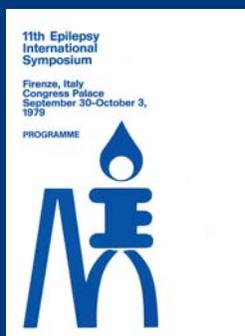
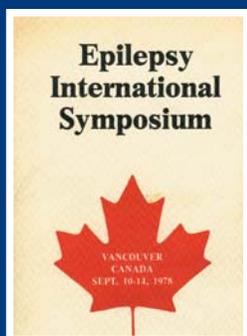


# EPILEPSY INTERNATIONAL – A FAILED ATTEMPT TO MERGE THE ILAE AND IBE



In 1974, the ILAE and IBE formulated a long-range plan for eventual integration. This was spearheaded by George Burden and Ellen Grass for the IBE, and Kiffin Penry and David Daly for the ILAE. It was realised that full merger initially would not be possible, and so a proposal was made in 1976 to set up an umbrella organisation called *Epilepsy International*, with a view eventually to merge into

a single entity. *Epilepsy International* was never a success and it limped on in a state of financial crisis. For the next 5 years were occupied by convoluted discussion and argument – culminating in the resignation of Burden and Grass at one point. Finally, at the Kyoto conference in 1981, a proposal for total merger was drafted by the ILAE executive and put to the ILAE General Assembly, but to the dismay of the ILAE leadership was rejected. In retrospect, it seems obvious that merger was ill-conceived, predicated as it was mainly on the idea that joint fund-raising would be easier (the experience of Epilepsy International was not reassuring on this point). The difference in nature, goals and membership of the two organisations in the end proved too great to allow easy merger, and following the debacle in Kyoto, the idea was then quietly dropped. During this period, the merger talks consumed the energies of both groups, and little else was achieved. In the next 10 years, however, great strides were made by both organisations and indeed they have grown closer together in the recognition that two independent bodies, co-operating at a high level, can achieve much more than the individual organisations separately or indeed merged.

