

SOME GENERAL REMARKS ON DISCUSSION, VOTING, AMENDMENTS, ELECTIONS

I want to state a few general things about Congress attitudes to such matters as the above and parliamentary procedure. On the first day, at the opening plenary, the Standing Orders were being discussed, and a few amendments were proposed, particularly to the matter of discussion of motions and amendments. A number of motions were presented, there was no vote on any of them in particular, and at a certain point the Chairman, a job skillfully handled by Mr. Pelikan, made a suggestion, presumably incorporating all the amendments proposed, and then asked if there were any objections, no, any abstentions, no, new paragraph adopted.

This attitude to voting persisted until the end. The first real vote came on the seventh day of the Congress, during one of the Commission sessions. Until that time every motion was adopted by the Chairman asking if anyone cared to object or abstain, and since no one ever did, there was never a request for those in favour, no one paid attention to the voting, and every suggestion of the Chairman was accepted. On the seventh day, however, a motion was proposed by Peru, which the Chairman was reluctant to accept. However, when it came time to vote he called it in the usual way -- any abstentions, no one, against no one. At this point he paused, realizing his predicament, but he asked who was in favour, and there were three votes. Realizing that this had gone wrong the Chairman asked for a revote, but Bulgaria suddenly woke up, made a suggestion which was contrary to the Peruvian motion, and the Chairman with evident relief, simply stated that he would accept the Bulgarian suggestion. There was no revote, but the Peruvian motion, which had passed, no one against, no one abstaining, three in favour, was simply dropped.

Perhaps the typical attitude to amendments was that exhibited by the representative of Cyprus, who was also a member of the IUS Secretariat. The draft resolution he had presented was being discussed, and a number of points were raised, and a number of amendments were proposed. He got up and said, however, that his draft resolution was drawn up in very general terms, that he was noting the discussion and the points raised and that at a later time he would incorporate them into his draft resolution. "Don't worry" he said, "I will keep them in mind and will incorporate them".

I have just referred to the Cyprus Delegate who, though he worked in Prague as a full-time member of the Secretariat, spoke for Cyprus. This was done by all the full-time members of the Secretariat present, except for Mr. Pelikan, the President, who never went so far as to say that he was really there as the representative of the Czechoslovak students. Mr. Cieslar, the Polish member of the Secretariat, made a statement that though he was responsible in the IUS for culture, sport and travel, and that though that was the topic of discussion, he really represented the Polish Student Association.

Perhaps at this point I should refer briefly to the election procedure at the Opening Plenary. When nominations were called for the Steering Committee, the Delegate from Cyprus got up and stated that he had consulted Poland, Sudan, and Ecuador, and that they proposed the following. (Then followed the list.) There was no question or objection and the list was presumably adopted. For the Credentials Committee, FEANF stated that they had consulted a number of people and proposed the following. Again the list was adopted without opposition.