

## ISR 12/1 + 12/2 \*An International Association Title 353 for the Advancement of Science\*

For more than 30 years—I wrote in 1987—I had been in the uniquely privileged position of regularly attending the three Meetings of the American and British Associations for the Advancement of Science, as well as the Gesellschaft Deutscher Naturforscher und Ärzte. In my opinion these three Organisations, and similar ones in other parts of the world, as for example the Indian Science Congress Association which I attended in Bangalore in January 1987, all basically face the same difficult problems. I thought it highly desirable, therefore, to create a new forum where their problems could be discussed and solutions be attempted. I advanced a plea for closer links of the new Association in the first volume of ISR, 1976, ISR 1/4, and called it the “Cultivators of Science” [see Title 266].

The functions of an *International Association for the Advancement of Science*, IAAS, which I proposed in ISR March and ISR June 1987, should be:

- To make politicians and the public understand the significance of science in the peaceful progress of mankind, the Scientific Temper.
- To attract again the elite of young persons to scientific careers.
- To counter unjustified criticism of science.
- To provide a forum for each of the constituent National Associations to exchange their experiences with their sister Associations.
- To infuse the international Spirit of Science into the often nationalistic and parochial meetings of the national organisations.

It must appear extraordinary to urge the oldest scientific organisations in Europe and the USA to form themselves into a new international Union. (The oldest is the German Gesellschaft, founded in 1822; the British Association held its first meeting in York in 1831 and the American Association for the Advancement of Science dates from 1848).

After all, scientists belong to the most international of all professions. International co-operation in scientific research, irrespective of language, race, creed and sex, has always been the pride of scientists. Furthermore, almost all individual scientific disciplines, whether chemistry, physics, biology or astronomy had formed their own international Unions, all of which are united in the International Council of Scientific Unions, a powerful but little known body.

The meetings of the National Associations are now no longer essential for learning about the latest advances in one's own discipline. For today's scientist they have become a luxury for pleasant social gatherings in their crowded scientific calendar, enjoyable, but not imperative, although their many interdisciplinary contacts have always advanced science greatly.