

POLITICAL ASPECTS

Traditional issues

The question of representation of China, the credentials of the Hungarian delegation, the admission of observers from Communist front organizations, all familiar issues, arose again in the opening phase of the session following the first report to plenary of the Credentials Committee. The Soviet Bloc did not press vigorously on the second and third points and they were settled in accordance with earlier practice. In the case of Hungary, the 'no decision' formula was endorsed by a margin of 39 in favour, 31 against and 15 abstentions; in the case of Communist front organizations, almost perfunctory approval was given to the list presented by the Executive Board which did not recommend the admission of those organizations. However although the issue of Chinese representation was raised by the Soviet delegations in a variety of contexts throughout the session, the opinion prevailed that the initiative for any change should come in the General Assembly of the United Nations and not in a Specialized Agency.

New Issues

(a) *Disarmament*

It soon became apparent that the Soviet Bloc had planned a political offensive in terms transcending the traditional issues and closely modelled on its position in the United Nations General Assembly. By seeking to inscribe a supplementary agenda item calling for a report on action taken by the Director-General to implement an Executive Board resolution which had requested him to collaborate with the United Nations in support of the General Assembly resolution on "General and Complete Disarmament" and to report on feasible proposals for the utilization of any resources released as a result of disarmament to meet urgent needs in education, science and culture, the U.S.S.R. introduced the issue of disarmament into the General Conference. Initially there appeared to be some validity to this request and our original disposition, as that of many delegations, was not to oppose the inscription of the item. However, in the course of the initial discussions on the credentials of the Chinese delegation, delegations which spoke in the debate had taken the line that political issues, of which this was one, should not be raised in the Unesco forum. The first vote on inscription of the disarmament item was an equally divided one and was therefore followed a day later by a second vote which rejected the item as more delegations had formed the belief that this was a propaganda move and perhaps also an oblique way of attacking the Director-General. Many of the delegations from the newly independent African states abstained in the voting. Later in the session, the Roumanian delegate argued that, by this vote, the General Conference had in fact pronounced against disarmament. For his part, the head of the U.S.S.R. delegation hinted that, had Unesco taken a more positive stand on the subject, his delegation would have taken a more positive attitude toward the organization.