties of operating an international student movement have not been settled with the establishment of the Charter of the ISC and the relevant constitutional changes. Nevertheless, it is the opinion of NUSAS that the ISC offers the most positive framework for International student cooperation.

In terms of the definition of the Charter of the International Student Conference a national union of students "shall be an organisation whose membership is composed of individuals engaged in study at universities and institutions of higher learning in any territory if that territory has a de facto separate Government administration whether politically independent or not, whose function it is to represent the interest of these individuals whose executive body is freely elected by the students and whose membership is open to all students in that territory, provided that such an organisation is either the only one in that territory claiming to exercise the function of a national union of students, or that, if there be more than one, it exercises this function on behalf of the majority of individuals".

Relations between NUSAS and the IUS

1946 -
IUS affil-
iation

In 1946, NUSAS affiliated to the IUS.

In 1948, after the crisis over the Czechoslovak issue, NUSAS reserved the right to dissent from any decisions taken by the IUS which were not acceptable to the Student Assembly of NUSAS.

1949 -
attitude
defined

In 1949, NUSAS defined its attitude to the IUS as being:

- 1) In favour of maximum cooperation between all student,
- 2) Anxiety to form international student friendship and wanting to belong to an international union of students which would promote the welfare of students and help the exchange of ideas between students. However, NUSAS asserted its right to work with National Unions which were not members of the IUS.
- 3) Recognition that the IUS must take certain legitimate political decisions and actions, but felt (at that time) that these decision and actions must be limited to gaining purely student objectives.

- 4) Objection to the fact that the IUS was being used to promote one specific political ideology, since it felt that an international union of students should not do this because of its nature as an international organisation.
- 5) Reservation, once more, of the right to dissent from IUS decisions which the Student Assembly of NUSAS did not accept.
- 6) Statement of its belief that, in terms of the IUS constitution, the IUS was bound to defend the rights of all its members, simply because they were members.
- 7) Objections to a tendency in the IUS to use, in its analysis of international situations, a viewpoint which was not acceptable to all its members; this, said NUSAS, tended to make the IUS very one-sided, particularly in its publications.

Although NUSAS did not see eye to eye with the executive and the executive committee of the IUS on these matters, it decided that it should not withdraw from the IUS, since the existence of an international student union was more important than a disagreement between NUSAS and the IUS executive. NUSAS felt that it should stay in the IUS to try to influence its decisions from within. It also appealed to national unions which did not agree with decisions taken by the IUS executive committee, to make their views known.

NUSAS furthermore requested the IUS executive to note the widespread dissatisfactions with the IUS that existed within NUSAS and other national unions.

In 1950, NUSAS recorded its extreme dissatisfaction with the IUS, in particular because of the fact that YUS Yugoslavia had been expelled from the IUS, by the IUS executive committee, following the political rift between the governments of the USSR and Yugoslavia. It should be noted that, at about this time, there was a SA representative - though not a NUSAS representative - on the IUS executive committee, Lionel Forman.

1953 -
NUSAS dis-
affiliates

In 1953 NUSAS disaffiliated from the IUS as a result of the refusal by the IUS to respect that attitude of NUSAS.

1954 -
associate
membership

In 1954, however, NUSAS accepted associate membership of the IUS under certain conditions, which included the following -

- a) NUSAS should be associated only with such resolutions, statements and activities of the IUS which dealt with practical student activities.
- b) NUSAS should not be associated with any resolution, activity or statement made by the IUS, except when NUSAS specifically requested to be associated.
- c) The IUS executive should not speak on behalf of NUSAS except when specifically requested to do so. NUSAS requested that, when the IUS executive committee issued a statement, it should make clear that NUSAS has not approved it, if in fact it had not.
- d) IUS should furnish NUSAS with its annual audited statement of accounts, including a detailed statement of its sources of revenue.

1955 -
disaffil-
iation

In 1955, because none of these conditions had been observed by the IUS executive committee, and although it had agreed to all of them, NUSAS disaffiliated from the IUS. In 1957 this decision was reaffirmed because the IUS had shown itself in no way willing to accommodate NUSAS.

It is interesting to note that during the period 1950-55, NUSAS made a number of attempts to reconcile the national unions which disaffiliated from the IUS and to promote world student unity; in fact, the first proposal ever made for an independent unity meeting "outside the two structures" was made by NUSAS. However the IUS refused to support any unity venture outside its own framework and also refused to reconsider its attitude to YUS Yugoslavia.

(As a postscript, one might mention that when the Soviet Union in 1956 repaired its relations with Yugoslavia, the IUS too began to take a new attitude to YUS Yugoslavia).

Since that time, the attitude of NUSAS to the IUS has been that if the IUS shows itself really concerned with the situation in South Africa to the extent of offering real assistance to people in this country and if it shows that it is prepared to rise above particular ideological considerations and apply non-party political considerations in its dealings with South African students, NUSAS will be prepared to change its attitude.

To give examples of this, the IUS in 1960 stated that it had offered NUSAS "some scholarships, microscopes, cameras, typewriters etc as an expression of our sympathy with South African student". The IUS statement, however, went on to say, "NUSAS did not accept such assistance." Investigation by NUSAS has shown that this statement was untrue, as the documentation below shows.

Assistance to NUSAS from the IUS

(1) Scholarships

(a) VUS Bulgaria was supposed to have offered a scholarship to NUSAS in 1951. When NUSAS asked in 1955 what had happened about this scholarship, VUS did not reply. NUSAS further discovered that VUS Bulgaria had in fact never offered the scholarship to NUSAS but had merely said at an IUS meeting that it would offer scholarships.

(b) 3 full medical scholarships were supposed to have been offered by VUS Bulgaria in 1955. When NUSAS heard about this, it accepted the offer gratefully. However, NUSAS pointed out that there was great difficulty involved in getting African students from South Africa to Bulgaria and requested VUS Bulgaria to consider the possibility of offering the scholarships to a South African university (the Medical School at Wits was at this stage still open to Africans). VUS Bulgaria did not reply to this letter and nothing further was heard about the scholarships.

(c) In February 1958, Mr Jolobe of UNNE informed NUSAS that he had been granted an IUS scholarship to study at King's College London. When NUSAS wrote to the IUS for further information, the IUS denied that it had given such a scholarship.

(d) In 1962 the IUS offered NUSAS 5 scholarships on Ghana. The

General Secretary of the IUS in a letter dated February 4, 1963, wrote: "For a year now, we have been continuing our efforts to offer some scholarships" to South African students in Ghana. Nothing has come of this at all, despite repeated requests.

(2) Other Assistance

(a) The IUS Council promised, in 1956, that it would give to NUSAS for the African Medical Scholarships Trust Fund (AMSTF) microscopes, cameras and typewriters. Later this offer became one typewriter and one microscope. Nothing was heard from the IUS about this again, though several letters were written by NUSAS.

(b) In 1957 the IUS officially dropped AMSTF from the list of projects which it supported.

(c) NUSAS made repeated requests to the IUS for assistance to its Academic Freedom Fund. The IUS promised to look into the matter, but nothing happened.

One should note that NUSAS is not the only National Union which has had this sort of difficulty with the IUS. An example of this is the Hungarian revolution, when many thousands of Hungarian students died fighting Soviet troops. The IUS issued a statement expressing "concern", but later supported the Soviet invasion, and repudiated the national Union of Hungarian Students of the time. Another more recent example is the attitude of the IUS to nuclear disarmament, which condemns nuclear testing by Western powers, that is by the "imperialist" powers, but not by the Soviet.

Conclusions

It may thus be seen that relations between NUSAS and the IUS fall into four stages:

- (1) The early period when NUSAS was a full member of the IUS.
- (2) The period when NUSAS was trying to stay in the IUS but finding it extremely difficult to do so because the IUS refused to respect the wishes and ideas of NUSAS.
- (3) The period of total disillusionment when NUSAS refused to have anything to do with the IUS because of its contempt for NUSAS' wishes.
- (4) The period of gradual re-establishment of relations based on a sincere desire by NUSAS to further international student unity.

Attempts to Promote Student Unity

In September 1952, a NUSAS delegation attended the "unity meeting" organised by IUS in Bucharest just before the IUS Council meeting. This meeting was meant to be one between non-member national unions, the sponsoring bodies and the IUS Secretariat, to explore a means of cooperation and to attempt to resolve differences. However, the IUS Secretariat, invited participants from other organisations which were all full members of the IUS, and so were able to prevent the attitudes of dissentiant national unions from being heard.

In 1955, the IUS proposed a "conference of cooperation" between the IUS and ISC. This the 5th ISC, which met in Birmingham, rejected, because it believed that such a conference could only enforce a "two bloc" mentality; the ISC did not regard itself as a "bloc". Furthermore, the structure of the ISC made it extremely difficult to have a joint conference with the IUS. The ISC was a structure, the IUS an organisation.

Two individual attempts by VSS Switzerland and UNEF France collapsed because of the same difficulties.

By 1956 the Prague congress of the IUS suggested a new method of cooperation "joint projects" undertaken by the IUS and the Coordinating Secretariat of the ISC. The 1957 and 1959 ISCs both rejected this because of the structural differences between the ISC and IUS, and because it was impossible for an executive committee like the IUS executive, and an administrative agency like COSEC, to undertake joint projects. Moreover it is difficult to see how there could be joint projects on issues such as help to Hungarian refugee students where the IUS called them "counter revolutionaries". This illustrates clearly a point made below - joint projects became most difficult when there are no universal definitions of words like "national liberation". Instead the ISCs both suggested that there should be bilateral contact between individual National Unions participating in the ISC and those which were members of the IUS.

At the 1958 IUS Congress in Peking, FEUU Uruguay proposed that a Round Table Conference should be called outside the existing structures of the ISC and the IUS. FEUU Uruguay suggested that all National Unions of Students should take part. Nothing concrete came of this proposal.

In 1959 the 8th ISC called for a Round Table to be held outside the structure of the ISC and the IUS.

In February 1960 the IUS executive committee meeting in Tunis published an Open Letter endorsing the principle of independent Round Table but refusing to cooperate with this initiative on the grounds that COSEC has issued the invitation. This objection was maintained in the face of the fact that COSEC undertook to issue an invitation to any student organisation which requested one, and that COSEC put the arrangements for the Round Table in the hands of the independent host country, VSS Switzerland.

In March 1960 at the ZSP Poland Congress, a 3-nation committee on World Student Unity was established among the National Unions observing; this consisted of ZSP Poland, UNURI Italy and CNAE North African Confederation. This committee was set up at a chance meeting which had no established representative character; therefore its task to mediate between the IUS executive committee and COSEC about the Round Table was fruitless.

Finally VSS Switzerland took full responsibility and convened a Round Table to which approximately 60 national unions came. Notable absentees were most of the National Unions from the Eastern European countries, UNEF France, UNURI Italy and the national unions of North Africa.

NUSAS attended this Round Table.

Unfortunately this Round Table cannot be called an entire success because it was not representative enough. However, all national unions from Asia, Latin America and most from Africa did attend, and these 60 did put out a unanimous communique. It must be noted that it is impossible to have a conference or Round Table unless some organisation calls it. Yet when COSEC calls a conference, the IUS executive refuses to attend; when the IUS executive committee calls a conference, COSEC refuses to attend since, as an administrative agency it has never been given a mandate by any ISC to attend a Round Table on student unity as a full participant - it may only attend as an observer.

In 1963 UGET Tunisia convened a seminar on the Structure of the International Student Movement and the Means of Obtaining Universal Cooperation. Because members of the IUS Secretariat came as representatives of national unions, which practise many national unions feel is unfair, since a person committed to either the IUS or to COSEC must obviously be unable to speak unbiasedly on behalf of a national union, 12 national unions walked out. Despite the other successes of the seminar, the walkout demonstrated yet another failure of cooperation.

The 10th ISC appointed a Committee on Universal Student Cooperation. This Committee investigated and tried to promote the cause of world student unity. The Committee sent a long questionnaire to all national unions of students, trying to gauge their attitudes. Only five (one of which was NUSAS) replied to the questionnaire.

In 1964, the 11th International Student Conference adopted the following resolution with regard to Universal Student Cooperation -

"This student conference believing that agreement on common principles of cooperation amongst diverse national unions of students as possible, as shown by the unanimous adoption of the Charter of the International Student Conference;

considering the vital significance of universal student cooperation as a means to achieve the realisation of these principles;

showing the desire of students throughout the world to create the conditions of freedom, peace and social justice, which will break down the barriers to international understanding and open communication and cooperation between students and people of differing social systems;

recognising that today neither the ISC nor the IUS is or likely to become a forum for international student cooperation; convinced that efforts to achieve universal student co-operation must be directed towards the creation of conditions in which cooperation can take place on a firm and meaningful basis, rather than to the clearly utopian and unrealistic proposals for immediate amalgamation of the ISC and the IUS, the immediate creation of a single world-wide student organisation or the immediate convening of a conference for all the student organisations in the world, since the conditions necessary for the success of these undertakings do not yet exist; the 11th ISC therefore mandates the Secretariat on the basis of the ISC Charter and its principles, to enter into discussions and negotiations with the Secretariat of the IUS to achieve;

- agreement on a set of common principles for operation between the two international organisations;
- implementation of these agreed upon principles of cooperation through initiative supported by both international organisations
- expansion of bilateral, multilateral and regional cooperation between the members of the ISC and the members of the IUS and those participants participating in both student organisations;
- a more thorough public understanding of the comparison of the structure, and functioning of the international organisations and the manner in which they implement these principles;

The Secretariat shall publish a report of these discussions for distribution to all national unions of students and keep them informed of further developments.

Through these discussions and through the individual efforts of national unions of students, throughout the world, international cooperation can begin, for it is only through the universal acceptance and application of these principles that mere coexistence can be transformed into meaningful cooperation. "

In the light of this resolution, the ISC Secretariat wrote to the Secretariat of the IUS and proposed that the two Secretariats hold preliminary discussions with a view to reaching agreement on common principles which could lead to joint action in support of the Moscow Test Ban Treaty, the Charter of Human Rights and the work of the United Nations. In addition, the ISC sent a delegation to attend the IUS Congress which was held in Sofia Bulgaria in December 1964.

The IUS refused even to consider the proposals and a resolution adopted at the 8th Congress of the IUS prohibited the IUS Secretariat from entering into discussions with the ISC Secretariat and urged that the next IUS Congress make all efforts to reverse the decision.

NUSAS' Attitude of World Student Unity

In its resolutions NUSAS has always stressed that any form of international student cooperation must be devoid of any partisan spirit, independent of all party political and ideological concepts, and must be based on the principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is in terms of Correlated Resolution 135/63. NUSAS regards the following principles as the best for international student cooperation:

- "(a) Mutual respect for the rights of each national union of students;
- "(b) Representativity of cooperating national unions;
- "(c) Development of practical cooperation on questions common to students of all countries;
- "(d) The national unions must be independent of governmental control for true student cooperation to be furthered;
- "(e) Support for students fighting the suppression of student rights, no matter what nature or form the suppression may take."

stresses that this international co-operation must be devoid of any partisan spirit and independent of all party political and ideological concepts, and must be based on the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

feels that the very serious problems which will have to be overcome before unity is reached, such as the form of co-operation, representativity of co-operation organisations, the universal acceptance of common definitions of such concepts as "freedom", "independence", "democracy", "Academic freedom" and "student rights" should be discussed in all parts of the student world through bilateral contacts, informal meetings, regional conference, etc.

affirms that it would welcome the holding of a Round Table conference on world student unity, outside of existing international structures, to which all national student organisations would be invited.

Further Developments since 1967.

In March 1967, the United States National Student Association (USNSA) revealed that it was being subsidised by the C.I.A. The money from the CIA was being channelled to USNSA via certain foundations which had been established as C.A. front organisations.

It was found that those same foundations were giving money to the ISC. The ISC reacted by a) dismissing all Americans, executive members and secretarial personnel.

b) Informing the foundations that they would no longer accept money from them.

c) Setting up a commission to determine whether ISC officials had knowingly accepted money from CIA. Commission found that, though certain Americans in the organisation had been CIA agents, no Secretary General had known that the money was coming from the CIA.

The CIA revelations led to a number of National Unions disaffiliating from the ISC and either joining the IUS or dropping out of the International Student Movement altogether.

NUSAS deferred any decision until the publication of the ISC Commissions report on the CIA. Congress must decide whether to remain a member of the ISC or not.

Today, the ISC is a weaker body due to the CIA exposure. Financially, it is struggling and is attempting to find alternate sources of revenue. There is a possibility that the 13th ISC scheduled for August 1968 will be postponed until next year due to lack of funds.

The Secretary-General of the ISC is Ram Lakhina from India.