

Canadian Student Movements on the Cold War Battlefield, 1944–1954

NIGEL ROY MOSES*

International student organizations were a strategic site of struggle in the cultural Cold War, as can be illustrated by an examination of the international activities of the National Federation of Canadian University Students (NFCUS) from 1944 to 1954. At its conferences immediately following the war, the NFCUS grappled with defining its role in international development and with questions of participation in the communist-oriented International Union of Students. Canadian students were involved with the International Union of Students (established in 1945), the International Student Conference (established in 1950 with assistance of the CIA to counteract the influence of the IUS), and the US National Student Association (whose leaders were often inducted into the CIA). However, despite the intervention of covert state agents, university administrators, Catholic clergy, and other communist and anti-communist social forces, the NFCUS remained a relatively autonomous subject that acted in accordance with its own cultural orientations and values.

Les organisations étudiantes internationales ont été un champ de bataille stratégique durant la Guerre froide culturelle, comme l'illustre un examen des activités internationales de la Fédération nationale des étudiants des universités canadiennes (FNEUC) de 1944 à 1954. Lors des conférences qu'elle a tenues tout de suite après la guerre, la FNEUC a cherché à définir son rôle et s'est penchée sur la question de son engagement international. Les étudiants canadiens entretenaient des liens avec l'Union internationale des étudiants (fortement sympathique à la cause communiste), la Conférence internationale des étudiants (créée pour contrer l'influence de l'UIE) et la National Student Association des États-Unis (dont les chefs de file recevaient souvent un laissez-passer pour la CIA). Cependant, malgré l'intervention d'agents secrets de l'État, d'administrateurs universitaires, du clergé catholique et

* Nigel Roy Moses is an independent scholar who lives and teaches in Ontario, Canada. His interests include the sociology of education, youth culture, social movements, and critical pedagogies. His PhD dissertation explored how student activism led to increased student access to post-secondary education, and he has published several articles on the history of Canadian student activism. He can be reached at nigelroy99@hotmail.com

d'autres forces sociales communistes ou anti-communistes, la FNEUC est demeurée relativement autonome, fidèle à ses propres orientations et valeurs culturelles.

BETWEEN 1946 and 1950 the International Union of Students (IUS) was a key organization in a global anti-capitalist revolutionary movement. Moscow-aligned student intelligentsia had the potential to take over civil society in many nations of the world, especially in Asia, Latin America, and Africa, in just one or two generations. Many of these students believed that the victory over European fascism signalled an important historical step, to be followed by the victory over capitalism and colonial rule. But for many students, typically from the core capitalist nations, the IUS had little legitimacy, as it was widely seen as "communist dominated". These students reacted negatively to the IUS leaders, who they alleged had an uncritical allegiance to the Soviet Union and lacked commitment to democratic decision-making. Such criticisms provided an opening for CIA operatives in the US National Student Association (NSA) to break the Soviet monopoly on international student organizing. Anti-communist sympathies in national student organizations, including the National Federation of Canadian University Students (NFCUS), were "selected" by the CIA and its allies; in other words, these student organizations were encouraged to break away and form an alternative international student organization, the International Student Conference (ISC). The legitimacy of the ISC relied on the perception of it as being "non-aligned" and "independent", unencumbered by any state or government interference and member-supported, but this was far from the truth.

The international activities of the National Federation of Canadian Students (NFCUS) between 1944, when it resumed operations after a wartime hiatus, and 1954 illustrate the extent to which international student organizations were a strategic site in the cultural Cold War. (NFCUS had originally been formed in 1926, but had ceased operations in 1939.) According to Gordon McLean, secretary of the University of Toronto NFCUS Advisory Committee in 1946, NFCUS was to be "the representative national organization of all university students of Canada, and work for progress and help to solve the problems of all students".¹ After initial involvement in the IUS, immediately following the war, NFCUS shifted its focus to the ISC, formed between 1950 and 1952. I argue that the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) helped undermine the IUS by encouraging student leaders of national student

1 "Students Survey National Aims", *Globe and Mail*, December 27, 1946, p. 5. McLean was active in the National Conference of Student Veterans and was a delegate to the formative meeting of the International Union of Students in Prague in the summer of 1946, where IUS constitution was formed. See "McLean Lays Charges; Livingstone Sends Reply", *Ubysses*, January 30, 1947, p. 3. His involvement in and support for the IUS and communism led to his repression by university administrators at the University of Toronto. See Charles Levi, " 'Decided Action Has Been Taken': Student Government, Student Activism, and University Administration at the University of Toronto and McGill University, 1930-1950" (Master's research paper, York University, 1994).

organizations to stop trying to reform it and instead to establish a non-communist international student organization: the ISC and its Coordinating Secretariat, which the CIA covertly funded and infiltrated. Thus NFCUS and what Gert Van Maanan calls the “international student movement” were not merely caught up in the Cold War, a social force external to them; they were, in fact, important social agents of its constitution.²

By and large, student activism in the immediate postwar years (1945–1954) has not been well examined in Canada.³ Using primary sources and recent studies of international student organizations, this study provides an in-depth examination of the formation of Canada’s national student organization and its participation in the early stages of the Cold War. The primary sources are the organization documents of the national NFCUS office, located in the McMaster University archives in Hamilton, Ontario. The *Globe and Mail* and *New York Times* online searchable databases were useful, as were some unpublished “in-house” organizational histories written by NFCUS activists themselves.⁴

This study also draws from and builds on recent studies of international student organizations.⁵ To a lesser extent I also draw from the largely outdated, but still useful, works on international student movements.⁶ Almost all these works tend to take the perspective of the international secretariats; that is, they look mostly at the decision-making centres and provide few details on individual national student organizations.⁷ There have been no historical studies of NFCUS from the point of view of the national office in this period and, except for those of Charles Levi and Nicole Neatby, few local campus-level studies. This more “local” or national perspective in the international

2 Gert Van Maanen, *The International Student Movement: History and Background* (The Hague: Interdoc, 1966).

3 The notable exceptions are Nicole Neatby, *Carabins ou activistes? L'idéalisme et la radicalisation de la pensée étudiante à l'Université de Montréal au temps du duplessisme* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997); Levi, “ ‘Decided Action Has Been Taken’ ”; and Peter Neary, “The Veterans Rehabilitation Act”, in Peter Neary and J. L. Granatstein, eds., *The Veterans Charter and Post-World War II Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998).

4 McMaster University Archives [hereafter MU], Box 18, M. J. Diakowsky and A. Enriquez, *History of the National Federation of Canadian University Students, 1926–1951* (NFCUS Publicity Committee, 1952).

5 In particular, Joel Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, trans. R. Blumenau (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996) and “Youth Organization as a Battlefield in the Cold War”, *Intelligence and National Security*, vol. 18 (Summer 2003); Karen Paget, “From Stockholm to Leiden: The CIA's Role in the Formation of the International Student Conference”, *Intelligence and National Security*, vol. 18 (Summer 2003).

6 Peter T. Jones, *The History of United States National Student Association Relations with the International Union of Students, 1945–56* (Pennsylvania: Foreign Policy Research Institute, University of Pennsylvania, 1956); Van Maanan, *The International Student Movement*; Philip G. Altbach, “The Student Internationals”, in P. Altbach and N. Uphoff, eds., *The Student Internationals* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1973).

7 Van Maanan is the exception. He grounds his analysis of the “international student movement” in the particular geopolitical social conditions faced by individual national student organizations.

context thus provides a starting point in the project to understand NFCUS and Canadian student movements in all their local, national, and international dimensions.

Not surprisingly, the NFCUS archive itself reveals little direct information on covert action on student and youth organizations. When examined in relation to the recent documentation of American and Soviet covert state activity in international student and youth organizations, however, NFCUS records do give evidence of covert activity directed at NFCUS leaders. Such revelations suggest that study of previously secret government files in the National Archives, and the national archives of other countries as well as the international student organizations, would provide further perspectives on Canadian student affairs. First, however, it is logical and preferable to analyse the rich source of information provided by the organization documents of NFCUS itself.

Theorizing Student Activism

This study of student activism is informed by the sociological perspective of Alain Touraine, in particular his concepts of “historicity” and the “production of society”.⁸ Historicity is the concrete effect social actors have on social relations and the form and practice of social institutions such as student organizations or nations.⁹ Examples of social actors considered here include student leaders from Canada and other international and national student organizations, members of various communist parties, university administrators, and covert intelligence agents. Historicity is both an ongoing process and the accomplishment or product of social actors who, often in conflict with each other, discursively and materially affect social relations through what Touraine calls “cultural orientations and values”.

Social relations are the mediated result of a clash of various social actors who have historicity. In other words, social relations and social policy, student organizations, and even “societies” are “mutually determined” products.¹⁰ For example, various programmes for Second World War veterans did not simply arise from the benevolent actions of government officials, but from historicities; they were mutually determined social products arising from an ongoing relation among various social actors, in this case, state policy elites concerned with reproducing the social order and former military personnel who had much potential for challenging that social order due to

8 See, for example, Alain Touraine, *Lutte Étudiant* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1978) and *Return of the Actor: Social Theory in Postindustrial Society*, trans. Myrna Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

9 For other analyses that use this approach, see my earlier work.

10 See Nigel Moses, “Student Organizations as Historical Actors: The Case of Mass Student Aid”, *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, vol. 31, no. 1 (2001), pp. 84–85. I derive the concept of “mutual determination” from Bob Jessop’s concept of “form determination”. See Bob Jessop, *The Capitalist State* (Oxford: Martin Roberson, 1982).

their marginal generational and socio-economic position. That the student veterans' movement after the Second World War was short-lived and did not radicalize, despite communist agitation, can also be understood in terms of the movement's mutual determination. Similarly, NFCUS itself should not be seen purely as a student-orchestrated phenomenon, but as a result of the mutually determined actions of a variety of social agents. There were, of course, the student leaders who sought social justice and political representation for their generation, but there were also government policy-makers who sought to build the nation-state, university presidents who sought social control over the political expressions of university students, and covert state actors who sought to manipulate the form and practice of student organization. The bifurcated form of international student organization can also be considered as a mutually determined product of a clash of powerful state agents operating through and on student leaders.

Student historicity can be seen discursively, as is the case when students start naming previously unnamed social phenomena; socioculturally, when new identities are formed in the context of new or imagined communities; politically, in the way powerful state actors respond to student demands; and biographically, when former student leaders obtain central positions in the state apparatus.¹¹ Social actors exist in a variety of often conflicting social relations and have varying effects on the ongoing production of society, primarily due to different access to social and economic capital. The pivotal ways in which student and youth movements have often affected social relations have been discussed elsewhere.¹² The Soviets understood that national student organizations had strategic cultural-military importance. The Soviets reasoned correctly that the student leaders of the world were influential and would become more so later, as they moved into more central positions in government and various liberation movements.

NFCUS was enmeshed in youth-state and youth-adult social relations of power. The older generation and secret government actors exerted their power mainly through "selection", a management process whereby dominating social actors influence the field of action by establishing ties with opposing and subordinated social actors — ones who are the least offensive. The more extreme opponents are politically marginalized while the more moder-

11 Interviews with NFCUS leaders of the mid-1950s to mid-1960s revealed a connection between their participation in international affairs and later careers in law, international development, government, and social justice issues. See Nigel Moses, "All That Was Left: Student Struggle for Mass Student Aid and the Abolition of Tuition Fees, 1946 to 1975" (doctoral dissertation, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, 1995), pp. 63–64. A precursory look at the period 1939–1954 reveals a similar connection.

12 Namely, the production of accessibility to education and representation on university boards (Moses, "All That Was Left" and "Student Organizations as Historical Actors"), tuition fees (Moses, "Forgotten Lessons, Student Movements Against Tuition Fee Hikes in Ontario in the 1960s and 1970s, *transforms, insurgent voices in education*, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, nos. 7 and 8, 2004), and the establishment of women's studies programmes and centres.

ate opponents are brought into the mainstream. The moderates become viewed as legitimate by potential followers by the very fact that they have established a relation with those in authority. The concept of selection helps us describe the relations among students, generations, and states, as well as how the concrete outcomes of these relations can be mutually determined.

University administrators, by and large, selected NFCUS over communist groups. They did not particularly like NFCUS, but it was far better than the alternative. For many university administrators, NFCUS was a potential threat, but one that could be contained and dealt with. The structural-relational logic embedded in this relationship was similar to that of the American government's covert support of the International Student Conference (ISC) over a more hostile and potentially revolutionary foe: the International Union of Students (IUS). By encouraging or selecting the movement that was already developing for an alternative international student organization, the CIA isolated the Soviet cultural offensive in the student field. The socially critical ISC was by far the lesser of two evils from the American point of view. A direct, overt attack, sponsored by the American government, on the IUS, an organization that for many students embodied the ideals of global unity, peace, national liberation, and racial equality, would have looked ideologically repressive and undemocratic to the world's student leaders, many of whom were already critical of American society and geopolitical intentions. Through a more subtle process of selection, the American government reached its goals to achieve international security in the youth, student, and international development fields.

As the selection process mediates conflict and involves the actual promotion of adversarial or potentially adversarial social forces, it can provide the political space for mutually determined student historicity. Although regulated, social change can occur. Student agency is neither completely independent of the powerful social forces with which it mediates, nor is it ever totally dominated by them. Hence the selection process can provide student movements opportunities to produce society despite their relatively marginal political location away from the bastions of decision-making. The process of selection, along with the notions of social relations, historicity, and mutual determination, allow for social explanation that incorporates so-called structure and agency without reducing one to the other and places the social actor or human agency at the centre of social analysis.

Cold War Tactics

After the Second World War, the leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union advocated peace and appeasement with capital. Even though various national communist parties were well positioned to take over state power once the Nazis had withdrawn or surrendered, the Soviet leaders discouraged immediate global revolution. Stalin had no plans for an immediate, all-out military attack on America, Britain, or anywhere else. The last thing Soviet leaders wanted after their devastating war with the Nazis was to sup-

port expensive and bloody revolutionary wars. The Soviet leaders reasoned that they needed time to recuperate and that open support of revolutionary confrontation would be met with devastating force and hostile encirclement. Instead of direct military assault on capitalism, in what Gramsci called a “war of manoeuvre”, they chose instead a more pragmatic and gradual “war of position”. Propaganda and subversion would become the weapons of choice. The global anti-capitalist revolution anticipated by Karl Marx would be put on hold until the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was in a stronger leadership position, economically, militarily, and culturally.

The geopolitical strategy of the Soviet leaders included reining in confrontational revolutionary activities of various communist parties around the world, ordering them to form broad coalitions of progressive forces within their respective countries, or, in some cases, turning their backs on their communist allies.¹³ The Soviet Union would build a defensive perimeter around itself (the so-called Eastern Bloc) and promote a variety of international cultural organizations involving women, labour, youth, and students. The Soviets had long recognized the strategic importance of these groups in revolutionary social change. Even before the war ended the Soviets and their communist allies, focused on themes of “peace” and “anti-fascism”, were organizing youth and students around the world. The Soviet leaders believed that, in time, a revolutionary class consciousness among the next generation of the “workers of the world” would grow as the contradictions of capitalism and imperialism intensified.

Many American and Canadian capitalists and political leaders understood the long-term implications of the Soviet “peace”: the slow erosion of support for capitalism. They engaged in aggressive and repressive campaigns against communists at home and abroad. The postwar American geopolitical strategy to weaken and eventually undermine Soviet Communism involved three broad strategies. The first was the Marshall Plan, a massive programme of financial assistance inaugurated in 1948 to help Western European countries rebuild. This plan created markets for American and Canadian goods, drew Western Europe away from Soviet economic and political influence, and removed the conditions for communist revolution.¹⁴ The second strategy to help curtail communism was the formation of the North American Treaty

13 The situations in France and Greece, for example, demonstrate something of the Soviet global strategy after the war. Stalin, leader of the Soviet Union, told the French Communists to dissolve their armed militias, to submit to the authority of a government recognized by the Allied powers, to build a broad left-wing movement, and to stop flying red flags and using the word “communism” in their literature. See Patrick Flaherty, “Origins of the Cold War: New Evidence”, *Monthly Review* (May 1996), pp. 41–42. In the case of Greece, Stalin completely abandoned and tricked the Greek Communists and socialists in a secret pact between himself and Churchill. See John Newsinger, “Churchill, Stalin, and the Greek Revolution”, *Monthly Review* (April 1999).

14 Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, and John English, *Canada since 1945: Power, Politics, and Provincialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), p. 88.

Organization (NATO), a military alliance that included America, Britain, and Canada, America's postwar "junior partner". NATO built a Euro-American military force to curb what it perceived as Soviet intentions in Western Europe. NATO also helped mediate among the old (British) and emerging (American) imperialist powers. Finally, and most relevant to Canadian student activism in international affairs, was a cultural strategy that involved supporting the non-communist or non-totalitarian left to ensure that the communist left would be politically isolated.¹⁵ Immediately after the war, Americans were caught off guard on the cultural front; the Soviets were much faster in implementing a programme of subversion and propaganda. Hence the American cultural strategy was formed largely in response to Soviet action and American perceptions that the Soviets were preparing for an immediate attack on the capitalist-imperialist nations. As the American Congress and the American population were in the throes of anti-communist hysteria and unable or unwilling to distinguish between socially liberal and communist, American government support to left-leaning or progressive groups such as the National Student Association (NSA) had to be provided in secret and managed from the top of the government bureaucracy.¹⁶

Formation of the IUS and the ISC

In 1945 international student meetings held in London and Prague led to the formation of the International Union of Students (IUS). The London meetings were the initiative of the communist-oriented British National Union of Students and members of anti-Nazi resistance movements living in exile in England.¹⁷ While Canadian students were involved in the IUS in its planning stages in 1945, they were not official NFCUS delegates, but youth associated with Catholic Church organizations or veterans' organizations. NFCUS was not sufficiently organized or supportive of the idea of international student organizing and did not officially join the IUS until 1947, withdrawing a year later; thereafter, NFCUS representatives would attend most IUS meetings as "observers".¹⁸

In contrast, when NFCUS participated in activities that led to the yet-to-be formalized "international student conference" in 1950, it was relatively well established. The "international student conference" was understood by its participants to be an informal meeting of non-communist IUS members, but,

15 See Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, pp. 204–205, and "Youth Organization as a Battlefield in the Cold War", pp. 83–84; Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: New Press, 1999).

16 Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, p. xi.

17 Jones, *The History of the United States National Student Association*, p. 3. For more recent study on the origins of the IUS, see Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, pp. 86–106.

18 NFCUS delegates attended two kinds of IUS meetings: large-scale congresses involving all members and associates, and smaller council (or executive) meetings. Between 1946 and 1954 there were only three congresses (in 1946, 1950, and 1953) and six council meetings, in 1947, 1948, 1949, 1951, 1952, and 1954 (Maanen, *The International Student Movement*).

under the careful manipulation of CIA agents in the US NSA (formed in 1947), the conference emerged as a rival international student organization.¹⁹ The International Student Conference (ISC), its Coordinating Secretariat (CoSec), and the US NSA were able to operate solely because of support from CIA-funded American philanthropic foundations until revelations in *Ramparts Magazine* blew the cover in 1967.

NFCUS leaders were also active in the World Assembly of Youth (WAY) and the International Student Service (ISS) that in the early 1950s became the World University Services Canada (WUSC). These organizations, along with IUS and ISC, were among the forerunners of the first international “development agencies” or non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as they would later become known. Both the IUS and ISC engaged in student relief work, along with the ISS and WAY. The purpose of “relief” was hotly debated; many in the ISC viewed IUS relief work as “political” and related to communist expansion, while seeing their own relief efforts as somehow neutral and more democratic.

After 1945 students were faced with re-establishing national student organizations that had stopped operating at the onset of the war. In Canada, there were important domestic issues to be dealt with, yet many postwar student leaders felt a tremendous moral responsibility for providing assistance to those people whose lives had been devastated by war and for avoiding another war.²⁰ Hence many Canadian and American student leaders, a number of whom were war veterans, looked outwards with the aim of forming international ties and communication. A major motivation for students around the world to establish an international student organization was the need to ensure international cooperation and global peace, two items on the agenda of international student meetings from the beginning.²¹ Global peace was a major motivating factor for student leaders in the early 1950s at the Université de Montréal, for example.²² Widespread concern among students for global peace and unity of the international student movement posed something of an obstacle for the CIA when it was helping to create the ISC as a rival to the IUS. Many international student leaders, including Americans, recognized major political differences among themselves, but felt these should be dealt with in a single international student organization.

19 See Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, pp. 204–205, and “Youth Organization as a Battlefield in the Cold War”; Paget, “From Stockholm to Leiden”.

20 Domestic issues included veteran integration, employment, and freedom of speech on campus. Student aid was probably the biggest national issue for NFCUS in the postwar period. See Moses, “All That Was Left” and “Student Organizations as Historical Actors”, for discussion of NFCUS and the struggle for student aid in the late 1950s to mid-1960s.

21 MU, Box 38, Finding Aid Reference [hereafter FAR] “McGill Conference, December 1945”, NFCUS, “Report of the Liaison Committee of the N.F.C.U.S.”, December 28, 1945, attached to “Administration Committee Report (as Amended in Conference)”.

22 Neatby, *Carabins ou activistes?*, pp. 38–40.

IUS delegates from what Van Maanan calls the “old established countries”, Canada, the United States, Scandinavia, and other self-defined “Western” nations, immediately found themselves in a minority non-communist position in an organization that they saw as “Eastern” or “communist dominated”.²³ The chair of the Canadian delegation reported, “Voting power at the I.U.S. [Paris] Council for example was 41 ‘communists’, 14 democrats, 11 neutrals.”²⁴ Student leaders who resented the dogmatic Marxist-Leninism and superior organizing abilities of the IUS leaders provided the opening for anti-Soviet covert state operations.

After the war, the British Foreign Office secretly backed the World Assembly of Youth (WAY) as a political antidote to the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY).²⁵ By the early 1950s the American CIA had infiltrated the US National Student Association (NSA) at its top level and created and funded the ISC and the Foundation of Youth and Student Affairs (FYSA).²⁶ The primary objective of the CIA was to undermine the Soviet monopoly on international youth and student affairs.²⁷ “The main objective of the organization [ISC/CoSec] is to have the non-communist national unions leave the IUS, and to weaken and isolate the communists.”²⁸ By 1952 the CIA had clearly achieved its objective of breaking the Soviet monopoly: “At the peak of its influence, the CIA subsidized not only the WAY and ISC: there seemed to be hardly any non-communist youth organisations it did not support.”²⁹

The Cold War Heats up on the Canadian Campus

Notions of “Western” and “Eastern” as they were used by Canadian and American student activists of the day were ambiguous. Great Britain, for example, was considered a “Western” nation, yet until the early 1950s the elected executive of the British National Union of Students (NUS) was predominantly communist.³⁰ Questions remained as to where to place countries such as Yugoslavia, Turkey, Greece, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Were they

23 Jones, *The History of the United States National Student Association*, p. 6.

24 MU, Box 38, Grant Livingstone, Chairman, Delegation to IUS, *Report on the Attempt of the NFCUS to affiliate with the IUS during 1948*, December 20, 1948.

25 Richard J. Aldrich, “Putting Culture into the Cold War: The Cultural Relations Department (CRD) and British Covert Information Warfare”, *Intelligence and National Security*, vol. 18 (Summer 2003).

26 See David Triesman, “The CIA and Student Politics”, in Altbach and Uphoff, eds., *The Student Internationals*; Philip Altbach, “The Student Internationals”, in Altbach and Uphoff, eds., *The Student Internationals*; Paget, “From Stockholm to Leiden”.

27 See Norman T. Uphoff, “The Viability of Student Internationals: Reflections on their Structure, Financing and Relevance”, in Altbach and Uphoff, eds., *The Student Internationals*, p. 153. Kotek also adopts this position.

28 Tom Braden, former CIA agent and advisor and wartime hero, quoted in Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, p. 209.

29 Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, p. 210. NFCUS, the Roman Catholic Pax Romana, the World University Service, and the Young Women’s Christian Association are among those Kotek names specifically.

30 Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, pp. 185–186.

Eastern or Western? This blurred distinction between East and West is not surprising, as Eastern and Western are socially constructed terms and lie at the core of imperialist cultural domination.³¹ As long as Canadian students believed there was a distinct and cohesive “West”, it followed that “Eastern” influences in the “West” should be curtailed and that it was logical to have a “Western alliance” of national student organizations. The idea of East and West divided by the Iron Curtain were Cold War terms *par excellence*, as they helped British, American, and other Cold War military strategists discursively to quarantine the USSR and the Soviet Eastern “Bloc” during a period of de-colonialist struggles and imperialist reorganization. The “othering” of the Soviets and their followers as “Eastern” helped create ideological unity among nations and national student organizations “in the West” to oppose communism at a global level.

There is no evidence of any covert Canadian government activity in NFCUS or international student organizations comparable to the US government intervention in the US NSA and in the ISC. However, much evidence indicates that the Canadian government took often secret, repressive, and authoritarian measures to curtail political dissent and communism on the home front, including purges of Canada’s film and television industries.³² As part of the strategy of undermining communism, the social welfare state started to emerge in earnest when the federal government implemented extensive social programmes during and after the Second World War. Policy elites correctly predicted that these would assure the smooth integration of veterans and dampen dissent within the working class.³³ Capital-labour relations had deteriorated during wartime, and many state officials worried that the influx of veterans in the context of a weakened economy would be a recipe for social unrest, especially among the younger generations. The policy elites did not want to see a return to the situation of the late 1930s, when the communist-influenced Canadian Student Assembly and the Canadian Youth Congress were formed. Overt measures included various state-funded social programmes such as unemployment insurance (introduced in 1940), family allowances (introduced in 1945), and most significantly the various programmes of the Veterans Charter (introduced during and after the Second

31 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

32 Reg Whitaker and Gary Marcuse, *Cold War Canada: The Making of a National Insecurity State, 1945–1957* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

33 See S. Brint and J. Karabel, *The Diverted Dream: Community Colleges and the Promise of Educational Opportunity in America, 1900–1985* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 67; James Struthers, *No Fault of Their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State, 1914–1941* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), pp. 16–17, and “Family Allowances, Old Age Security, and the Construction of Entitlement in the Canadian Welfare State, 1943–1951”, in Neary and Granatstein, eds. *The Veterans Charter*; also Desmond Morton, “The Canadian Veteran’s Heritage from the Great War”; Peter Neary, “Introduction”; and Jeff Keshen, “Getting it Right the Second Time Around: The Reintegration of Canadian Veterans of World War II”, all in Neary and Granatstein, eds., *The Veterans Charter*.

World War). These programmes included free tuition fees and living allowances for those accepted into university. Covert measures included police repression of youth and student organizations suspected of being communist infiltrated.³⁴ Various social programmes and economic growth, in part a result of war-related industry, reinforced the popularity of the federal Liberal government and weakened support for the Communist Party and the Canadian Cooperative Federation (CCF).³⁵ The government-funded Canadian Youth Commission in 1945 warned: "Discontented youth formed the vanguard of revolutionary movements abroad after the last war.... They might well play a similar role here should prolonged unemployment destroy their faith in democratic institutions."³⁶

Communist parties in North America were attempting to position themselves to lead students and youth and represent them in what could have become a major auxiliary organization of world revolutionary social change: the IUS. It was estimated that 10 per cent of the delegates to the founding convention of the NSA in 1947 were communist.³⁷ "Communists are trying every ruse to dominate veterans and student organizations in Canadian universities," reported the *Globe and Mail*.³⁸ The Labour Progressive Party³⁹ had chapters on most Canadian university campuses and members in a number of popular campus groups, including the Student Christian Movement, the National Conference of Student Veterans (NCSV) (as late as in 1948), and NFCUS (at least one known activist, Gordon McLean).⁴⁰ While I do not want to exaggerate the level of communist organizing in North America, the potential for communist parties to expand in the first few years following the Second World War was certainly evident. The communist movement in North America was successfully repressed, however, and it was not able to build any significant political support or influence. Unprecedented levels of government support for veterans and the repression of communists by the RCMP

34 See Paul Axelrod, "Spying on the Young in Depression and War: Students, Youth Groups and the RCMP, 1935–1942", *Labour/Le Travail*, vol. 35 (Spring 1995), pp. 43–63; Steve Hewitt, *Spying 101: The RCMP's Secret Activities at Canadian Universities, 1917–1997* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

35 The CCF was the precursor of the current social democratic New Democratic Party.

36 Quoted in Bothwell *et al.*, *Canada since 1945*, p. 64.

37 J. Angus Johnston, "Questions of Communism and Anticommunism in Twentieth-Century American Student Activism", *Peace and Change*, vol. 23, no. 3 (July 2001), p. 305.

38 "Communist Pressure on Campus Charged", *Globe and Mail*, December 13, 1946, p. 4.

39 The LPP was the name adopted by the Communist Party of Canada (CPC) after it was declared illegal under the *War Measures Act* in 1940. See Norman Penner, *Canadian Communism: The Stalin Years and Beyond* (Toronto: Methuen, 1988), p. 166.

40 Watson Kirkconnell, "Communists on the Canadian Campus Are Now Briefed for Their Missions", *Saturday Night*, January 18, 1949, pp. 6–7. Kirkconnell was a well-known anti-communist crusader and university president. There is no reason to doubt his information on the number of campus communist clubs that he draws from the *Report of Proceedings of 2nd Annual Conference of L.P.P. Held at Toronto, September 17–19, 1948*.

and university authorities help to explain the character of NFCUS and the NCSV in the immediate postwar period.

From the perspective of the RCMP in the late 1930s and early 1940s, “universities were potential breeding grounds of critical thought and political ‘subversion’, and ... merited close scrutiny.”⁴¹ RCMP suspicion continued after the war. Following the Gouzenko affair in 1945, the RCMP became even more concerned as to the possible extent of covert Soviet activity in Canada. Igor Gouzenko, a Soviet agent who defected while working in Canada, exposed a number of Canadians who had been secretly supplying the Soviets with information.⁴² The “red scare” of the 1930s would rage again in the mid-to-late 1940s. The RCMP was so disturbed and perplexed by Gouzenko’s revelations about a spy ring operating in the Western world that it ended up gathering “every possible scrap of information about communism.”⁴³ British intelligence was aware of Soviet agents in the international student and youth field as early as 1945.⁴⁴ Yet the extent of RCMP knowledge of foreign intelligence activities in student affairs is unclear. Given the potential for national student organizations to radicalize as they did in the late 1930s and NFCUS’s association with communists on campus and in the IUS, one would expect vigilance by the RCMP.

Oddly enough, Steve Hewitt’s book *Spying 101* (2002) does not uncover much RCMP material related to the surveillance of NFCUS in the postwar period. There are three possible explanations. The first is that the RCMP records on NFCUS were destroyed or continue to be withheld. The second is that NFCUS may not have been a target of RCMP suspicion. In the 1930s the RCMP had little interest in NFCUS, as it was viewed as politically conservative and loyal to established authority.⁴⁵ Hence the RCMP’s view of a benign NFCUS may have simply persisted after the war. At least in the late 1950s and early 1960s, NFCUS leaders maintained mostly cordial relations with the RCMP.⁴⁶ Yet, given the extent of RCMP fear of communist activity immediately following the war, this explanation seems weak. The third and most plausible explanation for the relative absence of RCMP spying on NFCUS (according to Hewitt) is that the RCMP relied on university presidents such as Watson Kirkconnell at Acadia or Sydney Smith at the University of Toronto to control and monitor campus-based student activism.⁴⁷

41 Axelrod, “Spying on the Young in Depression and War”, p. 62.

42 See Whitaker and Marcuse, *Cold War Canada*; also Reg Whitaker and Steve Hewitt, *Canada and the Cold War* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 2003).

43 See Hewitt, *Spying 101*, p. 67.

44 Aldrich, “Putting Culture into the Cold War”, p. 113.

45 Paul Axelrod, “Student Movement of the 1930s”, in Paul Axelrod and John G. Reid, eds., *Youth, University and Canadian Society* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989).

46 Personal interviews, former NFCUS leaders of the late 1950s, 1992–1993.

47 See Levi, “‘Decided Action Has Been Taken’”, pp. 40–44, for the situation at Toronto and McGill.

University presidents were in part able to influence student activities through people like E. A. MacDonald at Toronto and G. H. “Finnie” Fletcher at McGill. These permanent student council staff members wielded inordinate amounts of power to “direct student activity away from ‘harmful’ paths and towards ‘useful’ ones”.⁴⁸ Long-term student council staff members like MacDonald and Fletcher mediated between the student council and university presidents and are another example of youth-state and youth-adult relations that occur in student organizations. MacDonald and Fletcher provided important information to student councils about university politics, but, more importantly, they provided intelligence on student affairs to university presidents, who ultimately used this information to regulate and control student activism — quite feasibly without direct RCMP involvement. Fletcher was “hated” by the “activists” who could “never figure out who paid him and what his actual job description was”.⁴⁹ While it is true that many university administrators, alarmed by the real or imagined communist insurgency, worked in “full cooperation” with the RCMP,⁵⁰ it is possible that in many cases the RCMP was simply not needed. University presidents, as agents of capitalism, wanted to counter the “communist threat” on their own terms. They created a reliable antidote against communist youth organizing by working with or “selecting” student councils and NFCUS representatives and making them into friendly allies. As we shall see, policy decisions taken by NFCUS during its postwar reformation reveal a substantial deference to the “University Authorities”.

From the time of its re-emergence, university administrators carefully monitored NFCUS. On occasion, university presidents, worried about the politics of NFCUS, would not give approval to hikes in *per capita* NFCUS dues.⁵¹ However, most university administrators did not engage in such undemocratic and patronizing politics. It was better to promote or “select” NFCUS than to allow communist front organizations to have full run of campus student organizing. NFCUS activism, based in student councils and in NFCUS committees, could be carefully cultivated and monitored and, if the need ever arose, administrators could shut down NFCUS by refusing to collect dues from students.

While Paul Axelrod’s and Steve Hewitt’s studies provide ample evidence on the extent of RCMP activities on Canadian campuses, they do not concern

48 Levi, “‘Decided Action Has Been Taken’”, pp. 7–8. “Sandy” MacDonald was “General Secretary-Treasurer of SAC [Students Administrative Council at the University of Toronto] from 1932 to 1950 (and beyond)” (pp. 7–8). MacDonald was also appointed NFCUS secretary-treasurer in 1945, in part for his past experience in NFCUS. See MU, Box 38, “Administration Committee Report (as Amended in Conference)”.

49 Levi, “‘Decided Action Has Been Taken’”, p. 8.

50 Axelrod, “Spying on the Young in Depression and War”, p. 62. Axelrod refers here to the 1930s, but I see no reason to suspect this changed in the 1940s.

51 See MU, Box 21, FAR “18th Annual Congress – Toronto”, Antonio Enriquez, “President’s Report”, October 18–23, 1954, p. 13.

themselves with American and Soviet intelligence activities. Canadian students were coming into regular contact with CIA and KGB (the Soviet State Security Committee) operatives and so far there is no evidence to show the RCMP knew about this. Using RCMP records, Hewitt assesses the extent of Soviet intelligence operating on Canadian campuses and concludes that there is “slim” evidence of it.⁵² In other words, despite suspicions and attempts to uncover Soviet intelligence activities on Canadian campuses, evidently the RCMP did not find much. However, Hewitt does not consider NFCUS’s international relations with the IUS, which put Canadian students in direct and regular contact with agents of the KGB. Alexander Sheljepin, vice-president of the IUS between 1946 and 1959, for example, was appointed chairman of the KGB in 1958. He could not have “risen to the top of the Soviet secret service apparatus with out having had solid previous experience of intelligence work [while] in the IUS”.⁵³ This appears to be one “scrap” of information that the RCMP may have missed. Similarly, Canadian student leaders were in regular contact with undercover CIA operatives in the NSA, another dimension of “spying” on Canadian campuses that Hewitt does not consider, probably for the same reason: the RCMP files have no record of it. If this is the case, it is feasible to believe that the RCMP had no knowledge of CIA operations in American and international student organizations, unless such information was purged or remains unreleased.

Re-emergence of NFCUS in 1944

NFCUS began to emerge from its wartime inactivity when student leaders at the University of Saskatchewan, led by Bill Ellis, called a meeting in 1944. The revival of NFCUS went against the wishes of the last-elected NFCUS president (in 1940), Sydney Hermant, who took the position that it was inappropriate to have a national student organization during wartime.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, a meeting was held at the University of Western Ontario in December 1944, with delegates from Mount Allison, Acadia, Dalhousie, British Columbia, Western Ontario, Alberta, Laval, Ottawa, McMaster, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nova Scotia Tech, St. Mary’s, Queen’s, McGill, and Toronto. Delegates were unsure whether or not the gathering constituted a meeting of NFCUS, and they interpreted the NFCUS constitution, as it existed in 1939, as saying that NFCUS was legally a “technically defunct” organization and that its “[former] officers were legally not in existence”. The minute-taker reported, “Mr Ellis assumed ... that the Conference at London [Ontario] would be an official conference of the N.F.C.U.S. [and] believed that this assumption was shared by the rest of the delegates who attended.”

52 Hewitt, *Spying 101*, pp. 9–10.

53 Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, p. 213.

54 MU, Box 35, FAR “National Inter-Varsity Conference 1944”, *NFCUS Executive Meeting: Summary of Minutes and Procedure*, University of Western Ontario, December 27–30, 1944, p. 2.

Despite the fact that NFCUS was legally defunct, delegates decided to allow Hermant's assertion that he was still president, as he had been the last president to be elected in 1939. A "special wartime committee" was set up, and Hermant's role in it and the reformed NFCUS appears to have been minimal. Dick Bibbs of the University of British Columbia was elected as wartime committee chairman.⁵⁵ The wartime committee would oversee the implementation of conference decisions, which included re-establishing local NFCUS committees on each member campus and planning for the next conference. Topics discussed at the reinaugural 1944 NFCUS conference included veterans' rehabilitation and assimilation problems, military training, and the National Selective Service. Little was said about international student organizing except for one rather *ad hoc* "general" resolution calling for the NFCUS wartime committee to "negotiate with the National Union of Students of the Universities of England and Wales" to establish a "Commonwealth Federation [of students]".⁵⁶ It is worth noting that the communist-orientated British NUS would be an important player in the formation of the International Union of Students and a main organizer of the 1945 meeting of the World Federation of Democratic Youth in London.

The delegates passed a by-law placing serious restrictions on NFCUS's activism and political representations. By-Law 10 stated, "No opinion on national affairs reflecting upon the constituent members shall be voiced by the officers of the Federation without the unanimous approval of the constituent members." This decision meant that NFCUS would operate on the basis of consensus and that any member had a veto on any decision. While By-Law 10 may have been useful for consolidating NFCUS at this delicate formative stage, it was eventually found untenable and forgotten. For some, By-Law 10 was less about unity and more about stifling communist and "left-wing" activism and making NFCUS into a politically disabled service organization.

Despite the bureaucratic roadblocks, these wartime students covered many topics and laid the foundation for what became annual meetings of student council representatives. The inaugural conference of the new NFCUS had gotten off to a rather shaky start, and the situation did not change much by the next meeting at McGill in December 1945. While international affairs were hardly touched upon, the efforts of these formative NFCUS leaders would set the stage for international involvement.

The 1945 NFCUS Conference at McGill

At McGill, momentum was definite and the enthusiasm palpable.⁵⁷ The very fact that student councils across the country had organized yet another con-

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁵⁷ MU, Box 38, FAR "McGill Conference, December 1945", *Minutes of NFCUS Conference*, McGill University, December 27–29, 1945.

ference was a feat unto itself. Student council leaders seemed to put political differences aside to focus on re-establishing a viable national student organization, despite scarce resources and disrupted lives. The high delegate turnover rate from the previous conference was a factor working against the rapid re-establishment of NFCUS. I was able to identify only two delegates at the 1945 conference who had attended the previous conference: Jack Pye of McGill and George Doner of Toronto (formally of Saskatchewan). The 1944 delegates spoke well of NFCUS and arranged for “new blood” to go to McGill. Providing continuity, “the war time executive” and various committees had forwarded their reports from the previous year. Among the topics of discussion were student health, employment, reduced rail fares for students, and “inadequate educational facilities”.

Delegates continued to grapple with the role of NFCUS and how it would represent student veterans. Was NFCUS to be an apolitical service organization, organizing such things as interprovincial student exchanges, low-cost rail travel, and yearbook competitions? Or was it to be a political movement engaged in the pressing national and international issues of the day: global peace, postwar reconstruction, unemployment, student and university financing, and advocating the interests of veterans? Its existence was still tenuous, and political restraint prevailed. By-Law 10 was hotly contested and upheld.⁵⁸ Mr. Orr of the University of Saskatchewan expressed the minority view that “N.F.C.U.S. is an abortive and almost total useless organization ... unless the By-Law 10 [was] deleted”. What could have been so upsetting that some delegates threatened withdrawal if By-Law 10 was not implemented? Even a motion to address “inadequate educational facilities” was withdrawn to avoid embarrassing university presidents.

A poignant moment came at very end of the NFCUS conference with the presentation of a report from the International Student Service (ISS) entitled “Students in Europe”.⁵⁹ The placement of the ISS report at the end of the conference indicates the low priority it received. A motion to adjourn just before its presentation was evidently not supported, as no vote was taken. There was no doubt that some NFCUS leaders wanted to broaden NFCUS’s narrow political scope. If some wanted to limit NFCUS’s international activities, the ISS presentation suggested that such a limitation was morally indefensible and perhaps even grossly irresponsible. The minute-taker recorded in detail the report, given by Professor Long and Mille Ballon, a French student in Paris. Ballon’s first-hand account of students in France at the end of the war must have been rivetting. She spoke to tired NFCUS delegates of widespread deprivation of students, their starvation, forced labour, and torture by the Gestapo, and the formation of *maquis*, guerrilla fighters against the Nazi occupation. She described how students, despite the danger of severe punish-

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 10–11.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 21–24.

ment, had worn yellow stars to confuse the Germans. She spoke of the horrific situation around the time of the German surrender with a “flood of thousands of prisoners coming from all over France — some bombed on the way ... some dead of suffocation in the trains”. While the immediate response of the NFCUS delegates at McGill to the ISS presentation is not recorded, NFCUS did go on to work closely with ISS in the coming years.

NFCUS between 1944 and 1946 had little formal relation to international student organizing. The wartime 1944 committee had been in contact with the British NUS, but this was not followed up — at least publicly. Student veterans, connected to the outlawed Canadian Communist Party, appeared to be more directly involved in international student organizing. Certain veterans with ties to international communist organizations took the initiative unofficially to represent NFCUS at various planning meetings that led to the formation of the IUS.

One of the more interesting things about the 1945 NFCUS conference was that another national student conference was happening concurrently in the same city, at the University of Montreal: the first National Conference of Student Veterans (NCSV), at which the National Association of Student Veterans was formed.⁶⁰ Although there is no indication in the archival sources, we can assume that the timing of these two conferences was not a coincidence; no doubt some student veterans such as McGill’s Len Starkey or Toronto’s Gordon McLean wanted to see NFCUS and the veterans’ student organization amalgamate or at least coordinate their activities. The exact nature of the relationship between the two organizations is unclear, but some information is provided by the report of their Liaison Committee.

The Liaison Committee revealed that Lt. J. L. Starkey, chair of the NCSV, had attended a conference in London, England, on March 24–25, 1945, which had been called by the British National Union of Students (NUS).⁶¹ Starkey was named as “the delegate from the N.F.C.U.S.” (In fact there is no evidence that he was an official NFCUS delegate.) At this international meeting, which “was informal and was not a meeting of mandated delegates”, a “convening committee” was created that made plans for an “international student organization”. This International Preparatory Committee made plans for a “constituent congress” in London for November 10–11, 1945. The committee was made up of representatives from seven countries: Canada, China, the United States, France, England, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia.⁶² Starkey was likely the Canadian delegate. A direct tie is evident between the student veterans’ organization, the outlawed Communist Party of Canada (the LPP), and the communist-oriented International Preparatory Committee that led to

60 MU, Box 38, attached to “Administration Committee Report (as Amended in Conference)”, “Report of Veterans’ Committee”, NFCUS Conference, December 1945; see also “Report of the Liaison Committee of the N.F.C.U.S.”

61 *Ibid.*

62 Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, p. 87.

the formation of the IUS. Starkey's career as student veteran leader was short-lived, and he was ousted as president because of his "political affiliations" at the second NCSV in December 1946.⁶³ The same year he lost the election for McGill's student council president. It had been a close race, and he probably would have won if not for a smear campaign orchestrated by an "unidentified group".⁶⁴

NFCUS turned down an invitation to attend the 1945 "World Youth Conference" that established the World Federation of Democratic Youth.⁶⁵ Until 1948 the WFDY was widely supported by governments in both "the West" and in the Eastern Bloc. Concerns over the WFDY's communist connections had yet to surface.⁶⁶ NFCUS was not organized well enough in 1945 to send delegates; further, it was avoiding anything remotely "political". The National Federation of Labour Youth, the youth wing of the communist Labour Progressive Party (LPP), sent a contingent of over 100 young Canadians to attend the Second Congress of the WFDY and its "First World Youth Festival" in Prague in the summer of 1947.⁶⁷ No doubt NFCUS leaders knew about this delegation and became suspicious of the WFDY's communist orientations — a suspicion that seems to have prevented any future participation. The absence of NFCUS interest in the WFDY contrasts with its strong support for the distinctly anti-communist World Assembly of Youth (WAY), formed in 1948 with British intelligence playing a central role.⁶⁸

Despite the enthusiasm of student leaders at the McGill conference and the many resolutions passed, the reformation of the national student organization was moving at a snail's pace. The lack of funds, a permanent office, staff, experience, and communication were all problems faced by early NFCUS organizers. Despite all obstacles, the McGill delegates called another conference for December 1946 in Toronto.

From the time of the NFCUS and the NCSV meetings in 1945, there is evidence of strained relations between them, with both organizations maintaining separate identities. While more research is needed, the NCSV appears to have kept its distance from NFCUS throughout the late 1940s. By 1949 the NCSV appeared to have ceased operating and was likely replaced for a time by more local activities of the better-organized campus groups such as those at the University of Toronto in 1947.⁶⁹ In 1948 NFCUS executive sent the

63 Neary, "The Veterans Rehabilitation Act", p. 136.

64 Levi, " 'Decided Action Has Been Taken' ", p. 25.

65 MU, Box 38, FAR "McGill Conference, December 1945", Canadian Arrangements Committee, *Conference News* (published by the Canadian Youth Commission), no. 1 (September 21, 1945); "Report of the Liaison Committee of the N.F.C.U.S."

66 Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, p. 169; see also Aldrich, "Putting Culture into the Cold War", for details on the origin of the communist-oriented WFDY.

67 Penner, *Canadian Communism*, p. 222.

68 Aldrich, "Putting Culture into the Cold War".

69 Neary, "The Veterans Rehabilitation Act", p. 137.

NCSV a letter saying that NFCUS was not a competing organization but represented Canadian students — which of course included student veterans.⁷⁰ The last mention I found in the NFCUS records of the NCSV was at the end of 1948. NFCUS president Robert Harwood stated, “Insofar as the ... (N.C.S.V) is concerned, it appears not unlikely that we will merge our identities entirely before the present conference is over.” President Harwood cited declining numbers and “financial difficulties of maintaining a specialist organization” as reasons for the NCSV’s decline.⁷¹ The reasons why NCSV dropped off the political landscape were no doubt related to the decreasing number of student veterans, but also to the tendency for student veterans’ issues to be addressed by local campus NFCUS committees and “selection” — veterans received an extensive array of government benefits, and university administrators responded adequately, it would seem, to campus veterans’ issues.

The Toronto Conference: NFCUS Goes International

NFCUS President McVean began the Toronto conference in 1946 by reviewing the dismal organizational situation of the previous year.⁷² He stated that members had “expected too much too soon ... [we had] a lack of appreciation of the problems involved, and an inability to see the difficulties in the way.” Nevertheless, McVean believed that the McGill conference “covered most of the preliminary work necessary to put the organization back on its feet”.⁷³ Perhaps one of the most significant developments under McVean’s tenure was the formation of local NFCUS committees. This laid the foundation for the success of the next president, Maurice Sauvé, in further developing the organization.

President McVean promoted his vision of NFCUS as a service organization, one that “cannot allow itself to be drawn into the maelstrom of politics or religion”, but his conservative vision proved to be short-lived. McVean advised remaining non-partisan and not affiliating with the WFDY, having “examined the reports of that body in the light of our constitutional position”. McVean cited financial reasons for not being involved “on international student bodies”, which was likely a reference to efforts to establish an international student organization, what was to become the IUS. McVean was not an advocate of international involvement. He repeated the need for unity, and this meant avoiding anything deemed “political”. As NFCUS was still in a fragile state, McVean argued that international involvement in hard-to-under-

70 MU, Box 20, FAR “NFCUS 1948”, *Minutes of Executive Meeting*, February 8–10, 1948, p. 5.

71 MU, Box 3a (Sec. 5), “Report of the 12th Conference of the NFCUS”, Robert S. Harwood, “President’s Report on Activities for the Year 1948”, p. 13.

72 MU, Box 38, FAR “NFCUS Conference – Toronto 1946”, “The National Federation of Canadian University Students’ Conference: Opening Address by Mr. McVean, President of NFCUS”, December 27, 1946, p. 1.

73 *Globe and Mail*, December 27, 1946, p. 5.

stand and potentially controversial issues should be avoided. Yet the activism of at least some of the delegates, in particular those from the University of Toronto, would sway the mood of the conference in the opposite direction. Université de Montréal's Maurice Sauvé, a supporter of increased international involvement, was elected NFCUS president. This assured that NFCUS would enter the fray of international student politics. His friend and future wife (and future Governor General of Canada), Jeanne Sauvé, participated in anti-communist Roman Catholic student groups that were active in international relief work and, unlike NFCUS, in the formative meetings of the IUS.⁷⁴

One of the biggest supporters of involvement in international student organizations, and human rights more generally, was the University of Toronto Advisory Committee. Its 1946 report included a section on the Proposed Constitution,⁷⁵ suggesting that an "Aim" of NFCUS should be to "provide the means of co-operation among Canadian university students and those of other lands". Also included in the Advisory Committee's report was a sub-report that stated: "Since the future welfare of university students of this nation depends in large measure upon the future welfare of all nations it would be fatal not to affiliate eventually with an international organization. THEREFORE NFCUS SHOULD AFFILIATE WITH THE IUS."⁷⁶

Further evidence of NFCUS's interest in IUS membership comes from the Cultural Committee formed at the Toronto conference. This committee too recommended that it be a "principle" of NFCUS to participate in international student organizations, which could "promote understanding among students" with international student organizations acting as "co-ordinating bodies between national student organizations and general student activities". The Cultural Committee recognized criticism of the IUS and optimistically stated, "Although they [IUS] may at the present moment not be acceptable, it is by our presence at their meetings that we may hope to effect a change in those things which are not a present acceptable." It was resolved that a standing committee be created that would be "centred at one university" and would collect "recommendations of all Canadian Universities regarding conditions over which affiliation with IUS may be acceptable". Université de Montréal, Maurice Sauvé's home campus, would be chosen.⁷⁷ After lengthy discussion, it was also resolved that NFCUS "endorse the general work of the ISS [Inter-

74 Catherine McLean, for example, a representative from the Roman Catholic Church's Canadian Federation of Newman Clubs, attended the "preparatory conference" (of the IUS) in November 1945. See Jones, *The History of United States National Student Association*, pp. 12–13, 23.

75 MU, Box 38, FAR "NFCUS Conference – Toronto 1946", W. D. Lyon, "Extracts from Report on Cultural Exchange and International Relations", University of Toronto Advisory Committee on NFCUS, 1946.

76 It would be wrong to conclude that this report was purely the result of communist organizing. Both "left and right" at the University of Toronto between 1947 and 1950 supported NFCUS involvement in the IUS, although for different reasons. See Levi, "Decided Action Has Been Taken", p. 51.

77 "Students' Union Questions Studied", *Globe and Mail*, December 30, 1946, p. 4; "Students Ask Ottawa to Consider Problems", *Globe and Mail*, December 31, 1946, p. 4.

national Student Service] ... and make every effort to co-ordinate our work ... with that of the ISS”.

Despite the surge of interest in international student organizing at the Toronto meeting, delegates informally agreed that they would not take a stand on matters pertaining to religious and political beliefs.⁷⁸ This position would place NFCUS immediately at odds with the majority of IUS members, which had no qualms about taking overtly political positions on such topics as imperialism or capitalism. There was no mention of By-Law 10 when NFCUS adopted a policy whereby it could only take action on issues that “affected students directly”. This was known internationally as the “students as such” policy, which was also a major debate within the IUS and NSA.⁷⁹ Many people thought that such a policy was absurd as there was no such thing as a purely student issue. Nevertheless, the clumsy policy was a compromise between those who wanted a “political” NFCUS and those who wanted a “service-oriented”, “non-political” NFCUS. By-Law 10 had quickly faded into obscurity.

Under Sauvé’s leadership, NFCUS consolidated its position as a viable representative organization, nationally and internationally. In 1947 President Sauvé travelled across the country, encouraging the growth of NFCUS and its international involvement. Sauvé attended the founding meeting of the US National Student Association (NSA) in August 1947 and stated that “important relations” had been established between the two organizations. Plans were made for representatives to attend each other’s conferences. Most significantly, NFCUS was to send delegates to the IUS Prague Council in August 1947.⁸⁰

When NFCUS emerged in the mid-1940s, its leaders were in contact with organizations already involved internationally and with student relief work. These included the International Student Service, the Roman Catholic Newman Clubs, and student veterans’ groups, all of which were involved in the formative meetings of the IUS. It was not the case that NFCUS established itself and then, as a second thought, looked outward toward international politics. NFCUS leaders, many of whom were veterans, saw themselves as creating an important channel of communication for building friendly international relations. The issue of world peace could not just be left to the

78 *Globe and Mail*, December 31, 1946, p. 4.

79 The NSA at its 1948 convention, having failed to come to such an agreement at the constitutional convention in 1947, also carried a similar “students as such” resolution which prohibited it from “taking part in any partisan political or sectarian religious activities”. “Student Group Bars Partisan Activities”, *New York Times*, August 28, 1948, p. 13. For details on American student organizing before 1960, see J. Angus Johnston, “Student Activism in the United States before 1960: An Overview”, in G. J. DeGroot, ed., *Student Protest: The Sixties and After* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1998).

80 MU, Box 20, FAR “NFCUS National Conference/ December 1947 Winnipeg”, Maurice Sauvé, “President’s Report on NFCUS Activities 1947”, presented at 11th NFCUS Conference, Winnipeg.

“adult” world. After all, youth would be expected to enlist in the event of another world conflict.

The IUS Question

Of the several contentious issues in the early stages of the IUS, two in particular had a strong bearing on future NFCUS involvement. The first issue was whether or not an international student organization should take political positions. This debate was similar to the one that occupied delegates at early NFCUS meetings, starting in 1944. According to Kotek, “Most of the Western student unions wanted it [an international student organization] to be completely non-political and to concern itself with purely student activities. Others thought that political questions might be legitimate, but only to the extent that they concerned ‘students as such’.”⁸¹ The other contentious issue was the proposal that member national student organizations abide by and carry out all decisions of the IUS governing bodies.⁸² This meant that any member organization of the IUS would be obligated to follow any policy set by majority opinion of IUS members. This organizing principle was not accepted by the philosophically liberal “Western” delegates, who argued that minority positions were worthy of protection, especially so in this case, as non-communists were the minority within the IUS. These issues would be serious roadblocks to NFCUS and other “Western” student groups becoming full members in the IUS. If NFCUS had taken out full membership in the IUS, “local” national concerns would become secondary to wider, political international concerns. NFCUS, in effect, would have joined the chain of command linked to the centralized bureaucratic authority of the Soviet Union.

It is not surprising that the “IUS Question”, as it came to be called, would become a key one for Canadian and American students. In the American case, 24 American student delegates representing a variety of student groups had attended the 1946 IUS Prague Congress. On their return, these delegates launched an organizing campaign that advocated the formation of the NSA.⁸³ Rather ironically, the NSA was originally founded in 1947 because of the IUS — so that American students could represent themselves within it.⁸⁴ A similar relation may have transpired in NFCUS in 1946–1947 when interest in international student organizations took off. As NFCUS did at its 1947 conference, the 1947 founding convention of the NSA approved affiliation

81 Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, p. 88.

82 See, for example, Jones, *The History of United States National Student Association*, p. 10.

83 *Ibid.*, pp. 29–33, 128.

84 See “NSA Maps International Program”, *New York Times*, September 28, 1947, p. E11. Early NSA organizers also wanted an organization to address collectively domestic issues such as education rights, especially for Afro-Americans, freedom of speech, and freedom to have student organizations. For more details on NSA’s domestic activism, see Johnston, “Student Activism in the United States before 1960”.

with the IUS on a “provisional basis which would guarantee that American students would not be affected by any political action of that body”. The IUS question “was one of the most controversial at the [NSA] convention”.⁸⁵

“Affiliation with the IUS” was equally controversial at the 1947 NFCUS conference at the University of Manitoba.⁸⁶ NFCUS joined the IUS on condition that, if after two years the IUS persisted on taking political positions that NFCUS could not endorse and had not established an “equitable system of representation”, NFCUS would withdraw and, further, would “actively promote the formation of an alternative World Student Union”. A motion to affiliate conditionally with the IUS carried 14 to 4 pending ratification by two-thirds of the 21 members.⁸⁷ Jean Pelletier of Laval stated at the Manitoba conference:

Inside the house of the IUS we can strive to understand Communists — If we can understand why they are Communists and try to help them.... If it is proven that IUS is absolutely rotten, it does not mean that we will have to stay as members. The resolution is conditional, but we will at least be looking for international co-operation. That is the only way to promote peace and collaboration [the ostensible *raison d'être* of the IUS]. We will not be members on Communist terms however.⁸⁸

At the NFCUS executive meeting in February 1948, President Robert S. Harwood (who succeeded Sauvé) stated that NFCUS affiliation with the IUS was “conditional because the organization has concerned itself with political issues ‘beyond the problems of student welfare’ and because NFCUS believes this body is not a representative one”.⁸⁹ NFCUS joined on condition that it would work to change the IUS, but its formal membership was highly tentative, made even more so by events in Czechoslovakia in 1948.

Czechoslovakia 1948: A Decisive Moment in International Student Organizing

In March 1948 relations with the IUS on the part of both the American and Canadian student organizations deteriorated rapidly when the IUS did not rally support for the Czech national student organization against the Soviet takeover. Much of the debate in Canada focused on NSA’s William Ellis, who sent a damning letter resigning from the IUS Council.⁹⁰ The NFCUS presi-

85 See “U.S. Students Vote to Join World Unit”, *New York Times*, September 8, 1947, p. 42; “Students Demand End of Red-inspired Issues”, *Globe and Mail*, January 1, 1948, p. 3.

86 Diakowsky and Enriquez, *History of the National Federation of Canadian University Students*.

87 *Globe and Mail*, December 13, 1946, p. 4; December 27, 1946, p. 5.

88 *Globe and Mail*, January 1, 1948, p. 3.

89 “Students Debate Proposal to Join Enlarged Group”, *Globe and Mail*, February 10, 1948, p. 9.

90 The complete text of this letter is reproduced in Jones, *History of United States National Student Association*, pp. 52–56. This Bill Ellis is not to be confused with Bill Ellis of the University of Saskatchewan, who was instrumental in setting up the 1944 NFCUS meeting.

dent circulated Ellis's letter to Canadian student councils and NFCUS committees.⁹¹ The Czech crisis blatantly exposed the IUS's subservience to Soviet policy. While there is no evidence that Ellis was a secret US government agent, his action was no doubt welcomed by many top Western government officials, as it would create the kind of organizational division and anti-Soviet feelings that could be exploited by covert operations. By December 1948, after only a year, NFCUS leaders decided to disaffiliate from the IUS but continued involvement as observers. In contrast, the NSA ceased its involvement completely until 1950.⁹²

Grant Livingstone, chairman of the Canadian delegation to the IUS, also sent a letter to NFCUS members in which he commented on the Czech crisis and Ellis's letter of resignation.⁹³ Livingstone maintained a tone of ambivalent optimism. He suggested that NFCUS's conditions for affiliation, namely that the IUS should stay away from politics and become a service organization, might be unreasonable given that many national student organizations, particularly in colonized countries, "are formed largely for political purposes" and set defending freedom "as a minimum of their 'legitimate' political activity and their contribution to IUS is very heavy".

I must say my estimate of the chances of objectifying IUS [making it "representative" as per NFCUS conditions] have been greatly diminished, I feel a strong attempt should still be made, if for no better reason than to know we tried our best. The objectives are highly desirable — *one world*, with its "world federation" on the student level; another channel of communications between the two worlds of other levels; a real contribution to better understanding and peace, and perhaps the means of rebuilding a one world framework for all nations.... But for those objectives, we could pay too high a price. It is not worth one world to most of us if we must submit to another country or philosophy dictating how that world shall operate — even on the student level.⁹⁴

Livingstone, a veteran, was supportive of a single international student organization, but not in its present form. He envisioned either a Western takeover

91 See MU, Box 20, FAR "NFCUS 1948", "An open letter to the students' council and NFCUS committees", sent by R. S. Harwood, NFCUS president, March 13, 1948; attached is [former VP] Bill Ellis's "Letter of Resignation of IUS" addressed to Mr. Grohman, President of the IUS, and Mr. Madden, Secretary of the IUS, March 1, 1948. See also comments in "Americans Quit Student Union in Prague; Red-Dominated Group Silent on Beatings", *New York Times*, March 4, 1948, p. 4; "World Group Bars World Union Tie-Up", *New York Times*, April 13, 1948, p. 10.

92 "U.S. Student Group Snubs World Union, Association Acts after IUS is Called 'Instrument of Soviet Policy'", *New York Times*, September 2, 1949, p. 18; "N.S.A. to Attend Prague Meeting", *New York Times*, May 14, 1950, p. 171.

93 MU, Box 20, FAR "NFCUS 1948", Grant B. Livingstone, "Letter to the [NFCUS] President, Students' Councils, All Members of N.F.C.U.S. re: IUS Affiliation: U.S.N.S.A. repudiation of IUS, from IAC Chairman Livingstone, NFCUS Delegation to IUS", March 17, 1948.

94 *Ibid.*

of the IUS or an “alternative world student union” (a position the CIA encouraged or “selected”).

In the wake of the Czech situation and reports of “communist domination” of the IUS, many NFCUS delegates complained that more time should be spent on domestic issues. There was a backlash against NFCUS involvement in international affairs. However, those most involved in international affairs, the NFCUS executive, ignored the parochial mood of the 1948 NFCUS delegates and created the International Activities Commission (IAC), appointing Ross Hamilton as its first chair.⁹⁵ The Czech crisis, and the subsequent crisis in NFCUS support for international affairs in general, had the notable effect of actually strengthening NFCUS’s resolve in international relations. Developing a workable international student organization, either by reforming the IUS or by splitting off and creating a “Western IUS”, was still important, at least for the NFCUS executive. On one hand were the NFCUS delegates, who appeared at each NFCUS annual meeting; these were often student council presidents who were usually preoccupied with local campus concerns and came to only one meeting. Their commitment to NFCUS was often tenuous. On the other hand, the executive members had been around longer and were more informed. By far, NFCUS executives were clearly the most significant social actors in NFCUS at the international level.

In the first report of the International Activities Commission, Chairman Hamilton noted how, under the leadership of President Sauvé, Canada’s student association had “moved south in the International sphere” and since 1947 “had close and intimate contact with the USNSA”.⁹⁶ Hamilton planned to extend NFCUS relations with the Americans and supported working in the “wider world student field”. He stated, “The object of NFCUS as contained in the Constitution states that the Federation provides ‘a means for developing international relationships with student groups in other countries’.” Hamilton stressed that the International Activities Commission had been created so that NFCUS could fulfil its “obligations in the international sphere” such as with the IUS or the ISS. Hamilton spoke eloquently about the “great danger” of cutting off international contact and how NFCUS was needed to help “deepen understanding and cooperation between all peoples” as a means to achieve peace.⁹⁷ Hamilton also worried that student council executives would not carry out the international programmes of NFCUS and suggested

95 Please note: in the NFCUS documents the term “IAC” is a bit confusing. Sometimes it was the International Activities Committee and other times the International Affairs Committee. In 1956, NFCUS created the International Affairs Commission (IAC) along with two other “commissions”: National Affairs and Administration and Finance. MU, Box 3a (Sec. 5), “Minutes of the XX Annual Conference”, NFCUS, Montreal, October 8–12, 1956, p. 4.

96 MU, Box 5, FAR “IAC Reports at NFCUS National Conference”, Ross Hamilton, “A Report of the International Activities Commission of the National Federation of Canadian University Students”, 1949.

97 *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.

that each local NFCUS committee appoint someone to be in “charge of IAC [International Activities Commission] work”.⁹⁸

The 1949 International “London Conference” and the Road to Stockholm

The most significant international event of 1949 was the London Conference (England), attended by Gordon Gwynne-Timothy, former NFCUS president, elected in 1948. NFCUS joined delegates from national student groups from other “developed”, non-communist countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, England, Wales and Northern Ireland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Scotland, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States. This conference, distinctly “white” in complexion, was to be an important prelude to the “international student conference” held in Stockholm in December 1950. Gwynne-Timothy supported the majority opinion at the London Conference, which was that the national student organizations “from the West” should stay in IUS as observers, but not as full members: “My own feeling is that we should not join yet, but still, we must not close the door to joining.”⁹⁹ The British NUS, not surprisingly due to its communist alignment at the time, was the only delegation to advocate that all national student organizations should become full members of the IUS so that it could be reformed from within.

Unifying the “West” in Opposition to Communism

At the September 1950 NFCUS conference at Laval, just before the first international student conference in Stockholm, there were two documents of interest, the report of Fred Long from the International Activities Commission and that of Art Mauro from the international relations committee.¹⁰⁰ It appears that Long’s report had been circulated prior to the conference and that Mauro’s report arose from the activities of an *ad hoc* committee formed at Laval to respond critically to Long and the political direction he had taken. Long was adamantly against NFCUS staying in the IUS and supported setting up another international student organization. Mauro did not support such a split and advocated continued work within the IUS.

Long’s position marked a distinct break in NFCUS opinion toward the IUS, much different than expressed by previous pro-unity student leaders such as

98 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

99 MU, Box 2, FAR “Gwynne-Timothy Report”, Gordon Gwynne-Timothy, “Report to the President, NFCUS Representative to London Conference”, December 1949.

100 MU, Box 3, FAR “NFCUS 16th Annual Meeting October 1952”, Fred B. Long (Chairman), “Report of the IAC”, undated. I estimate that this undated report was circulated and available to delegates by the September 1950 NFCUS conference. It is incorrectly filed in McMaster’s Archives; MU, Box 39, FAR “Report of the 14th Conference of NFCUS”, Art V. Mauro (Chairman), “Report of Commission IV, International Relations” in *Report of the 14th Conference of NFCUS*, Laval University, September 12–15, 1950.

Hamilton and Gwynne-Timothy (at the London Conference), for example. Long proposed that “NFCUS call a similar conference [to the London Conference] *to be held in Canada* during the Christmas vacation of 1950 and for this conference to be a ‘Constitutional Conference’ in the hope that such could be drawn up and a ‘Western International Union of Students’ be organized to fulfill the students’ international needs the world over.” Yet the majority of NFCUS delegates did not support Long’s position. This is evident by fact of Mauro’s response and the election of a pro-unity chairman of the International Activities Commission for 1950–1951: Denis Lazure. Both Lazure and Mauro were selected to go to Stockholm.¹⁰¹ At this time, the NSA (with CIA involvement) was actively encouraging world student leaders to set up a rival to the IUS.¹⁰² This task was not difficult due to a broad dissatisfaction among IUS members and affiliates. That Long would call for Canada to host the inaugural meeting of a rival international student organization was just what the NSA-CIA wanted; the CIA had been looking for some time for a national student organization to sponsor such a meeting. However, the job of hosting the conference (what Long called a “Western IUS”) and undermining the IUS eventually fell to Olof Palme, president of the Swedish Federation of Students, who was encouraged by CIA operatives in the NSA to orchestrate the December 1950 “international student conference” in Stockholm.

After the Stockholm meeting, NFCUS, or at least “a committee of Canadian Students”, continued to “investigate the possibility of establishing the new group [a rival to the IUS]”.¹⁰³ Evidently, however, the establishment of a “Western” world student organization did not have majority support in NFCUS at this time. Many members, like experienced international delegates Denis Lazure and Charles Taylor, opposed creating another international student organization and preferred working to change the IUS instead. Even the “unwitting”¹⁰⁴ NSA vice-president of international affairs, Erskine Childers, was advocating reopening diplomatic ties to the IUS.¹⁰⁵

America’s NSA-CIA operatives pursued the goal of breaking the Soviet’s monopoly on international youth and student organizing by using proxy national student organizations to play leading roles — without their knowledge that they were being used in this way. Paget notes, “American leadership had to be downplayed, not just because the US government’s hand might be exposed, but because American students constantly encountered suspicion of American motives.”¹⁰⁶ It was often just a matter of waiting for, and then indirectly supporting, other national student groups that would inadvertently sup-

101 MU, Box 39, Mauro, “Report of Commission IV, International Relations”.

102 Paget, “From Stockholm to Leiden”, pp. 141–142, 154–155.

103 “Student Group Outlined, Lowenstein Explains Proposal for World Organization”, *New York Times*, January 15, 1951, p. 19.

104 Those who did not know of covert operations.

105 See *New York Times*, May 14, 1950, p. 171; Paget, “From Stockholm to Leiden”, pp. 142–144, 162.

106 Paget, “From Stockholm to Leiden”, p. 137.

port aims that the Americans desired. The Americans might “grease the wheels” or “select” those individuals and organizations that most supported its aims, while appearing to take a non-leadership, back-seat position. The most obvious case of this was the support given by CIA operatives in the NSA to the Swedes who organized and hosted the first international student conference. Canada would not have made a good choice to host the IUS rival, given opposition within NFCUS to splitting the IUS at the time.

The 1950 “international student conference” in Stockholm was promoted as a “free discussion” for “improving the co-operation” of Western affiliates in the IUS, not for “the purpose of the setting up of a new international student organisation”.¹⁰⁷ The Stockholm conference had to be billed this way, as many national student leaders such as those in NFCUS and even in the NSA itself supported the idea of working with the IUS to change it; they did not see a split as an option, despite their deeply rooted criticisms of the IUS. Nevertheless, the Stockholm conference was to be a coup for the CIA; it was the birthplace of what became the International Student Conference (ISC). Stockholm provided the momentum for a second, follow-up conference in Edinburgh two years later, where a Coordinating Secretariat (CoSec) and Supervisory Council were formed. The once *ad hoc* grouping of countries dissatisfied with the “Communist domination” of the IUS was now an official organization, the ISC. It would soon become the rival to the IUS. Other conferences would follow in Copenhagen in January 1953 and Istanbul in January 1954. The CIA recruited top NSA leaders such as Bill Dentzer to promote and watch over the operation of the ISC.¹⁰⁸ Denis Lazure, from the Université de Montréal, did not want to quit the IUS, which he viewed as the only forum with any hope for bringing together students from “East” and “West”. Lazure advocated a student exchange with Russian students and was against the NSA-proposed Student Mutual Assistance Program that was, in fact, a covert CIA plan.¹⁰⁹ Lazure felt that the International Student Service should be the main agency for handling student relief. NFCUS delegates eventually rejected Lazure’s controversial exchange proposal.¹¹⁰

The appearance of the ISC and the establishment of its Coordinating Secretariat brought about a total transformation of NFCUS’s international affairs in the early 1950s. The thorny issue of membership with the IUS remained, but attention became more and more focused on the ISC. NFCUS’s international involvement grew, while the IUS was “shattered”. National student organizations from Eastern European countries under Soviet influence were

107 MU, Box 35, FAR “London conference – 1949”, Swedish National Union of Students, “[Invitation to participate in the] International Student Conference”, undated; see also Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, p. 179.

108 Kotek, *Students and the Cold War* and “Youth Organization as a Battlefield in the Cold War”; Paget, “From Stockholm to Leiden”.

109 See Paget, “From Stockholm to Leiden”, p. 144; Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, p. 180.

110 “The Students and the Quakers”, *Globe and Mail*, October 25, 1952, p. 2.

mainly the ones that remained in the IUS.¹¹¹ Relations between NFCUS and the NSA developed further. In addition to diplomatic visits to each other's national and regional conventions (in particular, meetings of the New York State NSA), there were now regular cross-border exchanges, weekend socials, and increased mail correspondence. NFCUS strengthened its relations with the World Assembly of Youth (WAY), the World University Service (WUS, formerly the International Student Service), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and gave support to the formation of the Inter-American Student Bureau in Cuba. After increasing its *per capita* fees, NFCUS hired its first full-time staff member, J. Yves Pilon, as secretary-treasurer in 1951. The increased amount of archived organizational documents alone suggests NFCUS had grown much over the previous three or four years.

“Close and Intimate”: NFCUS International Affairs in the Early 1950s

After the first International Student Conference in Stockholm and even more so after the second one in Edinburgh (1952), where the Coordinating Secretariat was formed, support for “staying the course” with the IUS became a non-issue. No longer was NFCUS part of a marginalized, non-communist minority in an organization in which the majority was sympathetic to the anti-capitalist ideals of Soviet communism. NFCUS leaders could now focus on a new, seemingly more democratic, international student organization, the ISC. Several aspects of the new field of NFCUS's international student relations merit further discussion here: the increased interaction with the US National Student Association (NSA), the movement within NFCUS to formalize the Stockholm international student conference by initiating a coordinating body for it, and the methods NFCUS used to attend international student meetings, from obtaining support from American foundations to creating “overseas commissioners”.

The assertiveness and independent action that marked NFCUS in the early 1950s may explain why the NSA-CIA sent NSA president Bill Dentzer to attend the 1951 NFCUS conference.¹¹² Hereafter, sending NSA delegations to NFCUS meetings became standard practice. The CIA recruited Dentzer to assist in the establishment of CoSec, to which he became Assistant Perma-

111 Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, pp. 185–187.

112 For example, NFCUS was ignoring NSA advice not to initiate a “Pan American student union”. See MU, Box 2, FAR “IAC National Correspondence with NFCUS Executive to August 1951”, letter to Herbert W. Eisenberg, NSA president, from Denis Lazure, March 19, 1951; letter to Denis Lazure from Herbert W. Eisenberg, March 31, 1951; see also MU, Box 5, FAR “15th National Conference at Western 1951”, *Provisional Summary Conference Report [of 1951 NFCUS Conference]*, 1952, p. 7, National Office, Carleton College. Furthermore, NFCUS did not support the NSA (CIA's) Student Mutual Assistance Program. See MU, Box 3, FAR “NFCUS 16th Annual Meeting October 1952”, *NFCUS' 16th Conference*, October 13–17, 1952, p. 12; MU, Box 21, FAR “18th Annual Congress – Toronto”, Chairman Marcel LeBlanc, “REPORT on Commission ‘III’ (INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS)”, 1954, p. 3.

nent Secretary in September 1952.¹¹³ According to Dentzer's own testimony, the CIA recruited him in 1952 (after the 1951 NFCUS conference) to assist in plans for covert funding of the incipient ISC.¹¹⁴ Dentzer was recruited to influence and infiltrate the ISC in advance of its 1952 conference in Edinburgh. He was the CIA operative that convinced Olof Palme, leader of the Swedish National Union of Students, of the authenticity of the Foundation for Youth and Student Affairs (FYSA), just as he would do with NFCUS president Enriquez.¹¹⁵ Dentzer was also the key man in CoSec to make arrangements for it to receive FYSA support.¹¹⁶ While Dentzer may not have been a fully "witting" CIA agent at the 1951 NFCUS conference, Paget suspects he had certainly been "vetted" by the CIA in his election bid for NSA president. The CIA had infiltrated the NSA by 1951 and probably much earlier.¹¹⁷ Certainly, by Dentzer's next appearance at the NFCUS conference in 1953, just after finishing a term in the CoSec, he was acting with full knowledge of CIA operations in the ISC, NSA, and the various foundations.

The minute-taker at the September 1951 NFCUS conference summarized Dentzer's address to the plenary session. Dentzer stated that he was "looking forward to increased cooperation between our two unions" and that "[t]he U.S.N.S.A ... had resolved to push the results of the Stockholm conference in every way, to support the establishment of [a] new international organization, and foremost, an international secretariate". (It should be recalled that the Stockholm conference was emphatically billed as not having such intent.) "[Dentzer] expressed hope that the Stockholm and the Edinburgh Conferences would make a possible change in international student affairs." Interestingly enough, Dentzer's address followed NFCUS Vice-President Denis Lazure's International Activities Commission report, in which Lazure discussed his attendance at the IUS council meeting in Warsaw, where he had invited IUS President Joseph Grohman and a delegation of Soviet students to visit Canada. Lazure was still optimistic that the IUS would change for the better; yet he expressed, perhaps platonically, his openness to a "new international students' body" if current reform efforts failed. In 1953 Lazure had some trouble crossing the American border to work at an American hospital.¹¹⁸ Presumably, this was a result of some of his political work.

The extent of Dentzer's influence on NFCUS policy is unclear, but one can at least get some insight into his hidden agenda in his carefully worded

113 Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, p. 190.

114 *Ibid.*, pp. 181–182.

115 *Ibid.*, p. 219.

116 *Ibid.*, p. 208.

117 Kotek and Paget disagree as to the first time American covert action occurred in the NSA. Paget argues, with newer data, that there was covert action from the time the IUS formed in 1945 ("From Stockholm to Leiden"). Kotek sets the time to no earlier than 1951, the year Dentzer first attended an NFCUS meeting (*Students and the Cold War*).

118 Neatby, *Carabins ou activistes?*, p. 78.

address, recorded verbatim, to the plenary at the 1953 NFCUS annual meeting. Dentzer suggested that IUS policy changes were just “a change in tactics” and that NFCUS should “not be swayed by emotion” (presumably emotion over dividing the international student movement). The diplomatic Dentzer urged that “in serving the students of the world we should not close the door, but that it would also be a disservice if the door was left wide open”.¹¹⁹ I interpret Dentzer’s words to mean that NFCUS should not give up entirely on the IUS (a platitude Dentzer used to butter up NFCUS leaders, most of whom shared this position), but neither should NFCUS allow the Soviets to insist on having a single, unitary international student organization, which left “the door wide open” to communist influence. The immediate aim of the CIA was, after all, not to destroy the IUS, but to break its monopoly on international student organizing, an outcome more or less guaranteed after the ISC established its Coordinating Secretariat in 1952.

The movement to support the formation of this coordinating body for the ISC was another noteworthy situation in NFCUS international affairs in the early 1950s. It would be safe to conclude that this movement (based in the *ad hoc* “Sub-Committee on Peace”, which met and reported at the NFCUS conference at the University of Western Ontario in 1951) was connected to those supporters of Fred Long, chairman of the International Activities Commission. It would also be safe to conclude that the Americans, as suggested by Dentzer’s speeches at NFCUS meetings, were at least encouraging this movement.

At the 1951 NFCUS meeting the Sub-Committee on Peace released a single, rather broad resolution that was critical of IUS initiatives: “We deplore ... all forms of peace offers based on propaganda to further political aims.”¹²⁰ The resolution called for peace through “a programme of concrete aid” which would be given “without regard to race, colour or creed”.¹²¹ Most interestingly, in the event agreement was not reached between the IUS and “non-affiliated National Student Unions”, the NFCUS delegates to the 1952 Edinburgh ISC were mandated “to set up, and if necessary take the initiative in setting up, a Secretariat which would work toward the achievement of the programmes

119 MU, Box 21, FAR “17th Annual Congress McGill 1953 – Reports”, *Minutes, 3rd Plenary Session*, October 15, 1953.

120 MU, Box 5, *Provisional Summary Conference Report [of 1951 NFCUS Conference]*, p. 7.

121 It should also be noted that the language used here was an appropriation of IUS language. The IUS declared that one of its aims was the “eradication of all forms of discrimination and, in particular, of racial discrimination” (*IUS Constitution 1946*, Section III, Aim f, as printed in Van Maanan, *The International Student Movement*, pp. 289–300). This IUS policy was undoubtedly directed at the US government’s treatment of Afro-Americans and aimed to discredit American global leadership in developing, non-white countries. The 1952 NFCUS conference was also remarkable for its unprecedented statement of support for the South African Student Union and its call for “resistance to racial discrimination” (See MU, Box 3, *NFCUS 16th Conference*, p. 14.)

laid down by the Stockholm and Edinburgh Conferences".¹²² This "international organization" would be "apolitical in character, and would include all representative National Student Unions of the world".¹²³ The action suggested in the report of the Sub-Committee on Peace corresponds closely to the CIA's wish list and was undoubtedly influenced by the many conversations between NSA and NFCUS leaders. As expected, agreement with the IUS was not reached at Edinburgh, and NFCUS delegates, as per their mandate, were free to initiate or support the establishment of the Coordinating Secretariat, which was eventually based in Leiden, Netherlands.¹²⁴

Another noteworthy issue of the early 1950s was how NFCUS found the means, financial or otherwise, to go to all the international meetings. The whole topic of funding for NFCUS to attend various conferences is complicated, and the chaotic organization of the NFCUS archive does not help. Who was funding whom, for how much, and when, are often difficult to assess. Nevertheless, some preliminary observations can be made. Following the creation of the ISC CoSec, the financially pressed NFCUS sought "outside sources" of funding for its travel expenses.¹²⁵ These would soon be obtained from the CIA-funded Foundation for Youth and Student Affairs (FYSA) registered in New York on June 25, 1952. NFCUS received FYSA funding to cover its travel costs (\$2,400) for two delegates to attend the 1954 Istanbul ISC conference.¹²⁶ Yet, after Istanbul, NFCUS appears to have little direct contact with the FYSA.¹²⁷ Because contact was indirect, it does not show up in NFCUS accounts. For example, when a Canadian was elected at Istanbul to sit on the newly created nine-member Supervisory Council (to supervise the Coordinating Secretariat of the ISC), the ISC would have paid his travel

122 For further discussion of NFCUS demands on the IUS, see MU, Box 5, Appendix A, *Resolutions of the Committee to consider negotiations with the I.U.S., Executive Committee*, October 10, 1951, appended to *Provisional Summary Conference Report [of 1951 NFCUS Conference]*. The list of demands is reminiscent of those made in previous years when there was no alternative international organization. The main demands were that the NFCUS constitution would be primary over the IUS constitution and that there were to be democratic reforms and a more accountable secretariat.

123 MU, Box 5, *Provisional Summary Conference Report [of 1951 NFCUS Conference]*, p. 8.

124 MU, Box 6, *NFCUS' 16th Conference*, October 13–17, 1952, p. 12.

125 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

126 MU, Box 21, FAR "18th Annual Congress – Toronto", *Minutes of First Plenary Session – Oct. 18–19, Minutes of Second Plenary Session – Oct. 19*, p. 4.

127 As the FYSA was established in 1952, it mostly operated outside the period being discussed here, that is, after 1954. While more scrutiny is required, a preliminary review of the NFCUS organizational documents to 1961 reveal only three cases in which NFCUS received FYSA funding. First was the money for the Istanbul conference; second was a cheque for \$368.60, which was a reimbursement for NFCUS paying the conference hotel bill for the "Latin Americans"; and third, in 1961, was a payment of \$1,000 to help NFCUS deal with a dismal financial situation. I suspect that NFCUS received some financial compensation for hosting the 1962 ISC at Laval University in Quebec City. In 1965 and 1966, the Canadian Union of Students (what NFCUS became in 1963) received at least two payments of \$1,500 for "two student conferences" (see "RCMP Have Interviews with Student Leaders", *Ubysey*, February 23, 1967, p. 1).

expenses. The ISC, its CoSec and Supervisory Council, and other ISC-sponsored committees and events, as well as the NSA itself, all flourished on foundation money. Without it, they could not have operated to the extent that they did. It is doubtful that the ISC would even have existed very long without “outside” sources of funding. Thus, while NFCUS received relatively little foundation funding directly, its international involvement was ultimately boosted and shaped by covert funding. Most national student organizations, especially from developing and war-torn countries, could not have attended ISC meetings without American foundation support. Also, by providing a system of grants, the CIA foundations could influence “through approval (or disapproval)” which organizations and projects the CIA wanted to support.¹²⁸

In his presidential report of 1954, Enriquez explained how the FYSA worked. This provides good evidence of how NSA leaders, recruited by the CIA, influenced NFCUS leaders. It also demonstrates the ease with which the NSA, FYSA, and CIA were able to deceive national student leaders in general. Enriquez explained:

The number of private clubs, i.e., Lions, Rotary, etc., now interested in student activities and granting scholarships and aid is quite large and well known. The interested people with ample resources and willing to help are less known but existing. The Americans have channelled these interested people and their contributions by means of organizations specifically meant to study and help young people in their projects. The Foundation for Youth and Student Affairs [FYSA] of New York is one such example. This Foundation grants scholarships, sponsors meetings of youth and student organizations, i.e., CoSec and provides funds for worthy projects: Delegations to Africa (CoSec); Publications, etc.¹²⁹

Enriquez was so enthused with the idea of benevolent foundations that he proposed a resolution for the creation of a Canadian version of the FYSA! He also had his eye on the Massey report’s proposed Canada Council as a potential source of funds and had met the Prime Minister to mention this possibility.

The mid-1950s were financially hard on NFCUS because of a drop in student enrolment.¹³⁰ NFCUS responded to its poor financial situation by seeking external sources, but also by creating “overseas commissioners” — former NFCUS executives who were studying overseas and could be appointed to represent NFCUS at international meetings. In 1952 NFCUS appointed Jean de Margerie, Charles Taylor, and Bill Hoyt.¹³¹ Creation of these three overseas commissioners formalized what had been practised since at least 1949. Gwynne-Timothy, for example, was at Cambridge when he attended the 1949 London Conference. Sometimes the same individual was

128 Altbach, “The Student Internationals”, p. 94.

129 MU, Box 21, Enriquez, “President’s Report”, 18th Annual Congress, 1954, p. 14.

130 See Moses, “All That Was Left”.

131 MU, Box 3, *NFCUS’ 16th Conference*, p. 14.

used for as long as “three to four years”.¹³² While calling upon overseas commissioners was a great money-saver, those who did engage in international affairs were increasingly cut off from the rest of the NFCUS membership. Overseas commissioners just added another “hierarchical layer” in the “structure” of student organization.¹³³ The use of overseas commissioners and the reluctance to take charity money (especially from Americans) may explain why NFCUS did not develop a strong direct relation to CIA-funded foundations. Again, NFCUS leaders “resisted power”. They were reluctant to take foundation money, not because they suspected tainted money, but because they valued self-reliance and autonomy, especially from the Americans. At an executive meeting in 1955, for example, some NFCUS leaders expressed their reluctance to “have to rely on Foundation support again” to attend the ISC meetings and stressed the need to raise their own funds.¹³⁴ From the foundations’ point of view, by avoiding giving direct financial support to national student groups and by instead giving the large percentage of covert financial aid to the ISC/CoSec, the FYSA and others were less likely to face questions arising among national student organizations about the actual origins of funding.

Figuring out how NFCUS delegates got to IUS meetings is no less complicated, and the NFCUS accounts provide little information. While there is evidence of IUS support at other times, NFCUS had to raise its own funding to attend the 1950 IUS Congress.¹³⁵ M. LeBlanc, chair of the NFCUS International Activities Commission, referred in the oral presentation of his report, for example, to “grants from IUS [for the] Moscow conference” (presumably the September 1954 IUS Council meeting).¹³⁶ It is not clear how NFCUS delegates got the money to attend other IUS meetings. Besides employing former NFCUS executives abroad or overseas commissioners, it seems that NFCUS delegates used a variety of creative ways, such as attending in conjunction with other (paid-for) conferences and paying for attendance themselves in conjunction with pleasure travel. The IUS may have also reimbursed NFCUS delegates directly. It is also possible that NFCUS executives habitually sought ways of keeping travel expenses out of the NFCUS accounts to minimize the ever-present backlash from regular NFCUS delegates.

NFCUS raised its own funds for the 1949 London Conference by asking student councils for voluntary donations.¹³⁷ In 1949, as a result of efforts to

132 MU, Box 21, Enriquez, “President’s Report”, 18th Annual Congress, 1954, p. 12.

133 Uphoff, “The Viability of Student Internationals”.

134 MU, Box 23, FAR “Exec. Meetings Dec. 1955 – Agenda – Minutes”, *NFCUS Executive Meeting, Minutes*, Ottawa, December 21–23, 1955, p. 3.

135 MU, Box 34, FAR “Executive Meeting in Montreal”, *NFCUS Executive Meeting*, McMaster University, February 5, 1949.

136 MU, Box 21, *Minutes*, 18th Annual NFCUS Congress.

137 MU, Box 34, FAR “Executive Meeting in Montreal”, *Minutes of Executive Meeting*, University of Montreal, November 13, 1949.

raise funds from various external sources, NFCUS received what appeared to be a one-time only donation of \$1,000 from the Ontario Ministry of Education, purportedly to defray expenses of the 1949 Ottawa conference.¹³⁸ This donation was the only case I found of direct government assistance. Dana Porter, the Minister of Education, brusquely snubbed a further request in 1951.¹³⁹ (In 1948 the British government covertly channelled funds to the World Assembly of Youth through its Ministry of Education. The practice was considered too risky and was soon stopped, as it might have raised criticism and suspicion.¹⁴⁰) I did not locate any accounting related to the first ISC in Stockholm, but the records reveal that NFCUS did its own fundraising for the second ISC at Edinburgh, where the CoSec was founded.¹⁴¹ NFCUS received \$800 from “private donors”, assisted by former NFCUS staff member and long-time student council staff member E. A. MacDonald at the University of Toronto, plus \$250 from the university’s student council. Seven other member student councils donated collectively \$772.45. Someone or some people at the University of Toronto did not want NFCUS to miss the opportunity to go to Edinburgh!

NFCUS in 1954

NFCUS seemed to become much better organized with its first full-time president, Antonio Enriquez (1953–1954), who succeeded Raghbir Singh Basi (1952–1953).¹⁴² In 1954 the issues and points of disagreement with the IUS were more or less the same as they had been in 1947; NFCUS leaders were still hoping the IUS would meet its demands, but this never happened.¹⁴³ Marcel LeBlanc’s International Activities Commission report in 1954 indicates that the IAC was much closer to accepting IUS membership than the rest of the NFCUS organization.¹⁴⁴ The IAC called for NFCUS to take out full membership in the IUS, but this motion was defeated on the plenary floor. Yet the mandate to keep working with the IUS and sending delegations stayed firm, although full membership was overwhelmingly rejected: “15 against, 2 for, 2 ab[stentions].” NFCUS consistently rejected membership in

138 MU, Box 20, *Minutes of Executive Meeting*, February 8–10, 1948, p. 2.

139 MU, Box 5, FAR “Provincial Subsidy 1951 Conference London”, letter from Ontario Minister of Education Dana Porter to NFCUS Executive Secretary, J. Y. Pilon, September 7, 1951.

140 Aldrich, “Putting Culture into the Cold War”, p. 122.

141 MU, Box 5, FAR “Edinburgh Conference Delegates fund”, “Financial Report Edinburgh Delegation”, 1951.

142 It is worth noting that, for whatever reason, NFCUS represented Canada’s national identity in the international sphere as ethnically and racially diverse. The election of non-Anglo-Saxon and French-Canadian presidents in this period prefigures what later became known as multiculturalism.

143 “Student Group Advised Not to Join Red Union”, *Globe and Mail*, October 15, 1952, p. 8; MU, Box 21, “REPORT on Commission ‘III’ (INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS)”, 1954.

144 MU, Box 21, “REPORT on Commission ‘III’ (INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS)”, p. 2. A copy of this report (including hand-written amendments and deletions) indicates a number of resolutions were put forth by the IAC but were overturned or watered down on the plenary floor.

the IUS, but invariably participated as an observer. NFCUS consolidated its long-standing grievances with the IUS and announced “Eight Absolute Conditions” for how the IUS was to change before NFCUS would join.¹⁴⁵

Following the practice begun in 1951 by Bill Dentzer, members of the top executive of the NSA attended the annual NFCUS conference. NSA President Harry Lunn and international affairs Vice-President Paul Sigmund attended the October 1954 NFCUS conference.¹⁴⁶ The minute-taker noted part of Sigmund’s diplomatic address: “He ... complemented the Canadian federation for a strong impact on international student relations in the past year, especially mentioning the work on international CoSec commissions, and hoped for even stronger co-operation in coming years.”¹⁴⁷ Lunn went on to head the FYSA after his NSA presidency.¹⁴⁸ Similarly, Paul Sigmund, along with Gloria Steinem, the later famous American journalist and feminist, went on to set up the International Research Services with full knowledge of CIA involvement.¹⁴⁹ The extent of Lunn’s and Sigmund’s relationship with the CIA at the time they attended the 1954 NFCUS conference is not clear. Even if they were not “witting”, they certainly would have been involved with those who were. After his induction into the CIA in November 1954 and for the rest of his NSA presidency, Lunn would have certainly been in regular contact with NFCUS.¹⁵⁰ By 1954 the NSA was completely infiltrated, and communication between NSA and NFCUS leaders was well established.

Conclusion

By 1954 the International Union of Students was defused. The Americans and British had successfully established their cultural offensive in the student

145 These conditions included demands about how membership was to be defined and how the IUS needed a system of “one country, one vote”. The old demand, never met, that the IUS should only make policies directly related to students was again raised. The IUS also had to adopt a “Western parliamentary... democratic procedure” and provide more financial information about itself. As well, the IUS had to cease its “student relief” activities and support instead the relief work done under the aegis of the World University Service (formally the International Student Service). See MU, Box 21, *Minutes*, 18th Annual NFCUS Congress.

146 MU, Box 21, *Minutes*, 18th Annual NFCUS Congress.

147 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

148 Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, p. 208.

149 *Ibid.*, pp. 210, 218. The IRS was a CIA “screen organization” that worked to undermine the Soviet-backed World Youth Festivals.

150 In an interview with Kotek, Lunn claimed he was debriefed and recruited after his election in November 1954, which was once month after the 1954 NFCUS conference (*Students and the Cold War*, pp. 218–219). Lunn stated that Paul Sigmund “certainly” knew of the CIA involvement, but it is not clear when he was recruited. According to Kotek, after 1954 it became standard CIA practice to invite each new NSA president and vice-president to a secret meeting — that is, of course, if they were deemed trustworthy. In the presence of past NSA-CIA insiders, they would be asked to sign a statement indicating that they were aware of the harsh penalties that would follow if they revealed state secrets. If they did not want to sign, they could leave, of course, with no questions asked, but no one who got as far as being invited to a meeting ever refused.

and youth field. While the idea of a separate international student organization was in circulation before CIA involvement, it is unlikely that this idea would have gotten very far without covert action and funding. Just as the Marshall Plan discouraged many war-ravaged European countries from falling into Soviet influence, American and British covert action in the student and youth field lessened the possibility of anti-colonial movements falling into Soviet influence. Organizations such as the International Student Conference (ISC), the World Assembly of Youth (WAY), and the Foundation for Youth and Student Affairs (FYSA) formed a major component of American and the West's cultural Cold War. These organizations helped lay the foundation for capitalist development or "Western modernization" on a global scale.

As I have done elsewhere, I reject the pessimistic theory that a single hegemonic force absorbs all dissent: for example, Marcuse's one-dimensional society, or the capitalist class, or the American military-industrial complex. Instead, I propose theorizing student organizations in terms of various youth-state and youth-adult relations, where the agency of both state actors and student activists may be realized or have historicity. While the form and practice of student organization can be determined by powerful state agents, student leaders can still retain the power to affect social relations. In other words, students can still have historicity despite their relative marginal location in the field of social relations. NFCUS thus was a relatively autonomous student subject that acted in accord with its own cultural orientations and values and in spite of covert state agents, university administrators, Catholic clergy, and other communist and anti-communist social forces. Furthermore, it would be wrong to see NFCUS and other national student organization leaders as passive observers of a global conflict that was happening somewhere else. On the contrary, by helping to articulate the very meaning of the Cold War and national and international development, for example, student leaders were key social agents. International student movements were not simply the recipients of this notion of a noble "West" created elsewhere. They were a medium of its articulation.

While the effects of state power on student organizations are incontrovertible, it is also true that state power is not omnipotent and that student historicity is not simply reducible to it. CIA attempts to influence student leaders were not easy, and a "careful distinction must be made between CIA objectives and its capacity to execute them".¹⁵¹ To paraphrase Foucault, "Wherever there was power, there was resistance." As sure as manipulation was exerted "from above", there was resistance "from below". Despite the tremendous resources and deceitful techniques of the American state, Canadian student leaders appear to have maintained an independent international affairs policy. This is seen most evident in the decision of the US National Student Association (NSA) to disaffiliate from the IUS, while NFCUS maintained diplo-

151 Paget, "From Stockholm to Leiden", p. 137.

matic relations with the IUS and continued to send “observers”, as it would do throughout the period under study. Further, NFCUS started using a system of overseas commissioners to attend meetings, which increased its independence and prevented it from developing a reliance on the American foundations. NFCUS also attempted, with mixed success, to sponsor tours of IUS and Soviet students and attempted to organize a Pan-American student union. NSA-CIA leaders were not interested in any of these things. Power was resisted — it did not matter that the power in question was covert. The university itself became a major site of resistance, as indicated by the rise of a new left, starting in the late 1950s, which was both anti-capitalist and anti-communist.

The Americans clearly undermined the Soviet monopoly on international youth and student organizations. Yet it is not clear whether the outcome of undercover meddling in student affairs ever really served American interests. For example, in spite of CIA infiltration and funding, ISC/CoSec was active in areas that did not support American interests, supporting anti-Batista students in Cuba, for example. Another example of how covert American government involvement “backfired” on its foreign policy can be seen in the CIA-funded NSA’s unintentional provision of an institutional basis for the formation of Students for a Democratic Society, which became the major social agent in undermining the American war on Vietnam. The application of covert state power had unanticipated consequences, as student leaders often did not behave in the ways intended by powerful state agents.

While the CIA had broken the Soviet monopoly and the IUS was significantly set back, other outcomes of CIA involvement are much harder to discern. The CIA did not control the ISC/CoSec or NSA, which were ostensibly democratic, nor did it understand the social movements of which they were part, nor did it even have any real appreciation for what the long-term consequences might be of anyone’s involvement. While the CIA curtailed the activities of the IUS, it is also true that the ISC was not exactly a champion of American conservatism. All things considered, the division of international student organizing into two camps was short-sighted. It helped create an even more dangerous global situation by dismantling an important channel of international communication and debate. By leaving their student leaders alone and letting them hash out their differences in a single international student organization, the CIA might have better defended the cause of democracy. Canadian and American student leaders were quite capable of criticizing the Soviets on their own terms. The eventual disclosure in 1967 of the covert arrangements employed by the CIA announced to the world that American democracy was sick to the core and quite possibly marked the beginning of a long period of decline of America as global moral force.

After 1954 many national student leaders continued to resist the wedge that had been driven into international student organizing. It is, in fact, conceivable to speak, as Van Maanan did, of a single “international student movement”, given that many national student organizations participated in

both international student organizations. There were frequent calls for amalgamation, especially from student leaders from the “emerging countries” in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.¹⁵²

While a full comparative review of the theoretical assumptions underlying the various works on international student politics is outside the scope of this discussion, it should be noted that, compared with Altbach and Uphoff, Van Maanan recognized the socially productive capacities of student organizations or student historicity. Although Van Maanan did not have what I would call an “actor-centred perspective” on social change, he did take for granted that student activism could have significant effects, on African national politics for example. He even acknowledged how student organizations from communist countries, despite being under tight control from communist parties, were able over time to take more independent action.¹⁵³ It is evident that international student politics in the late 1940s to mid-1950s (and beyond) has probably had a much larger effect on national and international affairs than Van Maanan realized and certainly much more than Altbach and Uphoff were willing to admit. I suggest that international student and youth organizations were strategic social agents on the Cold War battlefield, and in many cases had profound influences on the development of nations and on the course of world history. Neatby shows, for example, that Quebec NFCUS student involvement in the IUS had a profound impact on the political consciousness of the younger generation of activists and ultimately the “modernization” of Quebec politics.¹⁵⁴ Another case in point is how the critique of racism of the IUS, and later of the ISC, probably helped stimulate the United States government to change its domestic racist policies. How could the United States be a world leader for “freedom” and human rights when it practised apartheid at home? Moreover, NFCUS leaders’ struggle to maintain diplomatic relations with the IUS prefigures Canada’s national struggle for an independent foreign policy, its position as a global intermediary, and its identity as peace-keeper. I have no doubt that further study would more fully reveal that international student organizations had historicity in that, in many cases, they had a profound effect on many national contexts and international relations.

That powerful social agents can covertly influence student organizations has implications for understanding more recent student activism. The movements to divide the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) and its provincial affiliates from the mid-1980s, and the eventual creation of “parallel” national and provincial student organizations in the early and mid-1990s, for example, bear the obvious hallmarks of covert action of some sort. The CFS always went against the grain of the neo-liberal policy agenda, especially in the education sector. It has, in my estimation, created popular resistance to decreased

152 Uphoff, “The Viability of Student Internationals”, p. 153.

153 Van Maanan, *The International Student Movement*, pp. 30–32.

154 Neatby, *Carabins ou activistes?*, pp. 65–80.

public funding, higher tuition fees, education “privatization”, and American-led economic globalization. It does not require any leap of imagination to see how the CFS, the contemporary descendent of the NFCUS, may have come under surreptitious and organized attack from many individuals and organizations. Moreover, be it the fate of the socially critical Canadian Union of Students in the late 1960s, or the internal organizational turmoil of Quebec student politics in the 1970s, or the development of conservative provincial college student organizations in the 1980s, all suggest the use of coordinated subversion of some kind or another. Whether the form of covert action in question was directed by the “private sector”, or by some domestic or foreign state intelligence organization, or a combination of all these remains to be seen. In its variety of forms, covert action on student organizations has never gone away.

APPENDIX 1

List of Most Common Acronyms

CoSec	(Coordinating Secretariat of the ISC)
FYSA	(Foundation for Youth and Student Affairs)
IAC	(International Activities Commission) of NFCUS
ISC	(International Student Conference)
IUS	(International Union of Students)
NCSV	(National Conference of Student Veterans)
NFCUS	(National Federation of Canadian University Students)
NSA	(United States National Student Association)