

INTRODUCTION

It is a basic tenet of our conception of democracy that the individual, even when projecting abroad an image of his country, is free from governmental direction or control, is free to voice his own opinions or those of his principals, and is responsible for his actions only to those he directly represents. In other words, there is a complete separation between the official policies of the government and the views of the private citizen or organization, and this holds true even in representation outside the country.

This proposition is stated because it bears immediately upon the scope and effectiveness of the international activities of student organizations. There is no doubt that such activities are greatly reinforced when they receive direct governmental support; however, they then risk becoming a mere extension of state policies, and lose the quality of independence essential to understanding and cooperation in the world student community.

The National Federation of Canadian University Students must maintain this foremost principle of free and independent action. And yet there has been since World War II a considerable increase of student involvement in international affairs which has brought heavy responsibilities to bear upon Canadian students; it has forced development of the Federation's international programme to an extent that surpasses the modest means at our disposal. Also it has meant that Canada itself is now more closely linked than ever with events that affect students everywhere.

Communication has grown between the Federation and the Department of External Affairs as a result of these factors, although relations have always been on an ad hoc basis and have never had any continuing or permanent character. The Government of Canada should now be made more aware of the student role in international affairs; in those fields where cooperation seems advisable the possibilities of a closer association should be fully explored.