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TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW OF

PAUL BERTHOUD

BY

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Transcribed by Ron Nerio

THOMAS G. WEISS: This is the 9th of January 2001. Tom Weiss is interviewing Paul Berthoud. We are sitting in the Palais des Nations in Geneva. Sophie Thevan is with us*. Paul, good morning. I wonder whether we could begin at the beginning, and whether you could tell me a little bit about your family's background and how you think your early childhood experiences contributed to making you the person you are, and in particular helped develop your interest in international cooperation.

PAUL BERTHOUD: The question is an interesting one. My interest in international cooperation is fairly easy to explain. I am from a mixed Swiss family. My mother was from the German side of the country. My father grew up in Bienne, which is a typically bilingual city at the frontier of languages. I would have to describe my milieu as middle class, or middle-middle class possibly, with nominally an intellectual capacity. My father graduated from the Zurich Federal Polytechnic. He was an agricultural engineer, and settled in the Agricultural Department in the Government in Geneva before I was born. He then acquired the nationality of Geneva. As you know, we have in Switzerland a citizenship, which goes down to the *canton*. Therefore, I was born a Genevese. Later on in my career, this very often provoked raised eyebrows on the part of people who had been working there for a long time but had never met a real Genevese, which I am because I was born as such. My mother was from a mountain farmer family in the *Berner Oberland*. I spent all my vacation as a kid in a small farm setting with relatives on my mother's side.

Now, I would say that not many of us, possibly, have had that influence, but I am very much a product of Geneva as it developed in the 1920s. The League of Nations and I grew together. My father was very interested in politics and international politics. Maybe I should

* Sophie Theven de Gueleran was present throughout the interview.

add that there was a special international angle in my family. My father had a cousin who had married a Chinese, Chan Choung Sing, who was one of the close collaborators of Albert Thomas in the ILO (International Labor Organization). Therefore, the idea of cultural diversity, of that other world that existed outside of our little world in Geneva, was very much alive in my own family.

Very soon, I got very interested in what was happening in the League of Nations. I should add that we had two daily newspapers at home. We had *Le journal de Genève*, which was a very good solid conservative paper, and *Le Travail*, which was the newspaper of the Socialist Party, which was a very leftist part of the socialist movement in Switzerland. My father, since I started to read, told me, "You always have to read both because you cannot rely on only one view of the world. It is much too complicated." So we had those sources, with those two violently antagonistic sources of information coming into our home every day.

Now, one of the reminiscences that I have, which goes very far back, was, I remember, when I was ten years old, when the Chinese-Japanese conflict broke out. Manchukuo, the attack on Shanghai, I think it was in the fall of 1931, or maybe in 1932. In my class, as kids of ten years, we were very involved in that, to the point where we were playing League of Nations during recess. We had a cardboard, on which we put a CD (c*orps diplomatique*) license plate. We tucked that to our belt, and we were driving to the Assembly Hall during recess in a corner of the courtyard, and started to argue the Chinese-Japanese War. That was very childish, very amusing. But we felt that this was a situation in which we wanted to be a part.

My next very clear recollection is of the day I skipped school, three years later, in 1935. I remember one morning I skipped school to go to the railway station in Geneva to applaud Haile Selassie, when he came to the League of Nations to defend his case after Mussolini had invaded

Ethiopia. We, a few of us in our class, felt it was important to show him some sympathy. I remember that corridor, and the short man with his cape. He had a wide cape. He walked down, and we were absorbed by the importance of the moment. This was a very momentous event in the history of the League and of Geneva because it sort of brought national politics close to international politics. I don't know whether you remember, or maybe even heard of it; it was not your time. A bunch of Italian journalists in the public tribune of the League of Nations interfered when Haile Selassie took the floor and created chaos in the Assembly Hall. This was during the only three years in which Geneva had a socialist government—1933 to 1936. And the government of Geneva proceeded to arrest those journalists. There was immediately a federal intervention, which gave an injunction to the Geneva government to set them free. There was a conflict between the vision which the Geneva government had of this role and the very benevolent-toward-fascism atmosphere which reigned in the federal government in Bern.

Anyway, this all explains an atmosphere in which I—and I would not say it was very generalized—but I certainly was one who was very much influenced with what Geneva was, and what Wilson wanted it to be, as the seat of the League of Nations. As my studies proceeded, I got very interested, of course, in the structure of international cooperation. I decided to study law. I had classical studies—Greek and Latin; seven years of Latin and four years of ancient Greek. I had no English at all. I got to the *baccalaureat,* or the *maturité* as the Swiss call it so nicely, without having had a single hour of English at school. But I had a solid background in classical studies. I decided to study law with very much, during my studies, an interest in international law, and particularly international organization. After graduating in law, while I was pursuing studies in political science, which at the time was really not much more than a bit of economics, and a bit of history added to law to make it sound like another science, I decided

to engage in doctoral studies. A doctorate I know is a concept which in Europe is particularly ill-defined because one gets a doctorate in the German part of Europe just after one's studies. Geneva was, at the time, still much on the French model. The doctorate which we issued in Geneva at the time was really a *troisième cycle*, as the French would call it. It is fairly close to what you call a Ph.D. in the Anglo-Saxon world.

I engaged, under the supervision of Maurice Bourquin, who has been one of the great international lawyers of that period—he was professor at the Graduate Institute of International Studies—in a study on the control of the implementation of multilateral commitments or agreements. I worked for two years very deeply and very assiduously on research on five mechanisms of control of the execution of conventions, to get out of it a sort of profile of what were the various mechanisms one could use to control the implementation of conventions. For that purpose, I studied the work of the League of Nations on minorities; the control of the implementation of mandates, which was my first direct contact with the question of Palestine, which was one of the mandates which gave rise to the hottest debates in the League of Nations; the control of the narcotics conventions—there were a number of them, which were providing for some mechanisms control; then the work on disarmament. There had been a conference on disarmament running parallel to the assembly of the League since 1932. I made a study in depth of whatever discussions had taken place on the mechanism, which would be set up to control the commitments agreed to on disarmament.

Then, I also studied the control of the execution of the International Labor Organization conventions. These were the elements of my first doctorate thesis which I presented in 1946. At the time in Geneva, in order to get the doctorate, you had to deliver to the university 200 printed copies of your doctorate thesis. It was not just a paper which you wrote like that. I was married

at the time, and my salary was used to entertain the household and my wife's salary was used to pay for the printing of my thesis. It is a book of 350 pages.

So I was very much immersed intellectually in the work of international organizations. At that time, of course, San Francisco had taken place. The United Nations was taking shape, and I was trying to follow that very closely. Meanwhile, I had to earn a living and I had taken up a job in Bern, in the Ministry of Economics. Switzerland had a legal mechanism which was a sort of investigating judge function on special measures for the war economy. So I ran, for about eighteen months, professionally after peasants who had slaughtered cows illegally, after problems with black market traffic and with gold smuggling, a number of activities which were related to special war economy measures.

My interest in the UN was so sharp then that I asked for, and obtained permission from the government in Bern and registered at the University of Neuchatel to give a course on the United Nations. I graduated, if I may say so, as a *privat-docent*, which is an institution that corresponds, in a sense, to a lecturer in an American university, I suppose. You have to present an *habilitationschrift*—in other words another thesis, which beyond the Ph.D. gives you the entitlement to teach at university. I set to work again, and published a thesis on Article 2 (7) of the Charter. It is about 100 pages, a monograph on the question of the domestic jurisdiction of states, for which I found an easier way of publication. It appeared as the main article in the Swiss Yearbook for International Law. And I got *separata* which allowed me to have my thesis published as a book. I didn't give you my theses with my literature because it is so far away that I didn't think I should bother you with them.

So for two and a half years, I was going to Neuchatel half a day every week, giving a two-hour course, one hour on the United Nations, and an hour seminar which I focused on the

question of Palestine, which at that time was very interesting. In order to keep abreast of what was going on, I was for all of that time—and I am very proud of it—a paying subscriber to the *United Nations Bulletin*. I got so much material free since then that I am still amazed that I was able to find the money to subscribe to the *UN Bulletin*. It was at the time—I don't know whether you ever went back to those bulletins of the first years—issued every two weeks. Every two weeks you were getting a forty to fifty pages bulletin which was full of all the relevant texts. All the resolutions were there, and pictures. And it was for me an invaluable source of information. In fact, after joining the United Nations I would very soon realize that I knew much less about it from within, being involved in my little setting. I had time to keep the overview of the UN from the outside at that time.

So this is what brought me close to the UN intellectually, but of course, not into the organization. Here, I had a major problem. The Swiss had not been in San Francisco, and they were not joining the UN. I knocked at several doors. I had a colleague at the university who had known very well Madame Steinig. Léon Steinig had been in charge of the Narcotics Division of the League of Nations, which had been taken over by the UN. There was nothing there, obviously. Steinig could not, at the junior level, recruit people of Swiss nationality. Human rights was another place where, as a lawyer, I could offer my skills. I couldn't go to any door at the UN; I had to find a place where law was really what was needed. So I even went to Paris during the 1948 assembly, the one which adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I was interviewed by Humphrey. Humphrey was very sympathetic to the idea of hiring a young man. And I had my credentials intellectually through my doctoral thesis, naturally, and then through my work as a *privat-docent*. But nationality was an absolute obstacle. There was just no way in which they could see to make an exception. My connections were not that important.

So really it was just fate that decided otherwise. I had been working for the Swiss government for two years, first of all in war economy matters. Then I moved to the social security system. I worked at the beginning, for a while, in the setting up of the AVS (*Assurance vieillesse et survivants*), the Swiss old-age insurance system which was adopted by a popular vote at the end of 1947. At the time, it was a relatively progressive system with total coverage of the population. In 1948, at some point, I became aware of the existence of an international bureau in Bern, which was called the International Penal and Penitentiary Commission (IPPC). It was one of several *Bureaux de Beren* which were catering for international cooperation among ministries of justice, essentially.

You had the directors of prison administration sitting on the commission, and some people from the judiciary, and it was sort of a clearing house and think tank on problems related to the administration of justice, the treatment of offenders and the prevention of crime. They had organized, since the 1920s at least, congresses every five years which were the famous *Congrès international pénal et pénitenciaire*. And they were looking for a lawyer, for a jurist for their work. I applied. I must confess it was not at all because of the substance of the work, but I was interested in a mechanism of multilateral cooperation. It was, for me, the opportunity to see how it worked in whatever field, at whatever level.

I joined the secretariat of that commission at the time when an American, Thorsten Sellin, had been designated secretary-general of the commission. He had come from a Pennsylvania university, and was bringing some very American dynamism into this situation. Now, it happened at the time that there might be some instability in the tenure of the job. I was warned that the United Nations was trying to put some order into various fields of activity in the economic and social field. And that there was a move from ECOSOC (Economic and Social

Council) to try to regroup within the United Nations in New York the activities of several organizations which had been working on their own. Indeed, I was not very long in the secretariat of the IPPC when I realized that there was a very important negotiation going on with the United Nations making the claim that the functions of that organization should be part of the United Nations, and that the IPPC should cease to exist as one of those scattered little organizations. This was the famous hunt after overlapping and duplication.

It was a very interesting negotiation. I didn't take part, myself, as a junior member of the secretariat, in the negotiation. But I was close enough because it was a small organization, to the delegates who were coming there to realize that there was a very considerable reticence on the part of most of the members of the commissions against giving up their little club-like atmosphere, and being absorbed into the larger setting of the United Nations. They felt that they might be losing their autonomy of action, and that their subject would be immersed into the economic and social field which the UN was encompassing, and might lose some of its importance.

There was one man in the UN Secretariat who had a specific interest in that matter. That was Delierneux, a Belgian staff member. He was a fairly senior man in the Department of Social Affairs at the time. He was the one who was pushing for this activity to be taken over by the United Nations. At the time, the forces were such that the UN won that battle. In other words, all those chaps from the ministries of justice had to be convinced by their colleagues from the ministries of foreign affairs, who were the ones who were sitting in New York, that it was really necessary to put some orderliness in the process of international cooperation in the social field. And it was decided that the IPPC would be dissolved, and its functions taken over by the United Nations.

By a stroke of luck, it was negotiated that in order to ensure the continuity of the activities in this field of prevention of crime and treatment of offenders, two staff members of the commission would be taken over by the UN Secretariat. I happened to be one of the two. I understand that there was a discussion in New York as to whether one would make an exception on the question of nationality. It was really *par gain de paix*, not to further irritate governments who had been so reluctant at accepting the dissolution of the IPPC, that it was decided to make the concession that two staff members would then be taken over in order to ensure the continuity of functions. This is how I showed up in New York on the 27th of February 1951—I remember the date—to join the Section of Social Defense of the United Nations Secretariat.

TGW: I am going to go backwards here, for a minute, and ask you to what extent, during the period when you were driving in your cardboard vehicle to the assembly in the 1930s, the Depression, or the any of the thinking that was being done by Keynes and others about economic problems, entered into the schoolyard. Or when did these issues come onto your radar screen?

PB: I think as kids we were really looking into that very much as a political game. I got to know, of course, that the League of Nations had those committees that were looking into a much more diverse setting. But I don't think the economic side of international cooperation entered the picture for us at that time. The economic side of politics at large, of course, did enter the whole picture because they were part and parcel of the dramatic 1930s. I just traced my course within those years, but they were the famous years of what has been called *le temps des passions*. There were then very strong antagonisms between the right and the left. We were very involved in the political aspects of all of this. I am probably one of those people—and I know I am not the only one—for whom the Spanish Civil War has been more important than the World War in forging my vision of the world. My *weltanschaung* was very much modeled by

this antagonism. Economics were part of the big struggle. But I wouldn't say that personally I was really involved in it until I started law. It is still something that amazes lots of people when I mention it to them, but in the first year in law school in Geneva at the time, the most important branch was political economy. We had six hours per week of economics as the major subject in the first year of law school. This was still part of the much broader—I would say "humanistic" but that is a big word—approach to the function of the lawyer in society, which existed, I think, in European culture. This has amazed many American friends, much later, when I described it because law and economics are for them very much more separate categories. We had a much more—maybe I should use the word "humanistic"—view of law school.

I was then, of course, interested in economics by being exposed to so much economic theory at school. But, I suppose, before that time economics had been coming in through the problem of social inequality—the struggle of the poor against the important ones in society—but not in terms of economic theory.

TGW: What about the Depression itself? How did this touch the family, or Switzerland? And did this make you at all likely to think more seriously about economic cooperation, as opposed to political cooperation, if one can separate them? The League of Nations, and then the United Nations, were founded to stop the scourge of war as one part of the assignment. The other part was namely to try to overcome the kinds of tensions that contributed to the *temps des passions,* the 1930s. Were you clued into that? Did the Depression make you more sensitive to this?

PB: I think it is clear, first of all, that Switzerland had bad times, too, during the Depression. I have alluded to those three years of a "red" government in Geneva. In fact, the first measure of that socialist government, when it took power in 1933, did was to cut by 10

percent the salary of all the officials working for the government. That affected my father. I remember my mother and father recounting the budget of the family because it pinched very much. I was studying cello at the time, and they had to extend the down payment on the cello which they had bought for me because the plan had to be reviewed. So, indeed, the Depression was there. And yes, I would say that as soon as I saw the shape up of the United Nations, I got very interested in Article 55. Obviously, the idea that the approach could not be one based on political aspects only, but had to encompass the economic relations, was clear to me. But it is not something which I can remember having been sensitive to very early. It came, really, with the passing of time.

TGW: And you mentioned San Francisco. What about Bretton Woods? Was this also a prominent event, or was San Francisco the dominant one in your consciousness at that time?

PB: No, what was important was Dumbarton Oaks, not Bretton Woods. Bretton Woods had not acquired in the perception of the world which I had been building up for me the same importance as the UN itself. Then, of course, very soon, because I was reading the *Bulletin*, I realized that those pieces were there. But for a long time, we thought that those pieces were part of the general construction. The centrifugal move of the Bretton Woods institutions came relatively later. Not so much later, but I didn't sense that in 1946, 1947, or 1948. It is only much later, during a research on the UN system, that I came across the fact that the agreements with the UN of IBRD and IMF had given rise to considerable controversy at the time of their negotiation and of their consideration by the General Assembly. Certain of the provisions insisted upon by the Bank and Fund negotiators had been considered highly unsatisfactory, if not in violation of the Charter.

So the writing was on the wall then already. But at the time, I was grabbing the first things which were being written on San Francisco, on the negotiation, and on the Charter. One of the books which I still preciously keep on my shelf because it is full of red marks and annotations is a book by the Belgian, Henri Dehousse, who wrote one of the first books that were ever published as an analysis of the Charter. Then, of course, the first edition of Goodrich and Hambro[1] came fairly soon afterwards, giving us the general view. But no, I would say that certainly Bretton Woods never entered my vision at the time as being something on par with what was going on in San Francisco, or had taken place in Dumbarton Oaks. That was the general line, and of course I became aware that those additions were being brought into the tree which was developing.

TGW: And, at Neuchatel, why were students interested in taking your course? What was driving them?

PB: First of all, I should say there were relatively few students. As a matter of fact, at some point the dean of the faculty gave them a big speech, saying, "This is important. The world is building itself, and you should really know more about it." From then on, I had a good group. But they had to be whipped into coming to this class. It was not compulsory, the *privat-docent* is a course which is offered in addition to the compulsory curriculum. Then it was an interesting group because two or three of them developed a very keen interest in what was going on. They would assail me with questions. Others were just politely listening, and possibly interested, but not manifesting much more active interest than just following accurately and with attention the description that was being given to them of the way in which that institution was being built up and developed.

[1] Goodirch, L.M.; E. Hambro; and A.P. Simons. *Charter of the United Nations: Commentary and Documents*. Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1946.

TGW: At about the same time, the curtain dropped somewhere in Eastern Europe as well as Fulton, Missouri. How did the beginning of the Cold War either enter your thoughts or enter the classroom? Did this seem, as it would turn out to be for four decades, an insurmountable problem for the United Nations? Or did this seem to be a short-term problem?

PB: I should maybe just go three steps back. I mentioned to you the Spanish Civil War as one event which had been markedly important in my vision of the world. Geneva was in very active political ferment at that time. I certainly was emotionally—not actually, but emotionally—involved in the fight for freedom of expression and in the active resistance to fascism and Nazism. I tried to in the 1930s maintain an equilibrium about the values which could be seated in those various systems. I was not among those who had already decided that the world was divided into the bad and the good. I was interested in what was going on in the Soviet Union at the time. I was trying to resist the tendency to just blacken everything that was coming from the other side.

But I was sensitive to the tension which this represented. And I must say that, for a long time, my interest in international organization was also motivated, I think, by a desire to be able to overcome that tension and work into a setting which would be really at the service of the world as a whole, and not part of that Manichean world which was the one which dominated in much of the thinking in Western Europe. And, of course, that world as a whole we had in my home with the two newspapers which we were receiving.

I think it is fair to say that after my studies, when I keenly tried to enter the United Nations, part of my motivation was really to be able to be at the service of an organization which would be beyond the dichotomic tension, and be able to put one's energy and ability and intellect at the service of the world community as a whole. Now, I realized, of course, the tensions as

they developed in the UN, as I observed it from the outside before I joined it. In fact, I even later gave to the *Société de droit et de legislation*, which was a highbrow legal club in Geneva, a lecture on the Uniting for Peace Resolution, the famous mechanism by which the Security Council was bypassed and the General Assembly was empowered with some functions which allowed for the UN to enter the Korean War. I was thus quite conscious of the tensions which existed, and thought, nevertheless, that somehow the organization should be the place where you could, in a sense, try to work at those problems without being entangled into having to take sides and to be brutally cast either on one or the other side of that wall as it existed.

My awakening on that score was very much—and I don't know whether I am jumping ahead too much—was, of course, McCarthyism. This was, for me, a very traumatic experience in the early part of my career. Maybe I shouldn't say "traumatic" because I think I overcame it rather well. But the idea of seeing projected into the United Nations Secretariat in New York all those tensions as soon as I arrived was, for me, a sort of a brutal awakening. I had hardly taken foot in the UN when I was called to attend protest meetings of the staff council. This or that colleague whom I had just met was being called by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) of McCarthy. I realized that, far from being the heaven where I could get enough distance from the Cold War to be able to really look at it, the United Nations Secretariat itself was assuming part of the burden of that tension.

Somehow it was enlightening, of course, and frustrating for a while. On the whole, I think it is fair to say—and I am not trying to reconstruct history—it certainly did turn me away from the ideal I had about working for the United Nations. It added a dimension about the complexity of the setting in which I was engaging myself. But at no point did it give me the slightest inkling that maybe I should do something else in my life rather than that.

That was not an entirely theoretical thing because I had been in the UN for about three or four years when I got a sort of *appel du pied,* a call from Neuchatel. They still remembered me, and there was a professorship opening. They didn't offer me the job, but they wondered whether they could put my name forward because they would be interested in possibly taking me back as a professor. That must have been 1954 or 1955 and I had not the slightest doubt about it. Nothing that had happened in the UN, however traumatic it had been, would make me change my mind about the satisfaction I would get from working in that organization.

TGW: Could you describe, when you arrived, maybe before you were hit over the head with McCarthyism, what other people in the secretariat seemed like? What was the atmosphere? What was driving other persons who had been employed in those first five years or so? Why were they in the United Nations?

PB: Yes. My professional universe was not very big. I joined the Section of Social Defense, which was one of the four sections of the Department of Social Affairs. It was dealing specifically with problems of prevention of crime, treatment of offenders, juvenile delinquency, prison administration. We had a vast program, which had been launched by the IPPC, for the adoption of standard rules for prison administration and the treatment of offenders. Now, the team which I joined there were, I think, essentially people motivated by the substance of what they were doing. In a sense, I don't think I can look, thinking of that team, and find another Paul Berthoud, another staff member who was there not because he was interested in crime prevention and juvenile delinquency, but just interested in international cooperation. It is fair to say that those people—for instance Ed Galway, who had a distinguished career already in the field of criminal justice in the United States—were interested in what was going on elsewhere. In other words, I would say that curiosity about the experience in their field of activity in other countries

might have been a good motivation on their part. But it was curiosity based on the profession in which they were involved which was motivating practically all of them, rather than just the idea of international cooperation as such.

As a matter of fact, I don't think that any of those in that first group ever left the field of social defense to go work and do something else in the UN. They were really very heavily specialized. And I think it was to the credit of the United Nations that they had recruited good people who were top specialists to do a specific job, which the UN was expected to do. I landed there by that accident of the takeover of the IPPC which I mentioned earlier. Fair to say, I had acquired quite a bit of knowledge, if not expertise, in this field very soon at the IPPC because Thorsten Sellin—I mentioned his name already—was a remarkable teacher in addition to being a very good boss. Therefore, I had learned a lot. There were even at that time some articles signed Paul Berthoud which you would find in *La revue pénitentiaire internationale* because I had really immersed myself in that field. But if you refer to the 27th floor of the Secretariat in New York—when I arrived, two-thirds of the staff were still in Lake Success, and were just moving bit by bit to the Secretariat—I think they were all devoted professionals who were there in good part because they were interested in having a broader view of their profession and this was a way to get it.

TGW: I didn't ask the question as clearly as I should have. To what extent was a personal experience with the War, or the Depression, driving people? Was there more idealism amongst your colleagues than you found two or three decades later, when you ran into people like me? Several people have argued that, in fact, the direct encounters—everyone had a memory, or a direct experience, a family member killed in those first years—made the

international civil service more dedicated, committed, and of a higher caliber amongst the people recruited earlier rather than those recruited later. Does that make sense?

PB: It is difficult really to say. You have to make sure that you do not extrapolate. It would be easy today to ascribe views and do a rewriting of history at the time. They were all very dedicated, very interested in that broader view. Now, what had been there, the history, which had brought them to that? One had been fleeing from Austria to Geneva. Her father was a Jew and she went through Spain and difficult times in the United States. Obviously, there must have been a traumatic experience there which might have motivated her to do this rather than anything else once she had been in the States. The head of the section was, for a time, the former head of the French prison administration. He had been in the *résistance*. But we never were very clear about what his role had been there. The South African among us, I never really knew what war had meant for him. Lopez Rey, who joined us to replace the French man as head of the section, was a Spanish republican who had fought in Spain and then left for Latin America and became a Bolivian citizen.

So they all had their experiences. But I am not sure that we were very concerned about that. I don't remember talking about what had motivated them. We were all involved in the job. We worked very hard at the time. We were publishing the *Criminal Policy Review*, soliciting articles, writing articles ourselves, sending questionnaires, analyzing things. I don't think that I could contribute to this dimension of what had motivated them beyond what was obvious to us, that is the professional interest and a very keen involvement in the field in which they were working.

TGW: Could you generalize about your three decades of service, and your subsequent encounter with the quality of the people you worked with? Were they impressive, not so

impressive, all over the map? How would they have compared, for example, with a social science faculty at the University of Geneva or Neuchatel?

PB: First of all what happened to me is that I fairly soon got out of social defense. Not immediately, as a matter of fact, because I had a first field assignment which was in respect of social defense. As for the reason why I moved out of that field, I have given you the explanation in substance. My doctoral thesis was probably at least in part the cause, as after all 200 copies had been spread about. I got a fellowship from the *Academie de droit international* at The Hague as an award for that book. And I am sure that Stavropoulos and Schachter, and I don't know who else in the legal department knew about it. My essay on Article 2 (7) of the Charter had probably been at the time one of the most in-depth analyses of the origin of that provision, and I had also made an analysis of the use of Article 2 (7) in the Spanish question—the attempt to deny the Franco regime a seat in the United Nations—the India-South Africa dispute and the question of Indonesia. This is what brought me into the legal field for a while. It came, I suppose, as a result of my scientific work before I joined the United Nations.

Now, to your question. Indeed, my view of people in the organization is much broader than this first group which I mentioned. I have seen people in all kinds of situations and I have been lucky to work, for a long time, with people with whom I felt that I was sharing a common sense of what we were there to do, and of the way in which we were to do it. My experience has been a very fortunate one, I suppose, because I know that there has been so much frustration in the UN. But I have been impressed by the quality of devotion of the staff in a number of fields. I found people of high caliber in the social field, then in the economic field when I expanded and I became a quasi-economist by osmosis through my work in the United Nations through the

years. And I have found very motivated people in the legal field, where I had three very specific involvements.

The most outstanding case of that motivation, and of a sense that we were together trying to build something, was UNCTAD (UN Conference on Trade and Development). There is no question that in the 1960s, the spirit which motivated the group that worked at that attempt at changing the world was a sense of devotion which was very enhancing of the quality of relationships, and the quality of the work itself. In my economic, social, and legal assignments in general, there always was that interest for the organization, and there was very often a high motivation which was due to the quality of the professional standing which those people had achieved and of what they were doing. In UNCTAD, you had a collective sense of mission which I found more articulate there than I have at any other place in all of my career.

TGW: I am just going to move back a minute because I had meant to ask a question before you got to the United Nations. One of the seminal events, at least in Europe—and it has now come up as an image elsewhere—was the Marshall Plan, a vast infusion of capital which has been called for in lots of other contexts—the Third World, Eastern Europe, et cetera. How did this experiment with international solidarity appear to you at the time? And did Switzerland's neutrality, which kept it from benefiting directly from it, strike you as an aberration?

PB: Yes, Swiss neutrality did strike me as an aberration right from the beginning. As a matter of fact, the big argument which was advanced in Switzerland right in 1945 about not joining the United Nations was the question of the military commitment. You didn't want to be part of an organization where you might be forced to contribute to a military action. And I was among those young lawyers who had developed the idea that we should negotiate our entry to the

United Nations by taking the military commitment never to engage into any military operation. In other words, cast neutrality as a negative military commitment, which would allow us to conform to the requirements of the Charter and overcome the objection which at the time was quite easily formulated. Very soon, it was realized that the military part of the mechanism wouldn't work. The *Comité d'etat major* of the Security Council never went beyond sitting and exchanging figures.

But indeed, there was something odd about Switzerland turning its back to the organization while at the same time wanting to be partly in. There has been something very ambiguous in the Swiss position. My compatriots tried for a while to account for it in the distinction between *l'ONU politique et l'ONU technique*. But this has been abandoned by the Swiss entirely, for many years, because it was realized that it was an absurd construction which couldn't really be sustained when you were looking into it. Of course, teaching about the United Nations at a university, I was a bit of a fish out of water in the mood in Switzerland at the time. The Swiss were very ambivalent. They were keeping that stance of neutrality at the formal level, while being very clearly a pro-western country in terms of all its moral strands, its political and economic interests.

I don't think that the Marshall Plan—though it was applauded—gave rise to any major considerations beyond the fact that it was welcome as being a very serious assistance to the reconstruction of the Europe within which, after all, we were sitting as a country. Then, of course, since 1951, Switzerland was for me very far. I worked in New York for four years, then the Middle East, then back in New York, then in Latin America. I had more than fifteen years of UN experience before I had my first assignment in Geneva, which we may talk about later because this was a very interesting experience in many respects.

But by then the problem of Switzerland's position in that constellation had sort of lost a bit of its acuity for me, except in the context of, "Ah, you are Swiss, what are you doing here?" That kind of sarcastic atmosphere you still encountered in the UN about the position of Switzerland.

TGW: You are at these first assignments in the field. What was it like? Did your firsthand experience with developing countries, or what would be called developing countries—Lebanon, Palestine, and then eventually in the Congo—strike you in some ways, when you look back on this, as fairly different from New York or Geneva? What exactly did it feel like?

PB: Very exciting. Very important, also. From the point of view of my vision of what the UN was all about, which was trying to bring together this world, the opportunity of being able to move to the field—this was Lebanon at the time—was an exceedingly exciting experience. I really felt that it was an added dimension of what might be the richness of my career which was given to me, and that it was an absolutely golden opportunity. I moved into Lebanon very excited about the prospect that I could, beyond my desk at headquarters, grasp at the field level the reality which we were discussing all the time in New York. That was a very exciting position.

I should just mention—it is not necessary to keep the strand of history point by point, but before that first field posting I had already had my first legal assignment in 1955. The Legal Department felt that it was important to try to develop the elements of what was called a repertory of the practice of the United Nations—an analysis article by article of the Charter as reflected in the life of the organization. This was the first time I realized that somebody in Stavropoulos' shop knew that I existed as an international lawyer because I was asked to review Articles 55 and 56 of the Charter for the repertory. Julia Henderson was my boss in social affairs

and she readily agreed. And I spent some months at the time with a foot in legal affairs, but I was still based in social defense. After that I was sent to my first assignment in the field. That was really the rounding up of the dimension of what I expected and hoped my job would be. I didn't realize I would spend so much time out in the field later. But the idea of being able go to Lebanon, to be at the service of a government under a specific situation, was very exciting.

TGW: When did it become clear to you and your colleagues that the initial decolonization process, which began with India and Pakistan, and—

PB: Indonesia.

TGW: And Ghana, in 1957. But when did it become clear that the dynamics of what would become the Third World was really undergoing a fundamental change? In particular, I wonder whether when Bandung (Asian-African Conference) first came on the screen in 1955, whether you or anybody else in New York was paying any attention to it, or whether we are reading much more into this subsequently than was the case at the time.

PB: No, Bandung was important. I am trying now to think. Was Balinski in Bandung? One of our colleagues in the later UNDP (UN Development Programme) had been in Bandung and brought the news to New York. There was at the time a TAB (UN Technical Assistance Board) in New York. Manuel Perez-Guerrero was the executive director, and Nessim Shalom was his assistant there. They were on the 27th floor together with us in social affairs. Bandung, I think, had arisen already then. I don't think that it has been a construct after the fact. But what it would mean for the United Nations, I think, became very clear only when the General Assembly started to vote the "wrong" way from the western point of view. Then, of course, you realized that you had a political force which had developed and would take its momentum.

Back to 1956, Lebanon was in several respects an interesting experience for me. In addition to my assignment with the government, I was then supposed to develop a regional project, a regional seminar on prison administration for the Arab states of the Middle East. This was canceled after the Suez Crisis, and I was returned prematurely to New York. I had already made visits in the various countries in regard to this project in October 1956, when the Suez Crisis broke out. One of the things which has been very instructive in that experience has been to realize the distortion of world events which can take place depending on where you are. That is something which has been for me very interesting and dramatic. It needed for me and my wife to return to Europe to fully grasp what the Hungarian crisis had represented for western opinion. We had been so immersed in the Suez Crisis that, while knowing that something had happened in Central Europe at the time, I must truly say that we had never realized the importance of the commotion of the Hungarian crisis until much later when we reached physically a setting in which this had happened.

The Middle East had been—this is a big word, but I would say almost indifferent to it. And this meant that not only the press that I read, the radio to which I had been listening, but also in the people with whom I had been talking, the concentration had been entirely on the Suez Crisis and its aftermath. We had almost entirely missed the intensity of the Hungarian events as perceived in the western world. I have very often reflected on this in subsequent years. When you live over three years in Latin America, as we did at a later stage, you have to wonder whether you are still keeping some kind of reasonable track of what is going on in the world, or you are being frustrated from that.

TGW: During the 1950s, first with McCarthy and Korea, and then the Congo, it is clear that there was a gigantic East-West tension. My question related to Bandung and decolonization

is when did it strike you or when did it become obvious that there was also going to be what subsequently became a North-South, or a "have" and a "have-not" cleavage, the kind of thing that you were interested in when growing up with the "red" government in Geneva? When did it strike you that there was going to be a major change in the agenda resulting from the fact that so many of the have-nots were now part of the institution?

PB: I spent the whole of 1958 and 1959 in Palestine, in Jerusalem. It was again a closed world in which we were involved in our own affairs. It was really in CEPAL (Comisión Económica para América Latina, or Economic Commission for Latin America) in Santiago de Chile, where I realized that we were heading in that direction. It took a very dramatic turn because New York called very soon on Raúl Prebisch to manage the process that led to UNCTAD I and it provoked quite a reaction in the economic commission. My colleagues in CEPAL were very unhappy at seeing Prebisch diverting his attention from Latin America to the problems of the world at large.

There was a Cairo meeting in 1962 of developing countries. At that point, it was quite clear that we were heading towards a big North-South confrontation, I think. Cairo in 1962 was certainly a landmark point, though there had been indications before that time. And, of course, we lived it very intensely in Latin America because Prebisch went to Cairo. He was sent there by the Secretary-General of the UN, and he was sharing with his colleagues all his experience. So we realized that we were heading towards another fracture. There was the East-West fracture and we were heading towards a North-South fracture.

TGW: Before we get to Santiago, I just wanted to go back to these experiences of yours in the field, which were essentially kind of technical assistance experiences. Some people have

claimed they were a major innovation, a creation, whether you want to call it an idea or not. Anyway, it was a way of operating of the United Nations. How do you feel about that?

PB: It was very educational. That year in Lebanon really taught me a lot of things about international cooperation and about life in general, I would say. First of all, there was that incredible experience I had of moving to the Ministry of Social Affairs, which had made the request for an expert and not finding people really interested in putting me to work. It was an absolutely charming welcome, but without any plan for my use. And I had to reconstitute what had happened. How did it come about that everybody was so charming but nobody seemed to have a slot for me to do something? I was even encouraged to take a good time. "It is a nice country. This is the Switzerland of the Middle East. Why don't you make yourself at ease?"

And the story which I found out was an absolutely illuminating one. The minister of social affairs had been involved in a very serious political controversy. The ministry was managing a reformatory for juvenile delinquents up in the mountain, and the mismanagement of that reformatory had become a very serious point of accusation against the minister. The minister had then asked for the United Nations to send an expert to assist him. He wanted to show his good faith by saying, "Look, I want to do a good job. I am asking the UN to help me on that." Between the time the request had been made and my arrival in Lebanon, however, there had been a change of government. The minister had gone. Somebody else was minister of social affairs and the pressure on criticizing the management of the reformatory had completely vanished.

Nobody had really any use for my services in relation to the crisis which had provoked the request. They had use for my services, of course, once we could establish a rapport and I indicated what I could offer. I did spend three days a week up in the mountain meeting with the

people at the reformatory and assisting in the improvement of its management and processes. We even extended my mission to giving a course to the senior staff of the prison administration and to visits to places of detention. So I had, really, to build my usefulness in relation to the situation. There was a place for it. I don't think for a moment that I lost a single day of my stay in Lebanon. It was very positive. But I had to be very actively assisting in the development of the way in which I could put that usefulness to work.

Another experience which was interesting was the very sensitive nationalistic pride I would say that I felt in the milieu in which I was working. I remember when, at a point, I made the suggestion that we could send people for training and observation in what was a very good reformatory near Bethlehem. There was a sort of a shock on the part of my Lebanese counterpart. The message obviously was that "you shouldn't expect us to have anything to learn from the Jordanians." If I had recommended Paris, it would have been welcomed.

Then I encountered a very interesting problem at the end of my mission. There was a large charity movement that was at work in Lebanon, in the very sophisticated upper-class community which spoke Arabic to the servants but were speaking French amongst themselves. They had an association which wanted to take over the reformatory. They felt that being put back in private hands it could be managed much better. It was 1956 and Lebanon had been independent for less than ten years. I had, at that time, a fairly strong conviction that if you try to dismantle a state system because it doesn't work well, you will weaken the state, which in the long run is a disservice to the country as a whole. Therefore, I made forcefully the point that I realized the difficulties, that the ministry would have to live up to its commitment, but I thought that it should be encouraged to do so rather than to be relieved of the situation by just

transferring the institution to a private setting. This was very ill-received in some circles in Lebanon, which was also a very interesting experience.

So, as you see, it was very rich from many angles to spend a year there. International circumstances prevented us from developing the regional project that we had in mind. However, we had already been to Amman, Damascus, Baghdad, Riyad, and Cairo for contacts with a view to organizing a conference which would provide for a regional interchange of experience on prison administration and I had visited prisons in most of those countries. But that project had to be abandoned because of the political situation.

TGW: During these early years, what kinds of, if not ideas, what kinds of images were driving either expert or local views about the process of development? What kinds of frameworks were people carrying around with them? What did they think they were doing?

PB: I suppose we were all do-gooders. We wanted to bring a knowledge which we felt we had to other people who were missing it. I think at the beginning, the whole idea of the identification by the government of its own needs was a very background theoretical premise in the work we were doing. At the beginning, very much of the technical cooperation instinct was really to bring soap to the unwashed.

TGW: The great unwashed?

PB: As a matter of fact, in your fifteen books, there is one that will be fascinating, that is your book on international assistance because there has been quite an evolution in the concept which is very interesting to trace.

TGW: The experience in the Congo must have been quite different from anything else you have done before, or actually since. What was that like?

PB: Absolutely. It rounded out my vision of the UN very much in the sense of being a truly multilateral experience applied to a specific political situation. Of course, multilateralism struck us through the confusion which was created by having, at a point, no less than twenty-eight different nationalities involved militarily in this situation. A was baking the bread. B was distributing it. C was putting in telephone poles. D was running the jeeps. It was exceedingly difficult to put that operation together. I was very close to it just by circumstances. My chief of staff in Palestine had been Carl Carlsson von Horn, the Swedish general. And he had been asked to take over the Congo operation. He immediately grabbed me into his office, because we had developed a fairly close relationship in Jerusalem. He professed to be very relieved at my arrival and asked me to assist in explaining what it was all about. We had those heads of contingents coming in and screaming and each one had the same story, "Let us do the job. We will do it better alone. Why should we have to do it with others?"

We developed a sort of pep talk to all those people. I was very much involved because von Horn ended up asking those chaps to go and see the legal adviser about it. I told many of those people—some were generals, they were of fairly high level in their army—"Let's agree on one thing. Left alone, you will do it better than we are doing it together. There is a coefficient of inefficiency which is built into multilateral operations. What that coefficient is, we could even discuss. What degree of efficiency are we losing by doing it together, rather than letting you, or him, or him, do it all by himself? It may be 30 or 40 percent, or even 50 percent of efficiency which we are losing. It is very messy to do it this way. But you have to realize that it is of the essence of what you are doing to try to do it together."

For me the experience of the Congo was really to live the concept of multilateralism in a very concrete situation. The very essence, the very nature of the operation was that we were

conducting it together. We were conducting it at a price which was a fairly heavy one in many respects. And that is a point I am prepared to make about the UN as a whole, not only about the operation in the Congo. The efficiency cost of being a multilateral setting we have to be especially conscious of when we talk about UN reform, which we may or may not talk about. But I mentioned it in my little paper about the things which we might be talking about here.

Thus the first thing I got out of the Congo was that feeling of strong involvement in a demonstration of what was meant by a multilateral operation and by working together as exponents of a community of nations. Now as you know, the Congo situation was a very complex one. I have read many books about it ever since, and this may be one of the situations where you have to be careful not to rewrite history afterwards on the basis of what I have read. But concentrating on my memory of that time, I would say that the first and foremost thing was this sense that here we were demonstrating what it meant to be operational as a United Nations.

Beyond that, of course, the big problem was a reconciliation of our attempt at doing what we were doing with the constraint of the Charter, which was the famous Article 2 (7) about which I knew quite a lot. This was very interesting. Retrospectively, of course, it is fascinating for me to remember the respect which was given to that provision of the Charter. The evolution of the setting in relation to that concept of nonintervention in the internal affairs of the country has been one of the most dramatic features in the evolution of the organization. At that time, we were really very much constrained. There was the famous closure of the airport and of the radio station. This was at the fringe of this problem of the interpretation of Article 2 (7). But we were also very conscious of the fact that we had the mandate to assist in the maintenance of law and order. Reconciling those two dimensions of the mandate and the constraint is, I would say, the second major souvenir which I have of my experience in the Congo.

TGW: You mentioned earlier where you stand depends partially on where you sit. So you were at the other of the line from what was going on in New York. Did it seem that this was going to be a gigantic crisis for the institution, and subsequently a financial crisis changing the Secretary-General into three parts and all of these things? When the operation began to come apart, was it clear that this would be a big black eye that would have subsequent repercussions for the institution as a whole?

PB: Yes. I realized the importance of it because we had Hammarskjöld personally in Leopoldville several times. The fact of the very presence of the Secretary-General in the August 1960 crisis, back and forth, made us very early realize that we were in a serious crisis. It was written on the wall that this was a difficult matter. And then, of course, very soon it took an unfortunate East-West tinge at the local level.

TGW: How did you get from the Congo to Santiago, physically? How was this really quite dramatic shift in your career explained? Was this something you sought, or that came up, or that somebody asked you to do?

PB: I have been very lucky. For all my assignments, including 1980 when I left for Venezuela, not a single move in my career has been at my own initiative. In not a single one of those various assignments did I take the initiative of saying, "Look, I have interest in doing that." Each and every time, somebody came, and said, "We are very happy with what you are doing, but we think you might be even more useful if you did something else."

Now, those things don't happen in the air. I was in social affairs, working with Julia Henderson in social defense. *"Le droit mène à tout, à condition d'en sortir,"* as we say in French. Is it because my legal training was giving an indication that I could do something else? Julia Henderson already wanted to take me out of social defense. At some point, there was a

question that she would like to have me as *chef de cabinet* in her Division of Social Affairs which dealt with community development, social welfare, social defense, and the social policy group of McGranahan at the time at the edge of the spectrum. Then the legal people were after me. My departure for Palestine was quite an accident. It was a call from Stavropoulos, "Your compatriot (it was a Swiss who was legal adviser there) has just been declared *persona non grata* by the Jordanians. We need some time to find somebody to replace him. Can you go there to hold the job for two months?" So I joined for two months. And on the fifty-seventh day of the two months, a telex came asking me to stay for two years.

At that time—I am trying to answer your question even if it doesn't look like it—there was already some design in social affairs, on the part of Julia Henderson, to send me to Santiago de Chile. I would have probably gone to Santiago much earlier if it hadn't been for the Palestine assignment. But she kept that in mind. After Palestine, I thus moved to Santiago de Chile in January 1960, as part of what had been the plan of social affairs disrupted by the legal people wanting me in Palestine for two years. Now, the Congo was just an aftermath of Palestine. I remember exactly the day when, on a Saturday morning, a cable came from New York to Prebisch saying, "We need Berthoud in the Congo. Please detach him for six months." They knew me and they wanted me to go there. So I had to suspend my assignment in the Economic Commission for Latin America again to respond to an urgent call of a political nature, and therefore presumably having priority on the part of the Secretary-General's office. CEPAL was quite aware of that. The Congo was already looming as a serious crisis. I think it was the first of August when the cable came. So CEPAL said that would be their contribution because the UN was in trouble: "If they want Berthoud, let them have him for a while."

I did take very clearly the precaution of indicating loud and clear to Prebisch and the senior staff in Santiago that I was responding to the call of duty, but I was not deviating my career towards legal work, in spite of the second call that I had had in three years from them. And I counted on them at the proper time, to take all the steps which would be necessary to repatriate me to Santiago. This was a very positive decision on my part because I had by then already realized that legal work in the United Nations can be fascinating—as it was for me in those two assignments—but could be exceedingly boring. You get a P-4 and a P-5, and then you will be asked to look into the administrative tribunal recourses on behalf of the secretary-general, or look at the terms of procurement contracts. I was very much afraid that toppling my career towards the legal field might end me up in work assignments in which I might not be interested.

So I went to the Congo making it very clear that this was in the line of duty, but was not something more than just a parenthesis in my career which was based in Santiago. The jump from one to the other, I think, is explained that way. Indeed, the message went through because after the Congo, I had lots of doings with legal affairs on different matters, but I never was posted again as a legal adviser to a political or military operation.

TGW: You mentioned Prebisch. When did you first meet Don Raúl, and what impression did you have?

PB: I met Don Raúl in January 1960. He was in Santiago when I arrived to report as director of social affairs. He received me. I mentioned right away—it was obvious—that his French was better than my Spanish, but I would like to speak Spanish because I thought it would be important for my insertion in the retinue to speak Spanish. He readily agreed, which was very interesting. It was a quite different mentality from the French. The French are so terribly particular about the purity of their language that they hate when somebody speaks bad French. It

is a stereotype, but it is certainly my experience. But the Spanish-speaking people, as soon as you try to speak Spanish with them, they are very happy to encourage you to do so.

Prebisch was a very impressive man, a very kind and a very gentle man. He told me what he expected from the Division of Social Affairs. Then I saw him only sporadically, except collectively in staff meetings. One of the things which very soon impressed me very much in Prebisch was his ability to work with a team, in the sense of extracting from the team all that was possible to extract. Prebisch was the absolute antithesis from Boutros-Ghali, for instance. He wanted always to work with people throwing ideas at him. He would then very articulately formulate his own views. But this ability to listen to people, this keenness to know what people thought, has been a fascinating thing for me to observe, both in Santiago and then, of course, in Geneva in UNCTAD. He was my boss there up to 1968, for three years.

This was just one aspect of an extraordinary intellectual ability and capacity to concentrate. I have more than once quoted my experience with those absolutely boring general debates in the UNCTAD conference. Governments came and made their prepared statements, which were partly for the public opinion back home. Prebisch would be capable of sitting for three hours in the morning, three hours in the afternoon, and listening with attention to each and every word which was being pronounced. And how do I know that? The next morning, in the staff meeting, he would say, "You remember the French delegate. About two-thirds into his speech, he said, 'dot, dot, dot, dot.' Why don't you go and ask him what he meant. Is that linked with that or this?" He had registered each and every point which had been made.

I am not able to sit for six hours a day, listening in concentration. That ability reflected, of course, an intellectual control which is incredible. I can only think of the music conductor who conducts by heart. He enters into a Mahler symphony and he has no paper in front of him.

Again, an illustration—Prebisch, making one of his major speeches. In the early years of UNCTAD, Prebisch's speeches were an event in town, people would come to the public gallery just to listen to him. One day, he was telling us, "I cannot do it in less than an hour and a half." We impressed upon him, "You cannot speak an hour and a half, even you." He asked, "So how much do you give me?" We said, "Let's say an hour and a quarter is about as much as you can use." The next morning, he entered in the room, he had his hands in his pockets—no paper, nothing. And he spoke for one hour and fourteen minutes! I am certain that he concentrated into an hour and fourteen minutes all what he had felt he needed an hour and a half to say.

Another experience of his operating as a speaker—he had just two little pieces of paper in front of him, but was not looking at them. Then at the fifty-fifth minute of the speech, he would take the paper and read a quote, and put it back. It was all prepared, all set up in advance in his mind. In other words, Prebisch had a truly extraordinary intellectual capacity. I don't know whether it is comparable to that of a musical conductor, or a chess champion. Those are two actors for whom I have unbound admiration—the music conductor and the chess champion—because they obviously have something which functions in their minds that I don't possess. Prebisch, in his way, was that kind of person. He has been in my whole career the person for whom I developed the greatest admiration, limitless admiration. He was very humane too, very open. He was a *bon vivant*, as you know. He had a reputation as a *bon vivant,* and he was. When he was at La Pelouse—for a while, he had an apartment at that villa.

TGW: Now Vladimir Petrovsky's villa?

PB: No. Today it houses the Iraq-Kuwait Claims Commission. We had some very nice retreats there, during crises, from time to time, which were very well provided with excellent wine.

TGW: In an earlier meeting, you described the secretariat as a boiling kettle of ideas. What determined the temperature underneath the kettle? Was it him, or other people in the secretariat? Was it Latin American development? What gave ECLA its well-known reputation?

PB: I think it was the interface between him and a few very bright people. The most notorious—in the positive sense—of those bright people I hardly knew because they had left Santiago when I arrived and they were only returning for meetings. Celso Furtado and Victor Urquidi were two of them.

TGW: We have interviewed both.

PB: Yes. People of that caliber, of course, did contribute. It was not all Prebisch just shooting ideas at others. I think people of the caliber of Urquidi and Furtado, and others—people like Balboa, like Vuscovic, Bardeci—they were all very bright chaps, full of ideas. And, of course, Prebisch was creating an atmosphere which was stimulating that boiling of ideas. He was encouraging people to come out to speak, and to try and see what could be made out of it. It needed a Prebisch to orchestrate it, but it would be wrong to attribute the whole of the movement to him. It was obviously his ability to take the best out of a very bright group of people which allowed for CEPAL to be what it was, what it became.

TGW: Why has the United Nations itself, and so few other institutions, spawned, or attracted, a Prebisch?

PB: Why so few?

TGW: Yes.

PB: I don't know how many Prebisches there are to be attracted, first of all. Then, of course, that ability to work as a team is so fundamental, and so fundamentally missing in so many people. It is very often by the fault of the system. I always cite as an example that if you

have a team of twenty bright economists, what the UN would be trying to do is to find a twenty-first one who is a bit brighter than the twenty others and put him on top of the team. This is just very wrong. What you need is somebody who extracts out of the twenty what is needed for the job. Many of the people who come to the UN and are being put in the top positions are not able to produce much more than what they could offer themselves. That is a great limitation. One of Prebisch's great qualities was to use the Urquidis and the Furtados and the Balboas and the Vuscovics, all those people. It is the ability to mobilize a collective effort which has characterized Prebisch. And that is a talent which is not too developed in the world.

TGW: It seems to me that in the earlier years of the UN, as I look at it, every top-notch economist you can think of was brought in at one time or another. Stanovnic actually argued this yesterday. Arthur Lewis wanders through. There wasn't a name in a textbook who was not associated at some point in the UN. Then this changes, subsequently, because such people are on the outside and are no longer brought in so much. So I guess one of my queries is, to what extent could the institution make better use of outsiders in bringing them in to inject some ferment and to take away the ideas and perhaps utilize them?

PB: Of course, it is also a loss of the image of the organization. Since I joined the UN, I didn't pay anymore for the *UN Bulletin,* but I collected it. I have a full set of it. It is a fascinating set, I assure you. It starts in 1946 with this very compact *hebdomadaire,* than *bi-mensuel,* and then you see that it moves to a sort of a looser thing when we have the *UN Chronicle* monthly. It still is very good. It still has all the texts of the resolutions. Then we move to another aspect of it, a bigger format, more public relations oriented. You start not finding the text of resolutions anymore. It becomes a very lousy tool for work. Then it begins being issued only quarterly. It is gone for any serious reader. The UN is not anymore putting at

the disposal of the public at large a good working instrument on the UN. You look at that and you see the degradation. It might also reflect a loss of interest on the part of many people in being attracted there, in wanting to go and work for the UN. It is a different organization.

TGW: What was the relationship between New York and Santiago? How much authority was decentralized? Was it important that Santiago was a long way from New York? And how did thoughts, ideas, initiatives that emanated from Santiago get passed on and used by other people?

PB: The distance was great, obviously. And there was very much a sense of wanting to keep autonomy on the part of the Latinos. The Latinos had their world, and they wanted to manage their world. If you are interested in the mechanics of this, one cannot forget the fact that the economic commissions—all of them—had their mole in New York. It was a mole because Vladek Malinowski, the head of the Section for Economic Commissions, was an absolutely devoted advocate of, and spokesman for, the economic commissions at headquarters. And soon you got into an ideological dichotomy. I don't want to say conflict right away though it led to that, in the sense that the economics that were developed, nurtured, pushed through in Santiago were not necessarily easily absorbable by Mozak and his group at headquarters.

Malinowski was sort of an agent for the commissions, trying to obtain greater recognition at the headquarters of the work that was being done not only in Santiago but also in Addis and Bangkok. Whereas there was an orthodoxy at headquarters which I think was not very permeable to those ideas as they came. So, the distance was there. And I don't think that the transfer of ideas was very easy at all. The New York Department of Economic Affairs remained a sort of self-contained ideological setup, which was not very susceptible to being influenced from those peripheral movements.

TGW: Was it obvious, sitting in Santiago, that some of the regional commissions were created more equal than others? Most people hardly mention in the same breath ECE (Economic Commission for Europe), and ECLA, and the others. What accounts for the difference in quality coming from these commissions? Was it only the heads? Or are there other factors?

PB: It was the heads in part, obviously. The approach of a U Nyun to ECAFE (Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East) as it was known at the time, had little to do with the approach of Prebisch, or later Enrique Iglesias, to the work of CEPAL. It think also that the sense of Latin America having a commonality of interests dynamized the work of the commission more than would have been possible in Asia where the presence of very large nations did not allow for developing the same sense of cohesion as was the case in Latin America. ECA (the Economic Commission for Africa) was another problem because Africa had just emerged and they emerged in a rather volatile and disorganized way. Mekki Abbas and Robert Gardiner were strong executive-secretaries, also, but the dough they were working with did not lead to cooking the same pie. I think it is a combination of a strong personality, and also the circumstances of the continent, which caused the clicking of that intellectual burst which we had in Latin America.

TGW: In terms of new thoughts and ideas in ECLA, to what extent did these emanate from member states or from the secretariat? Or to what extent was it a two-way street? Is it possible to assign responsibility for initiatives?

PB: I was not really in the best place to judge this. I sat in the meetings of the commission, of course, when it met. But I didn't sit in all the expert groups which were called. My inclination, in a judgment subject to all the reservations it may call for, is that one has to give a very important percentage of initiative credit to the secretariat. I don't know how many ideas

really came from the other side of the dialogue. They were encouraged, but even when they came from a government it might often have been after a good chat which the delegate had with a member of the secretariat before the meeting started.

Overwhelming is a big word, but I am almost inclined to say that ideas overwhelmingly originated in the brain trust. This was not only the people sitting in the secretariat. It might have been groups of experts brought in by the secretariat. Ideas were then fed into the intergovernmental machinery, but probably rarely originated with governments. Maybe the big exception was President Echeverría on the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States. This was a Mexican initiative, and I have no indication myself that it had been suggested to the Mexicans by somebody in the secretariat. It was a completely wild but genial idea, and it came from the government. I may be wrong. There might be somebody laughing at me for making that statement, saying, "Aha, I am the one who told the guy." But I have no indication of this. I think it is a fact, however, that ideas generally have been prompted by the brain trust.

TGW: At some point toward the end of your time at ECLA, the preparations for UNCTAD began. How did this look at the time, from Santiago? Did this seem as if we were turning a page, so to speak? That we were going back to the notion of a trade organization that had fallen apart in Havana, or was it much more modest than that?

PB: First, it was resented in terms of the involvement of Raúl Prebisch because his staff felt that he might be—which he was—leaving the Latin American scene to enter the world scene. It was comforting to be under the leadership of Raúl Prebisch. It was solid. It was there. You could move ahead, and you knew that ideas would be produced, would be exploited. Here was a secretariat that was seeing the boss taken away to do something else. The first reaction to the coming of UNCTAD was, "Oh gosh, we are losing Prebisch."

To your point, it was entered certainly by the developing countries with the idea that they would like to reactivate the ITO (International Trade Organization). This is on the record and it is the way we felt. We had to try to put together that organization, after all. There was that appendix, GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) which had sprouted from it. But that would have to be recuperated and inserted within the new construction. So, yes it was to be seen as activating ITO.

TGW: This is the beginning of tape number two, Tom Weiss and Paul Berthoud on 9 January. One of the things that we are trying to get our hands on is the link between reports and research, and new policies and new institutions. And I just wondered whether it was obvious at the time that the Haberler report (*Trends in International Trade*) really set the stage for the preparations for UNCTAD? To what extent did other work—Prebisch's own work, Singer's work, development economics of the 1950s, some people would argue even League of Nations reports—point in the direction of an UNCTAD?

PB: I think the Harberler Commission was *visionnaire*. They had that vision. Whether they had any influence on the movement, I don't know. I was never present in a location where I could pass judgement on that. I know of so many reports which are being appreciated, praised, and then left without any follow-up. In addition to the dynamics of decolonization, I don't know what motivated this groundswell of the developing countries in moving in that direction, beyond the work which was fed to them by the UN—by the Economic Commission for Latin America in particular, and then more broadly, by the secretariat. In the GATT, the Haberler report was not the only one. There were a number of pronouncements which were left unattended. I wouldn't have an answer on that. I am sorry. Frankly, I am surprised by the proposition that the Haberler report might have been a contributing factor to what happened. It is an interesting proposition. I

am quite prepared to think of it. But it hadn't occurred to me. For me, the Haberler report had just been a progressive pronouncement carefully shelved by the powers that considered it an embarrassment.

TGW: One of the problems with ideas, good or bad, is that there is a new orthodoxy which then gets institutionalized. Some people have argued, actually, that some combination of a cult of personality and rigidity characterized Prebisch's work, particularly in ECLA, which sort of gets stuck in a mode of state sector-oriented development, and the initial part of market reform passed it by. Does that make any sense, that the popular idea outlives its usefulness?

PB: The idea of rigidity in the model is for Prebisch's thinking denied by the further evolution of his writings, including his last major report, *Transformation and Development*, which was commissioned by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). That report was showing quite an evolution in its thinking, and an absorption of what were the new parameters which were projected into the debate. I think that Prebisch was, of course, not an economist but, in a sense, a prophet. I consoled him once on that, when we were talking about the Nobel Prize for economics. He never got the Nobel Prize for economics. I remember saying to him, "But look, the Nobel Prize is for economists. You are not an economist. You are a prophet. And prophets speak in the desert. They don't expect recognition at the Nobel Prize level."

Rigidity of thinking is a concept which is so strange to me when we talk about Prebisch. He had a definite vision of some basic needs for the reorientation of the world economy. He devoted the latter part of his career to that vision, once he was asked by the Secretary-General to do that rather than to stick to Latin America's problems. I think it is easy, but I don't find it very documented to accuse him of a rigid mold of thinking.

TGW: Well, perhaps not him as a person, but an institution actually can be enamored with a particular kind of idea, so that ECLA, long after Prebisch had left, maintained some of the ideas, which certainly were not popular with another group of economists, and who find that embedded in the secretariat is this older kind of thinking. Perhaps Prebisch himself had moved on, but the secretariat had not.

PB: Yes. It is possible. Of course, the secretariat of CEPAL was rigidly motivated. There is no question about that. It was very clear when you saw at the time the shift of people between the Allende government of Chile and the secretariat of CEPAL. But that rigidity might have reflected a conviction of the necessity to maintain some line against countercurrents. I don't necessarily think back on it as having been a sclerosis in thinking, which is really what is being suggested by critics. The countervailing movements were trying, of course, to erode that way of thinking by precisely accusing it of rigidity. But it might have been conviction, as much or more than passivity—an intellectual analysis that led them to maintain that line. I was not on that scene anymore, but I was following it closely enough to have this general judgement about it.

TGW: I wonder whether you could describe the politics among member states at that time. I am, in particular, curious about big country-little country politics, and also about Spanish versus the Caribbean before there was a "C" on ECLA. How were these managed at the beginning of the 1960s?

PB: Most of what has been ascribed to CEPAL's thinking was really developed in Santiago, with the participation of Victor Urquidi when he came, but with a fairly large autonomy for Central America. Central America was having its office in Mexico, running its course. And then on the Caribbean, I don't know when the Trinidad office of CEPAL was

opened. I think it was open already at that time. But it had quite a bit of autonomy. There was plenty of work done in Central America on the question of a Central American common market. But I would say that I have never sensed the contribution of those two sub-regions to the core of CEPAL's thinking as being very important. I think those two sub-regions were dealing with their problems, and that it was in Santiago that the message was worked out.

Of course, South America, as opposed to those two sub-regions, is a very disparate group of countries. The two large ones—Argentina and Brazil—I am sure, while following CEPAL's work with very great interest, were very much in charge of their own economic policy. That I have no doubt about. As a matter of fact, I am sure that Celso Furtado was not always reflecting at all views that were pleasing to the government of Brazil. But, at the core of the doctrine that was evolved, there was enough commonality of interests of all those countries so that you could carry the commission along.

TGW: Why don't we now move back to the Middle East? What happened next to get you to Beirut in 1963?

PB: Circumstances of life, again. The Beirut situation was one that was starting to plague seriously Philippe de Seynes and the secretariat because of the pressure of the Arab states to also get into the act in terms of the economic commissions. ECA had been set up, ECAFE was there up to Iran, and the Arab countries wanted to have their own mechanism. But the question of the need to maintain the principle of universality of participation in UN activities, like Article 2 (7), was much more on the minds of people then than it is now.

And this is how the formula was developed to have in Beirut an office which would not be an intergovernmental machinery, but an outpost of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat. This office would be located in the region and would start to carry out

some activities at the regional level, offering thus a sort of first approximation to what could one day become the secretariat of an economic commission. Social Affairs had already some people outposted in Beirut. The idea was to create an office there which would have economic and social functions, but would be clearly cast as a branch of the secretariat, thus avoiding the problem of the principle of universality of participation.

Now, why Paul Berthoud? You would have had to ask Prebisch and de Seynes. I was Swiss. At the time, it was a good nationality for Middle East affairs. I knew the region fairly well. I had been assigned there twice already—in Lebanon the whole of 1956, and two years in Palestine in 1958-59. And I had been working in a regional commission. So there were basically three factors—knowledge of the region, nationality, and having worked at the regional level already—which made de Seynes ask Prebisch if he could have Berthoud back for that. Prebisch agreed.

Except for my seven months in the Congo, I had been for three and half years already in Santiago. So from the point of view of rotation, it was not unreasonable to expect me to go. But the game went on later when, in 1965, it was then Prebisch who asked de Seynes, "Can I have Berthoud back from Beirut as secretary of the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board?" That was more dramatic because de Seynes said: "Yes, you can have him, but please let me keep him for some more time." So for a full year, I was at the same time director of the UNESOB (UN Economic and Social Office in Beirut) and secretary of the Trade and Development Board in Geneva. But that is later. We are not talking about that now.

The personal circumstances of my returning to Beirut were nationality, knowledge of the region, and experience in a regional secretariat. It was daring on the part of de Seynes because he put me in charge of an office which would have a social section, and an economic section.

And my modern economics had been acquired only by osmosis. But I had a very bright person as the head of the economic section—Bassim Hannesh. My job consisted of getting the maximum out of my economists, not of trying to be a brighter boss imposing his view on those other professionals.

TGW: I had wanted to ask this for ECLA, so I am going to ask it for ECLA and UNESOB. What was the range of nationalities working there at the outset? That is, to what extent were non-regional people welcomed? You obviously were a non-regional person. But to what extent were these open to the fact that people from elsewhere might have something to say? It seems to me that, over time, that notion has virtually disappeared. Now, Africans are supposed to know more about Africa than anybody else, and Middle Easterners more about the Middle East than anybody. And there is almost a hostility—maybe that is overstating it. Was that different at the beginning?

PB: No. It was already there. In Latin America, I was the only non-Latino heading a division. It was probably tolerated because it was a division that was not really central—social affairs. But at the time already, as a matter of fact, this provincialism was really a terrible defect of CEPAL. I have always said, "I don't mind 80 percent of the staff of CEPAL being Latin American. But I resent deeply the fact that 80 percent of those 80 percent have never known anything else but CEPAL in the world of the United Nations." I don't mind having people coming back to the region at some point in their career. But what CEPAL has terribly missed has been an opening to the world on the part of its staff.

At some point, much later, my name was tossed by Prebisch and de Seynes for the position of deputy-executive-secretary of CEPAL. That provoked very strong feelings on the

part of the Latino community in the secretariat. It was inconceivable that a non-Latin American would fill that job. So the idea was dropped.

Prebisch was very conscious of the problem. As a matter of fact, he was scornfully speaking of the "Africanization of CEPAL." That was at the time when Gardiner had been instructed to sack all of the non-African staff from his secretariat. That included Erling Nypan, who was serving Africa better than anybody else ever could. But that is another story. Prebisch felt that this mentality was a great pity. But this provincialism was very strong in Latin America.

In Beirut I did not sense it that way. The team which had assembled was in great majority Arab, with however a Pakistani on the social side. Somehow, maybe because UNESOB was much smaller, I had much more a feeling of acceptance in Beirut among Arabs than I had in Latin America among Latinos. Now, maybe that is unfair. It never was pointed out to me. I never was hampered in my work because I was a non-Latino. But I was very conscious of having to try to be as much possible like one of them, by speaking Spanish as much as I could and so forth. That consciousness did not exist in Beirut, where we were a small team. I don't think that anybody, at the time I was there, really felt that my job should be going to an Arab. My successor there was Jean-Pierre Martin, who was also not an Arab. But in Latin America that feeling always existed.

TGW: Was any timetable set up for ESCWA (Economic and Social Commission for West Africa), or was UNESOB given a sort of indefinite lease on life? Was it quite clear that this was a first step towards ESCWA, and that Israel would not be in it?

TB: No, not at all. It was probably clear in the minds of some Arab delegates, who were pushing in that direction. But the secretariat, even if they had that in mind, would never have dared express it. Philippe de Seynes was a very astute politician. I suppose he realized when we

set up UNESOB, that this would lead us in that direction. But he certainly wouldn't have expressed it. As a matter of fact, I had moved into Beirut with a family, complete with three children, under difficult circumstances, because it had been made clear to me that depending on what happened in the 1963 General Assembly we might have to repatriate the office to Cyprus. This issue was whether the General Assembly would accept that we have that office function without Israel having the right-of-access to it.

Finally, it turned out differently, as the General Assembly refused to challenge the decision to establish UNESOB. This is a point which has fascinated me with the question of Palestine. Ever since 1964, even before the Six Day War, you had a complete dichotomy between the loss of grip by the Israelis on the diplomatic scene in New York, and their constantly increasing power on the ground. Israel has been weaker and weaker in the General Assembly, it has been very isolated. There have been a number of votes of 150 versus two, the two being the U.S. and Israel. But that constant weakening of Israel on the diplomatic scene has been accompanied by a very strong spreading of its power in the reality of the terrain. The divergence between those two trends has long interested me as an aspect of the conflict.

But, in 1964 or 1965, nobody would have dared say, "This is really the forerunner of an intergovernmental commission." It look another eight years for the idea to mature. And it could only mature because of the weakening of the stand of Israel in the General Assembly. It needed the General Assembly to set aside the principle of universality to create ESCWA without inviting Israel to participate. That would not have been conceivable in 1963. But it happened in 1973, as a result of the weakening at the diplomatic level of the position of Israel.

TGW: To what extent were the ideas about development that you had seen in ECLA also circulating in Beirut or in the region? I am trying to get my hands on what the dynamics were, or

the ideas that were going on in Geneva by this time. That is, the Group of 77 (G-77) is on the ground, you have UNCTAD started, and you are in Beirut. To what extent were either members of the secretariat or governments quite aware of what was going on in Geneva or in Santiago? Was there an exchange?

PB: No, not really. It is interesting. I focus on it now because you put the question. In our daily relations with the countries of the region, which consisted of basically gathering information for economic analysis and giving support to technical cooperation, I don't think that the Geneva scene entered actively. Delegates going to Geneva, of course, will probably have brought that in. But it didn't affect so much the work of the UNESOB, as such. The whole idea of regional cooperation was an ever-present one, with the Arab League trying to be the motor there, but very unsuccessfully. The North-South dimension, as such, did not during my time really very much enter the work of the Beirut office. I don't think so.

TGW: Did the Beirut office then participate? You mentioned de Seynes.

PB: Yes. This is where de Seynes took a very bold step because right from the beginning he decided that the director of the Beirut office should participate in all activities, including meetings, of the executive-secretaries of the economic commissions. He half-jokingly, but very warmly, always referred to me as the "quasi-executive-secretary for the Middle East." This is how I was projected into a circle that was for me quite unusual. Those people were ASG's (assistant-secretaries-general) and USG's (under-secretaries-general), and here I was sitting as a P-5 and then D-1, but participating in activities at a level which was quite different from the one corresponding to my grade. This was part of the anomaly of the situation which we had created in the Middle East.

TGW: Was there as much concern with turf amongst regional commissions as there is among agencies in the ACC (Administrative Committee on Coordination)? Or is the turf literally so different that there is less jealousy, less tension, less conflict among the various players?

PB: I sat in those meetings for almost three years, and I have never been aware of tensions of that nature. I think each one had a very clear realm of activity, and was respecting the others. No, I think the problem of turf among the economic commissions didn't arise at all because each one had a fairly clearly determined mandate. The only problem I can think of concerned Middle East activities. Julia Henderson had been organizing seminars for Arab states which were held either in Beirut, Cairo, or the Maghreb. They were bringing all Arab states together to discuss problems in the social field, community development, social welfare, housing, building, and planning. Then when UNESOB was created, what would we do with those seminars which represented a well-established approach to technical cooperation?

I was instructed to go and consult Gardiner in Addis Ababa about it, and ask him how he saw the future of our relationship. That was again a very instructive moment in my career because Gardiner received me very courteously, but he just would not answer my question at all. As a matter of fact, he made it very clear that he felt I should never have come to him and raised the issue. He was, of course, squeezed. If he were to agree for the Arab seminars to continue with Maghreb participation, the Africans would accuse him of sapping African unity. If he were to suggest that these seminars be dropped, the Arabs would accuse him of undermining the Arabs' desire to work together.

That was, for me, the experience of an unresolved issue that had to remain unresolved and be left to the whims of the course of events as they would unfold. Julia Henderson also more

than once reminded me that the obsession one has to solve problems can be sometimes very prejudicial to the way you carry your work as an administrator. You have to accept that there are some issues that you have to live with, and that an obsession to solve issues can be very negative.

TGW: In the work in Beirut, what was the importance of regional inequalities, or disparities in income, in different kinds of political systems? How were these handled? I don't know quite which adjective we should use to describe the region, but it is certainly not amongst the most "evolved" politically in the early 1960s.

PB: It really did not much affect the work of the office. A regional office had been set up because the Arabs wanted to have what everybody else had. But it was not an office which worked on an integration of the region. We were working individually with the various countries. Obviously, our working with Saudi Arabia was different from our working with Jordan. But the fact that those were completely different countries in terms of the level of resources did not really affect our work. Our economists were able to put together a story of the economic situation of the Middle East by weaving together the information we had about the various countries. But it was not an office which, at the time, had an active role in regional cooperation. It was an office which was serving the various individual countries in the region. As a matter of fact, it would be interesting to hear from somebody who has lived the experience whether ESCWA has been able to do differently. I am not sure it has. But I don't know.

TGW: How did you deal with the role of women in these societies, and in the office?

PB: The role of women?

TGW: Yes. Or the non-role?

PB: I suppose, at the time already, by background and everything I had lived, I was pro-women. Then, my first boss, in my early years at the UN, was a woman, Julia Henderson. She

was an absolutely splendid leader. I learned a lot from her wisdom and had for her unreserved respect and admiration. This helped erase in me whatever remnant of *machismo* might have subsisted in the cultural background of a Swiss lawyer. But I don't think the gender issue entered our work, really, at the time. It was the mid-1960s, you realize. At that time, it was only emerging at some points. I have no recollection that we would have given ourselves particular attention to that. It was not an issue that we faced.

TGW: Actually, now that we are on that topic, when do you think that really the role of gender switched from being a non-issue to being on the front burner in UN discussions? We had the conference on women in 1975. The role of women had certainly come out in western countries, earlier. But when did this become an international issue, something that you could not write a report without considering, or do a development program without considering? When did this become a mainstream issue?

PB: I cannot tell you when it became mainstream, but I can tell you when it became important in my professional life. In UNCTAD we were very insensitive to the issue at the time. I know that it has changed. I have former colleagues who are now in charge of the problem of the role of women, in the Secretariat and in general. But during my work in UNCTAD, both before I went to Nairobi and afterwards up to 1980, UNCTAD was brandmarked for being an awful organization because we had so few women on board. We had already the flak of it all. But I don't think we did much worry about it.

But when I moved to Venezuela as resident coordinator, then of course the UNDP (UN Development Programme) was very much involved in this issue. What would you do to further the role of women in development, and in the programs, and everywhere? I remember once having to remind Morse's group that I was, after all, serving in a county where there were five

women as ministers of government. Therefore, Venezuela was not a country which was particularly ill-placed in terms of the role of women in politics.

So for me it was 1981 when I moved to Venezuela. This was because of the circumstances of my having been in UNCTAD in a milieu which had not as yet developed its sensitivity to the issue. But we were always reminded that we were really bad boys because we didn't have any women beyond P-5, or whatever the line was at the time.

TGW: Why don't we now switch gears and move to UNCTAD, where you spent a large portion of time?

PB: From 1965 partly, 1966 full-time up to 1980, with two interruptions. There was one in 1973 for nine months as the interim head of the International Trade Centre (ITC), and then with Maurice Strong in Nairobi from 1973 to 1975.

TGW: I actually want to speak about the environment, but let's set that aside. Let's just spend probably today and part of tomorrow on UNCTAD. Could you evaluate UNCTAD's contribution to the world of ideas, both its approaches to development and to international cooperation more generally? What do you think it has contributed? What is the legacy, so to speak?

PB: Its legacy—well, it is a coffin, essentially. But it is a coffin full of remarkable ideas which at some point might have to be dug back from oblivion. I always say that I am waiting for my grandchildren to hear someday that there is a center and a periphery in the world, and develop an economic theory which would be based on that basic fact of life. The contribution of UNCTAD has been an absolutely remarkable, brilliant, alternative approach to the management of human relations through the management of economic relations among countries. That was

only half of the story, of course, because the other half of the story is what happens within the countries.

I am now going at random, but I should mention, in terms of Prebisch's ideas, that one is too often oblivious that Prebisch was very conscious of the fact that whatever he was doing in UNCTAD could be only half of the story because there was another half that was as important, which was what was happening for development at the national level. But his point was a very articulate one, that he had received a mandate to look at one part of things, and that other part was not part of his mandate. So he was trying to do well the job with which he had been entrusted.

But this being said, he never failed to remind us that there was for development another level of responsibility, which was the national responsibility. It was a very searching problem for UNCTAD. I remember one day, at the height of the best days of UNCTAD, my making the nasty remark that while Karl Marx had said that religion was the opium of the people, we certainly had to be careful that UNCTAD did not become the opium of the ruling classes in developing countries. Not all my colleagues found it funny. But I had very strong feelings at times that we were so much nurturing our approach to the external dimension of development, that it was becoming a sort of easy topic for the governments of the developing countries to concentrate on, and in the process neglect their basic responsibility, which was to handle the problem of development at the national level.

But to answer your question, I think that UNCTAD has really set a model of an alternative organization of the world economy, which has been a very important intellectual contribution. Now the model has been shelved, basically, which is just a fact of life of the world in which we live now.

TGW: What is that model, and where did the pieces come from?

PB: The model is one of reorganizing of the international economic relations on an acknowledgement that formal equality is not doing justice to the principle of equality among nations; that equality among unequals breeds injustice; and that you have to correct economic relations in order to instill equality at a real level of content and not in a purely, formal way. It was built fundamentally on the old saying of Lacordaire, in the nineteenth century that "Between the rich and the poor, it is freedom that oppresses, and justice that sets free."

It is a fundamental element of the philosophy that you cannot handle relations among people who are placed in an unequal position in their relationship through principles of freedom of trade and activity in general. This entails legal adjustments. And, of course, interference in the freedom of trade. In other words, in a sense, it is a socialization of the international economy. But one never used the word in UNCTAD because it was one of those red flags. There were enough red flags around that we didn't want to talk about that. We talked about regulation.

TGW: What is the origin of this big idea, or the bits and pieces of it? Where did it come from?

PB: For all I know, those are ideas which have been essentially developed in Latin America. Why Latin America? Because Latin America was a region where the problem of the inequality of sovereign states was already present at the time of the Havana conference (Conference on Trade and Employment) in 1947. Other continents saw an emergence to independence which allowed for the play of sovereign equality to start working in the 1950s or in the 1960s. But Latin America was faced with this problem right from the beginning. San Francisco (UN Conference on International Organization) was attended by twenty Latin

American countries. They were already there. I have said more than once, in the teaching which I have been doing since retirement, that I did not make the assertion that there was more brain in Latin America than anywhere else. But the circumstances of Latin America did lead to that kind of analysis earlier than would have happened in other parts of the world because of the political circumstances of the continent, and the economic circumstances of the continent. I do think that a good part of that thinking has come from the South, from Latin America specifically.

TGW: You worked for three secretaries-general. What was effective and ineffective about Raúl Prebisch, Manuel Perez-Guerrero, and Gamani Corea, particularly in terms of bringing out new approaches and new ideas?

PB: I shall never write my memoirs, and this is why I am at ease to talk about them. I have only headings for some chapters. My years with Prebisch would be called, "The Time of Prophecy." My years with Perez-Guerrero would be called "The Time of Diplomacy." And my years with Corea I am not quite decided as yet. I am trying to catch a word that would convey wisdom, and reflection, observation. Some of the dynamics had gone. One had to see and measure more carefully what one was doing. Though we still had the Integrated Programme for Commodities (IPC), of course.

This is very rough, but in other words with Prebisch we were on the barricades, preaching first of all in the desert, and then that great expansion. It is something about which I would like to add a word. It is among my list of fascinating occurrences, the way in which the accident that the developing countries lost the battle to create UNCTAD as a specialist agency had the remarkably positive effect of transmitting from Geneva to New York the whole of the *problematique* of development. UNCTAD's reports to its parent body were the conveyor belt of the ideas that were discussed in Geneva. UNCTAD was a subsidiary of the General Assembly,

and therefore the Secretary-General as of 1965 could go on making speeches without speaking about health, or education, or agriculture, but he couldn't afford not to speak about trade because he had a responsibility for trade. If, by a fate of history, UNCTAD had been set up as a specialized agency, which is what many developing countries wanted, we would probably have remained much more isolated. The emergence of the problem of development as a major political problem in New York was largely the result of UNCTAD being a subsidiary of the General Assembly.

Prebisch sensed that right from the beginning. I can testify that Prebisch was never in favor of setting up UNCTAD as a specialized agency. He would only have considered it if we had succeeded in becoming the ITO (International Trade Organization). If the Havana failure had been corrected by setting up a world trade organization, then it would have made sense to have that independence. But as it became very soon evident that the developed countries would maintain GATT as a separate body, the whole idea was bust and Prebisch realized that it was much better to remain a subsidiary organ of the UN.

Whether he realized that in terms of the link with New York, the extent to which it would become a sort of a stream which would end up making the General Assembly rather than UNCTAD responsible for the North-South dialogue, that I don't know. But the effect has been there. And it has been dramatic. And not all my colleagues in UNCTAD have appreciated that. I had some colleagues in UNCTAD who regretted that the limelight of the drama on the frontline was escaping them, once it was transferred to New York. But this was the result of the accident of having avoided the setting up of UNCTAD as a specialized agency.

Prebisch was the prophet. That was the dynamics. Under Perez-Guerrero, it was already more nuanced in the sense that the machine had set. You have to realize that, in the first days of

UNCTAD, we had to fight on the question as to whether UNCTAD had a negotiating function at all. "UNCTAD is deliberative and GATT is normative" was the big formula propagated by the West at the time. We were helped on that score, of course, by the fact that we inherited all the commodity agreement negotiations, which had been ECOSOC's responsibility before 1965, and were transferred to UNCTAD. But the decision taken, in a meeting of OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) in Paris, by Group B countries, that they would not contest anymore that UNCTAD could be a negotiating body, was what they considered a very big concession made to UNCTAD.

When that battle was won, UNCTAD entered into a stage where there was, in a sense, more *sérénité*. Not that the fights would not be as hard as they had ever been, but it was within some agreed rules as to what could be the role of UNCTAD. This is how we moved from prophecy to diplomacy, if I may put it in those terms. Then, with Corea, we still had that very major negotiated attempt in the field of commodities—the Integrated Program of Commodities, about which incidentally he has written a book which I think many people unfortunately do not know enough. It doesn't have an active publisher.

TGW: Manchester University Press.

PB: Yes. *Taming the Markets*, it's called. Corea had a different style. It is difficult to talk about it. For my teaching after retirement, I did do quite a bit of work on cultural patterns in negotiating styles. Corea was a different kind of personality. That made a difference.

TGW: What were the best ideas, and what were a couple of the worst ideas to come out of the secretariat? Some people argue that the IPC may have been the worst idea because it occupied so much time and actually did not get off the ground. You could define "best" or "worst" a variety of ways, but how do you look back on this period?

PB: IPC, yes. It is very difficult for me to try to categorize initiatives as best or worst. IPC was a package. The holistic approach of UNCTAD to commodities obviously was daring. Yes, it was a bad idea from that point of view, that it had an extravagant view of what might be the possibilities. This idea of moving into negotiations on eighteen commodities, ten of which were susceptible to stocking, and moving in each case into a commodity agreement, was over-ambitious. But fundamentally, I think that the idea that you cannot leave commodities in the hands of national policies and the international market was a very sound one. I would refuse to say that this was among the worst ideas. Something had to be done about it. Today nothing is being done about it. And you see that the cost is enormous. It is not only the Ivory Coast cocoa growers. It is all over the world that the commodities field is in absolute shambles.

What was wrong about the idea was probably its overly ambitious approach. But here again, what has happened to the whole of the UNCTAD program has been that the countervailing forces which have dismantled it, have just been, in terms of power politics, more successful than the positive forces which wanted to promote it. I don't see it as—I said "coffin," but I don't think that we have in UNCTAD a cemetery of bad ideas, which have to be buried. I think we have there ideas which have been the victim of a power struggle, which has imposed different ideas on the world than these which were then promoted.

In terms of commodities, in terms of the field of shipping—the field of shipping has been a fascinating one from the point of view of international cooperation. I know it is not part of the tracing of ideas, but let's digress for a moment. Why should shipping be discussed in UNCTAD when you have an IMO (International Maritime Organization) in London? This was, again, very typical of what happened across the board. As long as shipping economics was kept away from the multilateral dialogue, everything was fine. Developing countries in London were told that

they were in a technical organization dealing with the technical aspects of shipping, but that the economics of shipping had nothing to do with the mandate of the organization.

Then, when UNCTAD wanted to start talking about shipping as an element of international trade, of course London became interested. But then it was too late. Some of the fiercest discussions in UNCTAD were in the field of shipping. Now things have evolved. Is it reasonable to suggest, for instance, that our work on the Code of Conduct for Liner Conferences, or Multi-Modal Transport, was to be so quickly overtaken by technological development that we should have foreseen that? I don't know. Liner conferences in the 1960s were a very important way by which international trade by sea was being handled. So I suppose it was logical to try to move into getting a better deal for developing countries in that respect. What happens is that now, twenty-five years later, liner conferences carry just a very small parcel of trade which has taken different shape.

There is an element of obsolescence in some aspects of UNCTAD's work which is due to technological development. In other words, some ideas have dried up because of the circumstances. Could we then say that those were bad ideas because we should have foreseen that? I don't know. But this doesn't, of course, affect the mainstream of what UNCTAD was trying to do.

TGW: In describing your time in Santiago, you mentioned that the ECLA secretariat was ideological. How would you characterize the UNCTAD secretariat?

PB: About the same. With good exceptions that were planted there by the personnel office, I think it was a secretariat which had, on the whole, a firm conviction of the necessity of a serious overhaul of international economic relations, and was prepared to accept regulation as an important element of the way in which we should organize international economic life.

TGW: It strikes me that, in fact, the UN system and the people who work in it are profoundly Keynesian, across the board. But I think this may create certain problems for the production of ideas, in relationship to political correctness. You mentioned—and I will throw this out here—that, within the secretariat, there were certain subjects that had to be kept at arm's length, even if they occasionally came up: the role of national policies in the development process, and I would argue the role of the market. So it seems to me that there is a positive side for the production of ideas from having a fervor, a dedication, a particular slant. But if it also moves into political correctness, where certain things are off the table. This is not a good development for the production of ideas.

PB: I would agree with that. Of course, off the table were other things that were very important in the game. You realize that, up to the time of UNCTAD, oil economics or shipping economics were not even touched in the UN. The UN was able to produce reports on the world economic situation for years without mentioning shipping or oil economics, which were very important aspects of it. So, that problem of the gaps, of the blanks, is real. And indeed, it brings about distortions.

Prebisch's view on national development policies was an easy way out, in a sense. He said, "It is important, but it is not my responsibility." But do you think that he should have projected himself also into that? He would have then been accused of encroaching on everybody else's flowerbeds. I can imagine the reaction if UNCTAD had started at some point in the late 60s to think that they had to deal with the problem of national policies for development. There was a division of work, there. But I told you my story of the opium of the ruling classes. I certainly was among those who were conscious of the danger which was inherent in the way in

which we were concentrating on the external dimension of development and capturing so much attention to the detriment of the other side.

TGW: I wondered whether also, in terms of developing new ideas and new norms, the victory was not somewhat pyrrhic, in terms of having negotiations placed in UNCTAD. The negotiations actually didn't go very far, but an enormous amount of energy went in that direction. I wondered, if one is arguing that UNCTAD had a comparative advantage in the production of new ideas, maybe doing no negotiations, which is actually probably the present situation, might have been a better thing in the 1960s and 1970s. What do you think about that?

PB: I think there was, in UNCTAD, a great illusion. There was, at some point, a feeling that the negotiating power generated politically by developing countries working together might amount to a power that could transcend the economic situation and have an influence on the outcome. And, of course, the first oil crisis in 1973 was in this regard very dramatic. But it was also perniciously deceptive because it gave an illusion which could not be sustained by further developments. The history of why that didn't work would still deserve a serious study.

Commodity power, for a while, was really such a tangible illusion. After all, it did work with oil. But it motivated people to lose sight of the big wall ahead. They felt that they could erode that wall, and they couldn't.

TGW: But in retrospect, do you think that the euphoria around the 1973 oil price hike in the special session of the General Assembly, the NIEO (New International Economic Order), was this a plus or a minus for international relations? Within a very short time, this whole thing was stood on its head. But was it an important moment?

PB: I am glad I lived it. I think it was a very exciting period. But, of course, now I am taking a very biased position and I will tell you why. I still occasionally meet some staff

members who are surviving in the UNCTAD secretariat by doing what they are doing today as opposed to what we were doing long ago. And they have a tendency to justify themselves by debasing the past. Today their line is, "We did it wrong, but now we are on the right track and will do it well." This revisionism saddens me. My reaction is, "We tried. We failed. But I don't think that we were wrong in trying."

It is very difficult to know. But depending on how things evolve I can visualize a point, way ahead in history, where some people might look at that period, might contemplate what happened in those fifteen years from 1965 to 1980, up to the collapse of the dialogue, and probe whether there are not from that experience ideas which will have to be reverted to. I am very conscious that it has been twenty years—since 1980—that we have the Washington consensus calling the shots. And I think that the demonstration has still to be made that they are doing better than what we tried to do in the 1970s, and that they will succeed in organizing the planet along the lines that we all want to have it organized. Let's give them another fifteen or twenty years. They had twenty years already. And the indicators of those twenty years are not such that you can very happily discard an alternative model and try to put all your stack on the present approach. So I would answer your question by saying that I am very glad that those years are on record. We might need to look at them again at some point, if the alternative doesn't work. And I insist, I don't think that we have any reason to be too optimistic as to the proposition that the alternative is working.

TGW: What about the dynamics that resulted from that moment? What is the relative utility for the world of ideas of confrontation—which is what you certainly would describe that period as about—versus accommodation in the subsequent period? Is one of these better or worse, or are they just different strokes for different folks?

PB: I suppose they are different strokes. I wouldn't wish to put a hierarchy on that. A failed confrontation leaves you always with some bitter taste, but it is also the way in which you might have had to put a point across, even if you were not able to carry it. Therefore, I have been suspicious enough of the call for consensus at all levels of our activities not to wish to discard confrontation as a useful element for the production and advancement of ideas.

TGW: Hegel would probably agree. How about a couple of "what-ifs" for that period? It seems to me that there were certain bridges that were not built, or were partially built. One of them was by the like-minded countries, in terms of trying to reach out in two directions. The other "what-if," I think, would be linked to measures for NOPEC (Non-Oil Exporting Countries). So what would have happened without a debt crisis in developing countries which ended up obviously borrowing a whole lot to pay for their oil imports? What do you think about these two what-ifs? Were there opportunities missed?

PB: You mean if the like-minded had been able to develop a sort of middle ground? We probably would have gone ahead. They were certainly distant from the two poles. I think the subsequent events, by toppling the whole thing in the Thatcher-Reagan era, have shown how much we missed the Like-Minded. A successful Like-Minded movement might have avoided as violent a backlash as we have had in the 1980s and after. That is a possibility.

Now the question of the Non-Oil Exporting Countries—if we had done more for them, would it have changed the solidarity of the group of developing countries? Would there have been more solidarity if they had been helped, or, on the contrary, would they have seen that they had their own stake in the game and kept even more their distance from the more militant view? I don't know how it might have worked. But it didn't.

TGW: One thing you said earlier jogged my memory, which was that in 1962, the original idea was an ITO or an anti-GATT. This quickly became an impossibility, so we established a permanent conference, which was not a specialized agency but a subsidiary body. Subsequently, a couple of proposals came up. One was, like UNIDO (UN Industrial Development Organization), "why not make it a specialized agency?" And the other one would have been the opposite direction, "Let's have a Third World secretariat. Let's move away from universal participation." Were either of these ideas taken seriously, or should they have been?

PB: Some remarks on that. UNIDO, of course, today bitterly pays the price of having become a specialized agency. If they were a department of the Secretariat, their budget could not be slashed as much as it is being slashed in Vienna now. There were lots of ideas in 1962 or 1963. I don't think anybody seriously wanted to dismantle GATT as such. It was recognized that it was a system which had dynamized very actively the trade among developed countries. Some of the ideas which were informally floated were that you would have a world trade organization that might encompass different systems. You would have a GATT working for the trade among developed countries, and you would have parallelly an alternative system which would reflect the modifications of the rules of the game that would be necessary for regulating trade between developed and developing countries.

But there was turmoil up until the conference itself. Some developed countries still hoped that we could avoid creating anything. They were prepared to offer a serious overhaul of the GATT, which hopefully would be sufficient in their mind to take care of the pressure of the developing countries. But that was too late. It wouldn't really click at that time.

When teaching about negotiations, I was describing the outcome as a very interesting compromise, where both parties had to abandon quite a bit of their stake in the matter. The

developed countries did not want anything to be created, and something was created. That was a half defeat. But their half victory was that they maintained GATT completely insulated from that new creation. And the developing countries, which wanted their own organization, got something. But what they got was also only half a pie because it was a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly which was leaving GATT outside.

The dynamics were such that I have no scenario which would show me how things could have moved differently at the time. It was quite clear that you would get into that dichotomy, as there were two basically ideological positions. You spoke of an "ideological" secretariat at UNCTAD. Yes. But GATT was as highly ideological a secretariat as the one that we had. On the other hand, I had a very positive personal experience of the relations between the heads of those two secretariats—I accompanied Prebisch a number of times in meetings with Wyndham White. The big joke of the town at the time was that you couldn't invite those two guys at the same time to dinner because they were not talking to each other. It was not true at all. They were two gentlemen, and they had very courteous relations. But they were in completely different positions. Prebisch was in a very difficult position at the helm of a very complex organization, part of whose membership didn't even want it to have been created in the first place. And here was Wyndham White who was very much in control, and had the full confidence of his constituency.

I illustrated that in some notes that I made about life experience by referring to a meeting which we had once. We had suggested to Prebisch to complain to Wyndham White because the representative of a large developing country had, in GATT, made a proposal which was walking straight into the path of UNCTAD. It was a blatant duplication of the work of UNCTAD. Prebisch paid a visit to Wyndham White and indicated that this was not the way in which he had

thought they would maintain what was obviously to be a complex relationship. It was a complex relationship but they had to live with it. I was there, sitting with Prebisch, and Wyndham White was sitting alone at the table. After pausing for a moment, he said, "Forget about it. I'll ask him to drop it."

This, more than thirty years later, is still vivid in my memory. It was such a glaring indication that those two officials were in so completely different positions. People were seeing them as heads of quasi-agencies—GATT was not an agency either—relating to each other as equals. It was not true. They were in two completely asymmetric situations. One could say about a delegate of India, of all countries, "Forget about it, I'll ask him to drop it." It would have been inconceivable for the other to have taken that line, even with one of his friends in the Latin American group.

This is what has to make us very wary of generalizations about the texture of the international organizations. Behind the faces you see at the table, you have to measure what is sustaining the actors in the position in which they are.

TGW: What about the proposal to turn UNCTAD into a Third World secretariat, which a number of people have called for?

PB: Really? The idea of turning UNCTAD into a Third World secretariat I never heard of, as such. UNCTAD was, after all, an organ of the General Assembly. The idea of setting up a secretariat for the Third World has been the Loch Ness monster of the Group of 77 almost since its inception. The closest we ever got to it was 1971. I think I have in my papers at home—though I am discarding many papers because I don't want to leave to my children too much work—I have in my papers the first outline of a constitution for a secretariat for the 77.

In 1971, Perez-Guerrero was interested in that idea. But one of the first things he said was that secretariat would have to be located in Geneva. You cannot put it in the Third World because it is just *la quadrature du cercle*. You have three regions, and basically two major functions—the headquarters and the secretary-general. So you would never have those two fitting the three regions. Therefore, you would have to locate it in the North in order to be able to function.

There have been lots of attempts all through. Nineteen seventy-one was probably the closest we ever got to an actual draft of a constitution for it. It never clicked. It never gelled, somehow, which is a big tragedy for the Group of 77, or for that matter for the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), never having been able to develop their own intellectual capacity. They have been missing that all the time. And unfortunately, the South Centre doesn't seem to be able to do it as much as we had hoped. The latest hope in that series of attempts to produce ideas is the South Centre. It still is today. But it doesn't look too promising. It doesn't work well. It is not clear as yet.

TGW: What actually happened in 1971 to stimulate this constitution, or the idea about drawing up a constitution for NAM?

PB: Well, some people in the UNCTAD secretariat who were servicing the Group of 77 had that ambivalence about having the secretariat put its resources at the disposal of the Group of 77. I think it was in the secretariat that the initiative was taken to try and see what could be the elements of a separate think tank. But the question of financing the whole operation was in itself so big that it didn't ever lead to the point of "where shall we put the secretariat, and who shall be the secretary-general." There was a sort of *prima facie* impossibility due to the fact that governments were not prepared to put up the money to make it work.

This, of course, leads me to another question which is the accusation of which UNCTAD has been the object of for a long time, about being a sort of a hidden secretariat for the Third World, and therefore distorting the neutrality to which the UN Secretariat is bound. On that, I have very strong views.

TGW: That actually was my next question, so please.

PB: I have very strong views about that. I have been a witness to the scene. Once Prebisch was asked by a nasty western journalist in a press conference, "Mr. Prebisch, isn't it so that many of the papers you produce are reflecting positions which favor the developing countries? And isn't it so that really, in a sense, you are not neutral in that game? You are assisting them?" Prebisch remained very calm, but obviously he was somewhat tense. He said, "Look, I received a mandate from the world community, and that mandate is to find accommodations to the world economy which will give a better participation to the developing countries. By definition of my mandate, I am looking for arrangements which will favor the position of the developing countries. This is what the mandate of UNCTAD is about. Now, I have to be impartial towards all parties in the United Nations community, and we are striving to be impartial at all times. But as for neutrality, we are not more neutral to development than WHO (World Health Organization) is neutral to malaria."

That has remained a famous statement to dispose of the issue. An organization set up with the very mandate to look into a better adjustment of the international economic relations could not be expected to be neutral in regard to those international economic relations, unless it forfeited its mandate. But that was a message which we really never could put across in western public opinion, or in western diplomacy. Part of the destruction of UNCTAD was orchestrated by harping on that chord.

TGW: Besides our three secretaries-general, who are the most memorable other—I don't want to say "characters," but other—staff members of UNCTAD, particularly in terms of thinkers? Who had the best minds in this period?

PB: Two names come immediately—Sidney Dell and Vladik Malinowski.

TGW: I can't interview either of them.

PB: No. Krishnamurti, who is in Ohio now. Surendra Patel, of course. Some people came and went. Jack Stone. Is he still alive?

TGW: Jack just telephoned me last week.

PB: Jack Stone is the father of the least developed countries concept. In terms of development of ideas, this is a fellow who has made a major contribution. That idea sticks. Much of UNCTAD's wash is gone, but the concept of the least developed countries is still there. And Jack Stone really is the father of that. Who else, really? Arsenis, of course. Is he still minister?

TGW: Yes.

PB: Then the second generation, but it is not the same. I don't know whether you would get very much out of them.

TGW: This is the beginning of tape three. It is Wednesday, 10 January 2001. We are once again at the Palais des Nations. What, in your view, is the legacy of the group system that was really begun by the preparations for UNCTAD? How did this have an impact on the development dialogue, the North-South dialogue? And what is its utility today?

PB: I think the legacy is still there to see because in spite of all the criticisms which were formulated about the group system, it shows a fantastic resilience. It is still very often alive and kicking, in spite of its very bad reputation in many quarters, including in many respects among

countries which participate in the Group of 77. We speak of the group system in general. Of course, this idea of negotiating not through representatives of government, but through spokesmen for collectivities of governments, started with the developing countries. The group system was created through the reaction which this frontal presentation of their position provoked in the debate leading to UNCTAD I. The other group of countries, the western countries, decided that they, too, had to try to present a united front. In that sense, it may be said that the group system was imposed on the international community by the developing countries, by the discipline which they exercised in working together.

Now, you ask what its legacy is. Do you mean to say what effect it has had on the whole of the process? It is a most debated and controversial issue. The pros and cons of the group system have been largely debated. In western circles, the criticisms have been very harsh at the general level of the principle of negotiating by groups. Among developing countries, the criticism has been much more pointed, in relation to specific instances where it was demonstrated that some countries would have certainly done better if they had been able to negotiate more freely.

The balance of what the group system has meant in the period during which I was active on the scene is a very difficult one to draw. There have been very harsh remarks made about it. The one that I liked to quote in my teaching, because it was very colorful, was a word by Ambassador Blanckart, a Swiss who ended up secretary of state. He was the president of the Trade and Development Board at some point. He was speaking of "*le rituel polarisant de la négociation par groupes menant au déperissement du dialogue collectif,*" the polarizing ritual of group negotiating leading to the decay of the collective debate. It was very nice and colorful. It is the most poetic thing ever said about the group system negatively.

The negatives of the group system, or the difficulties it represented, are very well known and documented. What I have often missed in the debate is an objective assessment of what might have been the positive aspects of it. I am thinking now not at the general political level of the motivation behind working together. Maybe something should be said about that. After all, one of the big criticisms of the group system has been that the Group of 77 was creating an artificial coalition in a world which was basically multi-polar. You have, among developing countries, an exceedingly great variety of countries. You have the NICs (Newly Industrialized Countries) and the least developed countries. That is one divide. Another divide is between those who have oil and those who don't have oil. You have divides which are based geographically on continents—the divides between Latin America, Africa, and Asia. You have divides which have their roots in history—the former colonies which have French influence, or British influence.

You have a number of fractures in that group, obviously. What I think is important to realize is that what motivated the developing countries to work together was not a commonality of economic interests at the level of the actual problems in those various situations, from the NICs to the least developed countries. It was a common, very strong feeling that the structure of the world economy was such that it needed to be adjusted in order to ensure a better participation of the developing countries in the benefits of international economic activity. In other words, there was a very strong feeling that it was only by acting together on an objective which was very clear and shared by all of them that they could obtain what they were seeking.

I thus think that the idea of criticizing the concept of the group system on the basis of the differences in the stage of economic development of the participants is missing the basic point. The basic point was that, whatever those differences were, they had one element in common,

which was a shared vision of the necessity to adjust the rules of the game of international economics in order to get a better position for their own economies, at whatever level that was. And there was a very strong feeling that this could only be achieved collectively. After all, the concepts with which they were dealing—let it be the price of cocoa, let it be freight rates in a maritime conference, let it be the rules that were operating in the GATT—those were elements which were collective in essence. No country—the strongest or the weakest—would be able to individually act on those parameters. In other words, developing countries were facing parameters which had been set up and developed and were administered collectively. Therefore, it was only by acting collectively that they could have a positive impact on changing those parameters. This was the basic rationale of the group system, one could say.

Now, more concretely, what did it mean? First of all, transparency. The problem of transparency is now blowing into our face in the way in which WTO (World Trade Organization) operates. One has to recognize that the group system had a fundamental merit, which was that of being open to everybody and making everybody at least see what was happening. So this problem, which is a difficult one in all circumstances, was the object of a positive approach from the group system. Next, one has very often quoted negotiations which went badly or got paralyzed because of the group system. I think it is also fair to recognize that there were certain instances where the group system had a catalytic effect in sorting out the positions of the parties, and therefore had a positive effect on the negotiation. In the courses which I have been giving after retirement, I had at least two quotes which I remember very well. One was from Johan Kaufman, and the other one was from Chadwick Alger, both of whom made a general positive statement to the effect that the discipline exercised within the groups was a factor which could contribute to a positive result of the negotiation. Whereas if one had left the

individual countries push their own positions without having that filtering, it would probably have been in certain cases simply impossible to conduct the negotiation.

I remember one specific testimony on that in UNCTAD in 1979 and 1980. Sanchez Muñoz was president of the conference which negotiated the Set of Rules on Restrictive Business Practices. I remember him telling us very openly and clearly that without the discipline of the group system, it never would have been possible to achieve what was achieved in that conference. It was only through the tightening of the position of the parties, on both sides, through the channel of the group system, that he had got to a point where there could be a formula worked out which would reflect a consensus. As far as he was concerned, he was very positive about the material effect of the group system on the conduct of the negotiation.

Another element which is very often neglected by the critics is the educational process which is involved in the group system. You have to realize that through the group system, you have dozens and dozens, literally, of negotiators in a large conference, which are at least exposed to the basic issues of the agenda of the meeting. They are, maybe passively, but somehow involved in what is being negotiated, which is not the case in negotiations which are conducted on a multi-individual basis.

So, it is transparency. It is efficiency. It is an educational process. There is also in the group system an element of protection, which some countries will tell you has not been negligible. The fact of the acceptance of group discipline has more than once been, for a developing country, the opportunity to resist pressure of which it was the object on the part of an interlocutor in a dialogue. It was a way, at some points in the heat of the 1960s and 1970s, for a developing country to say to a large, developed country partner, “Oh, yes, of course I would be very happy to go along with you, but group discipline forces me to remain in that channel of the

negotiation." And this has been a sort of a protection which some small developing countries have been very happy to be able to use when they were faced with pressure from a large donor, for instance, or from a country which had a great political influence on them.

So this is the other side of the balance of the group system. The negative side has been so much documented that I don't have to add to it. But I think that the positive side is very often being neglected. What I note with fascination is that, in spite of all the weight of the negative criticisms, of which I am quite aware, the group system somehow has had fantastic resilience. There must be something basic, in the guts of this society of developing countries, which makes them go on thinking that they have still something to gain by trying to develop a political power by working together, to compensate their economic weakness as a negotiating partner.

TGW: What about the others? How coherent were they?

PB: The other groups had the same problems as the developing countries. There was an amusing game in UNCTAD, which we played at times, when waiting was becoming long in the corridors—which group makes the other group wait longer? Who is in the better position to move to the negotiating table? Of course, the general count of that would be that there was much more time spent by the developed market economy countries waiting for the 77 to make up their mind, than vice versa. But we have also had situations where the reverse was true because the Group B was a very complex group, too. You had the European Union (EU), which had to have a position before they moved to the group. The like-minded were sometimes also trying to develop their own focus within the Group B. Then you had, of course, the towering United States of America and nothing could be done without having them on board. Therefore, the complexity of the conflicts of interests in the Group of 77, which was manifested in a variety of ways, was matched, at least to some extent, by the complexity of the necessity of working

together on the part of the Group B, the developed market economy countries, to prepare for the negotiation.

In terms of that complexity, in the Group of 77 one of the major divides, or lines of tension, was commodities versus manufactures. There was the feeling among Africans that UNCTAD was paying too much attention to what was going on in the GATT, the regulation of international trade in goods, as opposed to the field of commodities. They often felt that the Latin Americans were more interested in changing the GATT and making it amenable to their needs than they would be in strengthening the regulation of commodity trade which would serve more the African countries. Very often you could see how the Group of 77 would try to balance the interests of their members by manipulating those two dimensions of trade in manufactures versus trade in commodities.

This is where, of course, the concept of the global strategy of Raúl Prebisch, in his 1968 report to the second UNCTAD conference, was very important. The idea was that you had to work on a very broad front, that A, B, and C would all work toward the total objective, knowing very well that some of the actions taken would be beneficial to A, but they would be backed by B and C because they knew A would also back them on other issues which were of interest to them. Global strategy means that because of the variety of interests in the group, you cannot agree on a program which would be other than very diversified and catering to diversified interests. Global strategy is the discipline that should consist in accepting that everybody backs the whole package because everybody will find the part of his interests represented in the package.

TGW: What about Group D, and the famous category of one, China?

PB: Group D was there. It exercised its discipline. But it was rarely a very active initiator of any move in the UNCTAD game. They were systematically casting themselves close to the developing countries, giving their support to the Group of 77. But they also had their own mechanism and their own problems. It was very interesting, before an UNCTAD conference, for instance, to see those delegates from Geneva leaving for Warsaw, Prague, Moscow, or wherever the COMECON (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) was meeting because they were also preparing very carefully their positions in their own mechanism. The delegates from the B countries were all going to Paris, to OECD. The socialist countries were going to wherever the COMECON was meeting at the time. And the developing countries didn't have any place to go.

This was the famous "unequal dialogue." To the unequal exchange corresponded an unequal dialogue because developing countries did not have their instrument to prepare for the conference. Hence, these conferences of the Group of 77, which were each time meeting two or three months in advance of an UNCTAD conference, very much prepared and supported by the UNCTAD secretariat because there was no parallel for developing countries to what OECD was doing for the B Group, and the COMECON was doing for the D Group. Later, the collapse of the Soviet Union was heralded and preceded by the disaggregation of the D Group. But this is another story.

TGW: What was China's role in all of this? Was there ever any difference between China and the G-77?

PB: China was for a long time, a lone, quasi-group. Should I here mention the circumstances under which we had China coming into the system? I did write about it occasionally. The unseating of the former Chinese government took place in the General Assembly in December 1971, and it was in March 1972, at UNCTAD III in Santiago, that we

had the first major UN event in which China decided to participate. There was great excitement in the UNCTAD secretariat: "The Chinese are coming." We were very proud to be the pioneer in accommodating them in a major UN conference. When they came, they were approached and told how the system was working, that there was the practice of negotiation by groups. And being an Asian country, we presumed that they might wish to sit with the Asian countries. After internal consultations which took a few days, the Chinese came back and said, "Thank you very much. We understand the system as it works. We are a developing country in Asia, but we are really a socialist developing country, and therefore it is not a brand which fits in the Asian group with the other countries. On the other hand, we are very much interested in participating in negotiations in a fully fledged capacity."

And the extraordinary decision was taken that in view of its specific political-economic-demographic weight, the Chinese would be given the privileged position of sitting in negotiating groups in their own right. In other words, it would be given the quality of a quasi-group in the negotiating system. Right there and then, at UNCTAD III, we started to set up the negotiating room by having the three groups, B, D, and 77, and then China next to them having its own individual voice. They kept that individual position for a very long time. Certainly as long as I was associated with the process, China did always maintain a certain distance even from the developing countries. They were very often backing their position, but they were not associating themselves with the presentation of resolutions and with declarations.

In the 1990s, as far as I can judge from a distance, I noticed that more and more, China associates itself in the presentation of papers and draft resolutions with the developing countries. The formula "developing countries and China," or "Group of 77 and China," has become a sort of a standard formula which you see more and more now in UN documents. This is a relatively

recent phenomenon. It is probably in the last ten years or so that it has happened. Throughout the late 1960s, 1970s, and I think most of the 1980s, the Chinese had maintained a certain distance within the constellation of the group system.

Incidentally, it is an interesting oddity—I don't know what this has to do with the flow of ideas in the UN, but it certainly has much to do with its functioning that the whole group system has never been reflected in the law of the United Nations. I remember a time when we were not able to issue a paper for a meeting which would say, "Presented by the Group of 77," because the Group of 77 had no legal existence in the law of the United Nations. So the paper would have to say "presented by," and we would have to list the individual names of the members of the group. If you go back to the 1960s, you will see that all documents presented by the developing countries gave a ten or twelve line list of all the countries that were the sponsors of that resolution because the Group of 77 as such had no power to act. Today references to the group appear in the sponsorship of documents. From the point of view of the evolution of the legal construct, it is interesting to note that there has been a partial reception of the group system in the practice of the United Nations. But in constitutional terms the absence of universality in the groups has been an obstacle which up to this day has prevented the United Nations from giving full legal content to the group system.

TGW: To what extent was there any competition, or complementarity, between the G-77, on the one hand, and the Non-Aligned Movement, on the other? Was there a division of labor? Or, over time, did they become indistinguishable?

PB: As far as I can remember, when I was in the game, there was a sort of assumed division of labor, by which the Group of 77 was essentially an economically motivated movement, whereas the NAM was essentially a political movement. I think that this distinction

was assumed to be there, though I don't know that the two groups ever formalized this. We just knew that the NAM was there. There was not an entirely congruent membership, either. There were some discrepancies between the two groups. It was just assumed, in UNCTAD, that the NAM was there, but they were in another line of business. They were a politically motivated movement, with political objectives. The 77 had its own dynamics, which were geared to the problems of the international economy.

TGW: What about another kind of competition, which grew up in the mid-1970s? On the one hand, the General Assembly got into the business of defining the "mother of all international changes," the New International Economic Order, and also then a smaller version in CIEC (Conference for International Economic Cooperation) in Paris. Were these seen within the secretariat as helping move things along, or as a distraction for UNCTAD?

PB: It is interesting that we should mention CIEC at this stage because I think the very idea, concept, and creation of CIEC was a direct result of the criticism of the group system. I think there was a very direct link there. CIEC was an attempt at doing business among serious people, and not leaving it to the rabble of 150 countries in the United Nations. "Let's talk among serious people, let's get together among interlocutors which can have a certain weight in the negotiation." In all fairness, one also has to project the dimension of energy in what led to CIEC, as you know. CIEC was not just taking away from UNCTAD part of its business and trying to do it better among nineteen countries in Paris. It was also the follow-up of what had started, I think, by Giscard d'Estaing's suggestion of an energy conference after the first oil shock. The developing countries said, "Well, a conference is okay. But let's talk about everything, not only about energy." And this led to CIEC.

I don't think we ever, in UNCTAD—I say we because I was there most of the time, except for my escapade with UNEP (UN Environment Programme) which is another story—felt that CIEC was a very helpful way of pushing ahead the agenda of UNCTAD. UNCTAD was quite involved in CIEC. We had colleagues going to Paris regularly. On the whole, the feeling we had, which I think was very much confirmed by the result of the conference, was that when it came to the basic elements of the North-South dialogue, it was not the composition of the negotiating partners which was making the difference. Selectivity in participation did not allow for the issues to be advanced in a noticeably better way than when everybody negotiated in New York or in UNCTAD. There is the famous word, which I think was quoted in one of the papers I gave you, of that delegate coming back to Geneva a Friday night fed up and saying, *"J'en ai assez de négocier avec les 77 par 19 interposés*." ("I am fed up with negotiating with the 77 through 19 interposed.")

For me, I have certainly been strongly reinforced by CIEC in my feeling that the factors in the North-South dialogue which prevented success could be not ascribed to the form of the negotiation, but were substantive because the idea of doing it differently, as CIEC did, did not make the difference. In a sense, this has reinforced my reservations about the scathing critiques of the group system. Those critiques are well and good, but I am very skeptical about the contention that if we hadn't had the group system but a better negotiating mechanism, we would have achieved dramatically better results. I just don't believe that. I think that the basic nut to crack—which never was cracked—was substantive. It was a problem of political will in the negotiation, and not a problem of the form of the mechanisms which were used for negotiating.

TGW: You mentioned energy and oil, yesterday, as one of the main contributing factors to the temporary euphoria of the G-77 and the NIEO in the middle of the 1970s. Is there any

irony in the fact that the process that was begun by oil, most people would say was also ended by oil in Cancun (Summit on Global Negotiations)? And the end of the North-South dialogue was really brought upon by the extraordinary indebtedness of other developing countries—brought upon by the initial and then the second oil price increase?

PB: Well, it is an interesting way of putting a beginning and an end to the story. I probably have been too detached from the process through age and retirement to have reflected much on the idea that it would be the indebtedness of the developing countries which brought the failure of the North-South dialogue. I suppose it is not what you are saying, though. Is it?

TGW: No.

PB: I misunderstood you. The connection between the indebtedness and the failure of the dialogue to go on is one which is not clear in my mind. You say Cancun. I agree Cancun was a very resounding failure in terms of what it tried to achieve. But before that, I think that the special session of the General Assembly in 1980 is really what put an end to the dialogue. The presidential resolution that decided that the U.S. Treasury should have its voice prevail over that of the State Department in the American delegation in negotiating the package which would have launched the process, is really what for me marked the end of the attempt to launch a North-South dialogue. No one talked about it realistically any more afterwards.

TGW: Is there any advantage to talking about big approaches in international negotiations—resoundingly large things like the New International Economic Order—and then shorter-term, tactical changes or reactions? Is one of these a better strategy than another?

PB: I don't know about better strategy, but I would say that if you cannot move ahead on the big scene, you should certainly not neglect the small one. They both have their value. The idea of going ahead bit-by-bit on a manageable ground of negotiation is certainly a course which

one should embrace once one is certain that it is not possible to work on the whole package. But the complexity of the issues which we were facing in the 1960s and 1970s—the complexity of the UNCTAD agenda—was making it very tempting to take a holistic view. There is the famous word, which I also quoted in one of the papers I published, of the French delegate in the General Assembly who opposed the Charter on Economic Rights and Duties of States saying: "*Messieurs, on ne codifie pas une révolution*." ("Gentlemen, one doesn't codify a revolution.") In other words, he was aware of what was going on. The attempt, which proved to have been completely illusory, a hullabaloo from the point of view of the realism of the situation, was that of undertaking a major overhaul of the system, a global approach. And it failed.

TGW: Yesterday, you mentioned at lunch something that I thought might be useful putting into the conversation—namely, the notion of collective economic security. When did that come up?

PB: This was an interesting idea. I think it was a sort of *feu de paille*, as we say in French, or a flare. But in any history of the ideas at the United Nations, I would hate to see it being omitted. In effect, it may probably be said that collective economic security was an attempt in 1973, on the part of ECOSOC, to revitalize its role by taking in hand the big problems that were being discussed both in UNCTAD and in the Second Committee of the General Assembly. As a matter of fact, last night I dug out the references to the papers issued in ECOSOC on the question. I want to pass them on to you. There are just three documents, which are very interesting. They are offering an approach to developing a concept of collective economic security which clearly shows ECOSOC really taking over, under its Charter responsibility, in a very comprehensive and meaningful way, the whole process which was then scattered between UNCTAD and the General Assembly.

The idea was that collective economic security would have four major ingredients: assessment, emergency, equity, and regulation. You realize, just when you look at those four words, what it meant in terms of taking over the agenda of the NIEO. Now, why in ECOSOC? Because ECOSOC had been marginalized. ECOSOC was not *dans la course*. They were not in the game at the time and they tried to get in. There was a presentation in a first paper by the Secretary-General. Then there was a second paper which was conveying some of the reactions that had been expressed. Then, one year later, in 1974, you have another paper about it, which elaborates on the subject. I lost track of what happened to that idea after that.

I think it has been, from the point of view of institutional history, a very interesting episode because it was one of those last ditch attempts on the part of ECOSOC to recuperate its role and its position in United Nations affairs. ECOSOC has been miserably ill-treated by governments. It is fascinating to see how we could go through the 1960s and 1970s without almost ever ECOSOC having a role to play about the process. This points to a question which again may be too remote from the history of ideas to be of very much relevance to your research. It relates to the question of the basic diffidence which developing countries developed very soon in the game against bodies with limited membership. I think it is a major characteristic which will have to be studied one day in the history of the United Nations, that bodies with limited memberships have given rise to constant suspicion on the part of developing countries. This might have been incidentally a side effect of the group system.

Its strong sense of democracy, participation, and transparency played heavily against ECOSOC because when a problem was being discussed in ECOSOC, a country which was not there knew that it had the Second Committee of the General Assembly where he would have its

voice. This is why the debate in the constitutional bodies, which was important—after all, UNCTAD was not a Charter body—was tilted toward the assembly and not towards ECOSOC.

UNCTAD itself had this problem. We started with bodies of limited membership. We had a board of fifty-five, and then sixty-eight members, and commissions of fixed numbers. Then fairly soon in the game those structures were dismantled. It was decided that we would have the principle of self-election first to the board, then at another conference to the committees of the board. In other words, openness and full participation was of the essence of the mechanism which the developing countries wanted to have at their disposal. The developed countries and the socialist countries went along with that approach. And I think that you can trace the whole tragedy of the way in which ECOSOC missed its role as a Charter organ to this reality which emerged after decolonization, that developing countries were just not prepared to entrust their interests to bodies in which there would not be full participation.

TGW: Even though the United States had an enormous influence on international organizations, it seems to me—to follow up on this point—that the thing that wasn't taken was the two-chambers idea. It seems to me that for large countries it makes no sense to be put on the same footing as an island of 10,000 to 50,000 people. And for the island of 50,000 people, obviously they would like to be on the same footing as the big country. My sense is that over time, we will have to move to something in which there is—even if there is universal participation—some kind of weighting or differentiated voice to reflect ill balances of power. Even Slovenia would agree that they are not quite the same weight as Italy. Does that make any sense?

PB: What one has to realize is that this entails the revision of the concept of sovereignty. This is fundamentally what it is all about. Of course, I think that we are really rather fast moving

in that direction. What the formulas will be, I don't know. It is anybody's guess at the present time. But I couldn't agree more with you. It is not a tenable position in the long run. But the concept of sovereignty is, today still, for a large number—not only of small countries but also of large countries, such an important protective tool which was given to them by the Charter, that it will be a long process to find the acceptable formulas that will solve the problem to which you refer.

TGW: I wanted to spend a minute on 1972 and 1973, when you were acting head of the International Trade Centre (ITC), a curious institution in that you have the GATT, and the anti-GATT, and the bridge between. What is this institution like, and what kind of contribution has it made to the world of ideas?

PB: I am glad you mentioned that because it is an institution which is fairly close to my heart. It has a very interesting and very clearly explainable history, though it looks at first sight like another piece of duplication and overlapping. Its origin can be traced in exceedingly clear terms. With the movement towards convening UNCTAD I, there was considerable restlessness in GATT also. Developing countries which were moving in the General Assembly towards convening UNCTAD I were also starting to exercise considerable pressure within GATT. They were already by then a majority as many developing countries after independence had acceded to GATT.

It was part of the genius of Wyndham White to design a solution. He took the line that he could not really give in to the pressure of developing countries by trying to induce a process of changing the rules of the game. The GATT was there. The General Agreement was very clear. Its interpretative decisions had been successively built up as a body of jurisprudence. But seeing the mounting pressure of developing countries, he took the genial step to say, "Look, we cannot

change the rules of the game for you. But we want to do something for you. We can help you to be better traders on the market. We shall set up a program of export promotion, and we thus shall assist you through technical cooperation in being a better agent in the world economic community by being better able to sell your products."

This is how he developed in GATT a program of trade promotion. It was meant to be, in a sense, a *fiche de consolation*. It was something given to the developing countries while saying, "If you have problems with the rules of the game, you discuss that in UNCTAD. We cannot change GATT. But we can do something for you. We can develop a program of export promotion which will make you a better agent in the world trading community." This is how the center developed as a GATT institution.

Now, after UNCTAD was created, within its program on the development of trade in manufactures, of course export promotion fairly early loomed pretty large. After all, to assist developing countries in selling their goods was something which was so obviously needed and so obviously requested by developing countries. So here you had the two bodies, the two quasi-institutions moving in the same direction, in a field, assisting developing countries to be better agents as salesmen on the market, which did not involve any of the ideology which was pulling the two bodies apart.

GATT and UNCTAD were two obviously ideologically very different worlds. The GATT had its rules of the game, with equality, nondiscrimination, reciprocity—all those concepts that were being very much challenged in UNCTAD. But export promotion, which was attended by both bodies, was not ideologically tainted either in GATT or in UNCTAD. It was a sort of neutral activity. And despite all that is said about the tensions that were existing in Geneva because of the ideological divide, it was the wisdom of the governments to realize that

here was an activity in either organization which should be isolated from the basic struggle that was taking place, and put under a single roof as something that should be allowed to flourish and develop without interference from either the one or the other of its ideological masters. This is the origin of the International Trade Centre.

In other words, it had nothing to do with bad management, or with any personal ambition on the part of somebody to carve out another mechanism for himself. It was the net result of a rational vision that there was, in that difficult situation, at least a certain sector of activity which deserved to be shielded from the pressures of ideology and allowed to develop on its own. This, of course, at the beginning requested lots of *doigté*. I was very much involved in ITC not only through my short year as director of the center, but throughout, as the UNCTAD representative on the joint UNCTAD-GATT mechanism giving guidance to the center. It was incredibly delicate. I remember that in some of our first joint meetings with GATT, the whole question as to whether ITC could develop a program of export incentives raised eyebrows with our GATT colleagues. Incentives, of course, enter into the catalogue of the interferences with the freedom of trade.

There was thus at the beginning some element of reticence on the part of GATT about expanding the work of the International Trade Centre. Here Olivier Long, who was the successor of Wyndham White, played a fairly major role. There was on his part a sort of detachment. I think Olivier Long was fairly strongly of the view that the business of GATT was essentially to manage the rules of the game. His was the setting which was to concentrate its attention on the legal infrastructure for international trade. I wouldn't say that he lost interest in the center, but he probably felt that it was a burden which, for GATT, was not very central to what should be its preoccupations.

It affected me personally, and this is one of those little things about which I am proud, in terms of the independence of my career. I was a man from UNCTAD. I had been in Prebisch's cabinet there. But it was Olivier Long, the director-general of GATT, who suggested to Perez-Guerrero that I be appointed acting director of the center for some time when Victor Santiapillai was called back by his government for a year. In other words, it was the GATT director-general who suggested that the UNCTAD official be the one to assume temporary leadership of the center. I always have retrospectively thought fondly of that as a sort of reconnaissance of my impartiality of view—not neutrality, but impartiality! He had seen the way I had behaved on the Geneva scene, on which I had been one of those UNCTAD bad guys right from the beginning of the game.

Because of my designation also, I think one can say there was some "detachment" of GATT, though they would probably deny it. They would not accept the word. But the slight distance which GATT took from the center allowed it to move in all kinds of directions. It has now a fairly good program of work which, if you were looking at it with a magnifying glass, you would find probably encroaching on some of the principles of the GATT. Somehow it has been allowed to develop as a wild flower, just sitting there, loved by everybody—loved by the developed countries because they were able to show that they were doing something for the developing countries, after all. "The rules may be hard on you—the Haberler report and all that. But look, we are good guys. We give you support in that direction." UNCTAD, of course, was pushing in that direction because it was very much part of its mandate. This is how the center was allowed to have a very unique autonomous place in an otherwise very complex, and ideologically very charged, context.

TGW: During this period, a number of tools developed, which some people think are important and others less important. So I just wondered how you look back on the use of Development Decades—the first, second, third, and fourth—or special years or decades. There are special decades on water, special decades on women, the year of the child. Are these public relations devices of utility in the spread of ideas, the spread of new norms, or mobilization of public opinion?

PB: I think yes. My answer would be definitely positive. I am quite aware of the last one, as we just entered the year of the volunteers. I know everything about it because Robert Leigh was my deputy in Venezuela and he is now the representative in New York of the volunteers outfit in Bonn. And he just was at my home. Therefore, I heard everything about the December ceremony at the General Assembly to launch the year of the volunteers.

There is an element of hit and miss in those years, I suppose. They don't catch the attention of everybody as the sponsors would like to. But I certainly would not discard them as additional tools which are important to try to put the United Nations on the map. Now the Development Decades was, of course, a much more serious—no, it would be unfair to the "years" to say serious—but much more elaborate system by which one would assess every ten years what was the state of the union in terms of development objectives and perspectives. You must find them very useful reference points for your work on the evolution of ideas, don't you?

TGW: They are snapshots at ten year periods, so it does give you a sense about how things have evolved. And there is a project in Norway called the CANDID Project (Creation, Adoption, Negation, Distortion of Ideas of Development), which is about the creation of certain ideas and their development. They are tracking, in a quantitative way, how many times words appear. And for them, the Development Decades are important, along with annual reports of

various institutions. But it seems to me that one tires of Development Decades. I am unaware that there is a fifth one. I was actually not very aware that there was a fourth one. I was really quite aware, when I got into the business, of the first one, and then the formulation of the second one. They were critical events and people took them seriously. I think we get tired of devices over time.

PB: Yes. I must admit that I lost track of them, also. Are they still going on every ten years?

TGW: There is no fifth one, although there are rumblings about doing something about it.

PB: This refers to my remark yesterday. The *UN Bulletin*, then the *UN Monthly Chronicle*, then the *UN Chronicle*, has become so bad, coming out every three months, or not even coming out at all. I think I haven't received a number now for quite a few months. The information is not circulating anymore. The first decade was taken seriously as an exercise. I remember Gamani Corea was quite involved in it. What accounts for its disbanding, if it is being disbanded, would be another interesting insight into what is happening in the UN in the economic field in general. I know the Committee on Development Planning (CDP) was sort of pushed out, also. Does it still exist now?

TGW: Yes. But it doesn't have the same statures in my view, as it did in the early years.

PB: It is rather serious to the extent to which you link this to the shift of the economic scene towards Washington. Would that be part of the syndrome? Would it be a result of recognition of the famous division of labor: let organizations that do it best do what they can do best, and therefore economic issues should be left to the Washington institutions and the UN should concentrate on security, political, social, and humanitarian affairs? There is testimony

that at some point in the early 1990s, this was an idea that was taking quite a bit of hold in the United Nations itself. As a matter of fact, I think Boutros-Ghali himself is not completely exempt from having had that vision at the time he took office. It is for me an absolutely pernicious distortion of the construction which was put together at the end of the war. First of all, there is something very wrong about the idea that you can discuss ideas in money-giving forums. When you talk in a money-giving forum, you have a natural tendency to say what the money-givers want to hear. I didn't invent that formula. I read it somewhere, but it struck me as being very sound. The idea that the Washington institutions could be a place where ideas about the fate or the direction of the world economy could be discussed objectively, is an aberration to me. But, of course, that tendency has been very marked. I think the decay of the Development Decades would be one more indication of the way in which the tendency has already taken hold.

TGW: Actually, that raises a question that has come out in other interviews. In UNCTAD or any other international institution, when you reach out to ask for an independent look—a consultant doing an evaluation, a consultant contributing to the Trade and Development Board, a consultant working on any issue—are you really going after someone who is going to tell you what you wanted to hear anyway? It is a permutation on the theme of do you speak independently, or is there a relationship between the piper and the tune and the person paying for it? What is your thought about the use of consultants—academics or others—in the system, and the extent to which they can bring in a breath of fresh air, or whether they are basically an extension of the orthodoxy within an institution?

PB: I am trying to think of my experience. My gut reaction is that they have been systematically, as you say, an extension of orthodoxy. They have been used to beef up your position or the direction in which you wanted your thoughts to go. You might have needed

assistance for that. You cannot do it all by yourself. But, indeed, I can hardly remember any situation where you would have had hired a consultant as a countervailing force in a debate. It might have happened, possibly. I don't know. But no, I think this is an extension of the intellectual capacity of whoever has thoughts to put together. He or she will use consultants to assist in this process. I don't know that consultants have been ever conceived as being shock creators. There is one who created a shock, of course. That was Sir Robert Jackson, with his capacity study (*A Study of the Capacity of the UN Development System*). But I don't think that was intended. In terms of hiring a consultant, and then being aghast at what comes out of the consultancy, it happened then. But I suppose this was a mistake. I think the people who hired Sir Robert were very sorry afterwards. Therefore, it doesn't corroborate an alternative view of the usual role of consultants.

TGW: How does a new idea actually then come in, in the sense that one is sitting in the academy, or sitting in a think tank with an idea that clashes with either UNCTAD orthodoxy or World Bank orthodoxy? Do you try to sell your idea to the institution that is most likely to consume it?

PB: Or influence the other one in your direction. You wouldn't be hired by the institution to change its mind. But you certainly can put pressure on it from the outside to try to change its mind. I think the work of Sidney Dell in the Group of 24 (G-24) in Washington—and Helleiner has been doing that since—is an example of an activity which has, as its function, the exercise of countervailing influence on the major orthodox trends.

TGW: That is interesting. Actually, Gerry has just resigned from the G-24. I interviewed him about a month ago. *Global Governance* will be publishing his Prebisch Lecture in the next issue. While we are on devices, could we switch to your period with UNEP? First of

all, tell me how you got there. But then I would like to use it as a lens through which we can discuss some other tools. How did you get to UNEP?

PB: I got to UNEP through Maurice Strong one day approaching me and asking me whether I would be interested in joining his team. He had heard of me. I cannot even tell you how. I don't think he ever told me how my name had come to his horizon. But he approached me. I was on an ITC assignment at the time. He told me he would be setting up an environment fund, and he knew that I had been involved through my work in administrative matters. I was a lawyer. There were many reasons where he saw that I could be an asset on his team. All this took place at the Auberge de Pregny. I had never met Strong before. We had lunch there and he sort of sold me the job. One of his basic selling lines was that headquarters would be in Geneva, which he thought would be very attractive to me because my kids were studying here, and so forth. I mention that because I remember his coming back after the decision in the General Assembly to put UNEP in Nairobi. I am sure he wondered whether I would still stick to the job, knowing that I would have to go to Africa. I did, of course. I had already been moving enough. I was not at a stage where I would have to decide on the course of my career according to geographic location. So I told him, "Well, if it is Nairobi, it is too bad. It will give me lots of complications, but of course I am with you." I got to UNEP because somehow Maurice Strong thought I could be useful on his team. But I never knew why.

TGW: What about Strong? What was he like?

PB: A very attractive personality. Bubbling with ideas. Very interesting, because of the parallels and contrasts with Raúl Prebisch. I was close to those two people. I was never at their level and incidentally, I knew I would never be. Maybe I should tell you that. When I first thought I would like to join the United Nations, I was still working on my doctoral thesis with

Maurice Bourquin, who was a Belgian international lawyer. He was a towering figure in the field of international law. I went to him, and said, "I would like to work for the United Nations." He told me, "But Monsieur Berthoud, "*vous savez, les grandes carrières internationales sont des carrières nationales."* ("Big international careers are national careers.") I have been quite aware of that through all my career. You can move up, doing a certain job, but the top jobs generally are being filled by people from the outside. I knew that right from the beginning. And it helped me a lot to be very happy with my career without having that striving to try and reach a political level. My relations with the Swiss have been very loose. I never had any backing from that point of view.

Anyway, back to Strong. Very bubbling with ideas. Very dynamic. What struck me with Strong, because I had been all through my career in public service, very much imbued with the public service, was the way in which he tried to project what he was seeing as the merits of the private sector into the management of a United Nations operation. That, for me, has been a striking thing. For instance, I heard Strong saying, in a staff meeting with all his senior staff, "It is a very important matter. It is so important that we might even hire somebody from the outside to look at it." How devastating that statement could be for the ASG's and the D-2's he had hired to assist him in the team, I think he never realized. "The world is the limit. If I have a problem, I will phone the guy who knows most about it. If he cannot do it, I will ask him who is the next guy who knows most about it." That kind of openness and flexibility was a major strand of the way in which he operated. And I am not passing judgement as to the merits of it. I just note that it is a sharp contrast to the traditional bureaucratic approach. I mean bureaucracy in the positive sense. This is one thing which Philippe de Seynes taught me, not to take the word "bureaucracy"

in vain, not to consider it a derogatory word. Strong was really at the other extreme. But it was tough on the staff who were not coming from that school.

He also would not mind in an administrative structure to leave some uncertainties, some vagueness about who should be doing what. You would go to him and say, "But look, it is not very clear. You really want me to get in a fight with that guy? Why don't you tell him what he should do and me what I should do." And Strong would say, "A little fight from time to time is very good to know who is really the stronger." It was another private business approach, which is so completely incongruous in the civil service that it was at times difficult to adjust to it. But it made, of course, for a fascinating experience. The man is exceedingly bright, very generous. He is a man who is bubbling with ideas all the time. He has been very successful financially in bubbling with his ideas, rather proud of the fact that he has had no formal education beyond the middle level, a self-made man. That is what I would say about him. He was a hyperactive man. He left UNEP at the time one thought he would start building it up because of the fantastic dynamism which he has in himself.

TGW: I am going to use this to come up to the present day, but then to go back to UNEP in the sense that one of the Secretary-General's new notions—which has gotten a lot of flack and a lot of support—builds a little on Strong's notions. That is, the so-called Global Compact in which somehow intergovernmental organizations are not the only act in town. Even for intergovernmental organizations, you need to make better use of the private sector—private for-profit, and private non-profit sector NGOs (nongovernmental organizations). What kind of idea is this? Is this good, bad, or indifferent?

PB: What can I tell you? I am probably too old to be able to relate to this new trend. I have not been in the strand of the evolution towards this worldview of the United Nations. I

think I told you enough about my past and my work in UNCTAD. And I suppose you have sensed the fact that my convictions have not much evolved. I have still enough of that past in me to be rather guarded about the idea that one should open our gates to forces which are pursuing their own private interests in a way in which they might end up occupying too much space. I have the very strong conviction that in principle, as in a regulatory system of society, socialism is superior to liberalism. Let me put it squarely. I think that it is the function of government in society to ensure a decent place for everybody in that society. When you open too much the mechanism to forces which cater for private interests, you may frustrate that function. I have difficulty with the idea that the sum total of private economic rationality of all the powers will amount to a global rationality that will be conducive to the best organization of society. But this is all at a distance. I think there is *un temps pour tout*—it is past for me to pass judgement on what is going on now. But if you ask me, I am sometimes concerned about the direction in which we are heading.

TGW: Let's go back to UNEP. One of the things that we are trying to figure out is the importance of global ad hoc conferences in either the production, the massaging, or the reproduction of ideas. And UNEP, obviously, grew from the Stockholm conference (UN Conference on the Human Environment), which was the first of these major institutions in the 1970s. Obviously UNCTAD was a perpetual conference, but it was a similar kind of event. What is the utility of these major public events organized by the United Nations in terms of ideas?

PB: They are eminently useful in putting ideas on the map, and sometimes institutions on the map to cater for those ideas. I think Stockholm has had a very momentous impact on the place of environment in the vision one had of international cooperation. So I would say that

those events—they are big bangs, in a sense. They are big bangs on the sector in which they are organized. The normal process of deliberations, regular meetings of permanent bodies, would not be nearly as equipped to bring matters to the fore as those conferences are. I see them as important points of anchorage in the evolution of ideas. Public relations are very fundamental—awareness development. I wasn't in Stockholm, incidentally, nor was I in UNCTAD I, which is a paradox of my career. During the big bang, I was doing something else. And then after a conference, somebody would say, "Why don't you come and help me on that?" That was the case, again, for environment.

TGW: Once an idea is thrown out, publicity is given, and in the case of the environment, transformed slightly from basically conservation to being linked with development. Is it important that this idea then takes an institutional form? Is it important that it becomes "embedded," to the use the language of political scientists, as an institution? In this case, UNEP? Or is it more important that existing institutions pick up such an idea and "mainstream" it, to use another jargon term? Is there an advantage to one or the other, or do we need to do both?

PB: Of course, your question raises the whole problem of the structure of the United Nations system. In 1945, at San Francisco, it was felt that it would be very useful to stick to "functionalism," as they called it. They felt that it would be much more favorable for international cooperation if you were giving an institutional niche to every one of those sectors of activity. Now we are paying the price for it because we realize that life is not really susceptible to being put into niches. And we have been struggling ever since with a problem which we have not yet resolved. Therefore, my answer to your question would be that if it were conceivable that a body could absorb those various strands, and administer them within a sort of

a coherent whole, that would be a much better approach. But I think that the international society today, as a reflection of national society—that is an important point I have very strong views about—is not susceptible to have developed that. Charter-wise, the receptacle of all those strands would have been ECOSOC. And now see what has happened to ECOSOC.

We thus have a serious problem. But if you had left the environment to be handled by the existing mechanism in New York, I don't think we would have made the progress which we have made in this field—whatever that progress is, which is another matter.

TGW: Is there a certain irony that many of the ideas pushing conferences, and the pressure for such conferences, and for changes in norms, often come from outside the UN system—from nongovernmental organizations—if one looks back at human rights, or if one looks back at the environment? And one of Strong's insights was to try to bring in as many of these folks as possible. How important are NGOs to the past and the future production of ideas, and advocacy for ideas—even those that are primarily discussed within the United Nations?

PB: I think you have sort of answered the question. I think they are very important. The cases you mentioned are very clear. Both human rights and the environment are maybe two master cases. But it happens in other fields. This is a whole strand of human life. What governments bring to the negotiating table is nurtured by currents that have been captured at home and have forged the opinion of that government. Obviously this activity outside the structure of governments is a very important contribution to the evolution of ideas, and of the structures in which ideas are being discussed. I think there is no question about that.

TGW: Yes, I misbehaved. My Columbia colleagues would have told me that I am not supposed to ask the question the way I did, that I should seek your views. So I will try to behave now. One of the other vectors, or vehicles, that we have been looking at is the use of eminent

commissions, of their blockbuster reports. I wondered whether you could reflect a little bit about two. One is the Pearson report (*Partners in Development*), which is the first of these, in 1969 on development, when you were director of technical cooperation and therefore eminently involved in the development business. Or, in 1971, the *Limits to Growth* report, which fed into the Stockholm process. To what extent are these kinds of reports important to either the production of ideas, or their dissemination?

PB: I think they are very important. The fact that we mention them at this stage shows that they have not been forgotten. They are other landmarks, signposts along the road. They are of a different nature from the global conferences, but they have in a sense a function which is not dissimilar. The problem is that a Copenhagen conference (World Summit on Social Development) has a sort of huge public opinion immediacy, whereas an eminent persons report doesn't get quite the same visibility, the same breadth of attention. But I certainly think that the Pearson Commission, the Brundtland Commission, the South Commission reports, are all landmarks which are ways of tracing the road. I follow my little path on that road, but that road is really *jalonné.* It is marked by various important milestones. Those might be world conferences, or they might also be documents which make a bang, like those reports.

TGW: Which of these make bigger bangs—both immediate and long-term—than others? And is there an explanation?

PB: I have been fascinated by the way in which the *Limits to Growth* report sort of—

TGW: Evaporated?

PB: Fizzled out. We talk about it today, so is it not that it has disappeared. But somehow I think there has been a turning of backs on various strong messages they were sending. Pearson, indeed, at the time was an important landmark. Then the next one was the

Brandt Commission. For me, personally, in my own activity, the Brandt Commission report (*North-South: A Programme for Survival*) was possibly the most important of those landmarks. I don't know what the date was of the Brandt Commission.

TGW: 1981.

PB: Yes. So it is interesting that it was really when I started to reflect on what had been my experience, and to share that experience, thanks to UNITAR (UN Institute for Training and Research), through teaching. I found in the Brandt Commission report much intellectual support in the clarification of my thoughts about my experience and about what I wanted to share. We had two audiences for those courses. One was newly arrived delegates in Geneva. Many of them had just come from bilateral diplomacy. I was spending a full week with them, telling them how to move around in that multilateral community. The other group was students. We worked closely with the Institut International d'Administration Publique in Paris. They were bringing African francophone students to Geneva. I also went to Paris a number of times to teach there, to try to familiarize future diplomats with the multilateral setting.

In that context, of all those reports, the Brandt report is the one which I found most useful, a penetrating analysis of the system as a whole and especially of the role of the Bretton Woods institutions. If I were going back to my notes, which I have now on my shelf, I would probably find references to that report more than to any other, either before or afterwards.

TGW: The fact that that was published when Mrs. Thatcher and Mr. Reagan arrived didn't help its reception?

PB: Yes, I'm quite sure. I can imagine that.

TGW: So it seems timing is an important variable here.

PB: Indeed.

TGW: After UNCTAD, you go back to the field. Was it attractive to go back to Caracas?

PB: Could we still have a word on UNEP?

TGW: By all means. Sorry.

PB: One of the things which fascinated me in UNEP—and it is very much relevant to the evolution of ideas—was the way in which (I had noticed it already from the outside) developing countries were brought into this venture of the environment. It is quite on the record that developing countries had been very skeptical about the whole idea of having a UN conference on the environment. This was something for the rich countries. "Why don't you do that in OECD? That's your problem, not ours." Now the genius of Maurice Strong was to go to them and tell them, "Look, poverty is your worst pollution, so why don't you come and join. We are talking about the same thing." And it worked.

But the consequence of that was, of course, that UNEP started with a very broad agenda. It was environment and human settlements. I know that very well because I was there as director of the Environment Fund. We inherited a broad sector of activity under the heading of "human settlements," which was really what developing countries largely considered as their share in what UNEP was to be doing in the field of environment in a broad sense of the word. I mention it because it was interesting from the point of view—in a non-negative sense—of the manipulation of ideas, the idea of the broader meaning of the concept. And it didn't last very long, which was also very interesting. The fact that in 1977 already, the Vancouver conference disassociated human settlements from the environment and created for that field a separate unit, was a surprising move, and I have always been fascinated about the forces which were at play in that game. First of all, there was a very clear broadening of the concept by bringing human

settlements within the realm of UNEP as an important element of an environmental program, and then, five years later already, one saw that this was really not congruent and human settlements had to be detached, separated.

The game that took place is an exceedingly interesting one to analyze. The trend which was created by the Strong vision—poverty viewed as pollution—was expressed in the Cocoyoc Declaration. I don't know whether you have already interviewed Branislav Gosovic. He is the one who will tell you the whole Cocoyoc story. It is a fascinating tale about the clipping of wings of ideas within the UN system. The Cocoyoc Declaration was a revolutionary document which was endorsing the role and the stand of the New International Economic Order within the confines of the UNEP program. This took place under circumstances with which I was never quite familiar, but Branislav will tell you because he was very much involved in it.

I think Wassily Leontieff had been in Cocoyoc, and he had been co-signatory of this Declaration which provoked quite a scandal in Washington. Anyway, from what I know—and this is subject to confirmation by Branislav, who was one of the major actors—there was a very strong intervention on the part of the United States, to the effect that this was not at all a direction in which UNEP could go on churning its ideas. The consequence of this reaction, of the danger of having UNEP becoming another battlefield for the NIEO, was the Vancouver Conference and the dissociation of the human settlements program from the environmental program.

The whole process had one very interesting consequence which I think was a positive one. Up to that time, what we had had in the field of human settlements was that section called "Housing, Building, and Planning" in Julia Henderson's shop. It was one of the other sections when I worked Social Defense in New York. They were really very much an architects'

setting—housing, building, and planning. What came out of the process of that marriage and then divorce with the environment was a concept of human settlements which was much broader, encompassing land management, physical planning, infrastructure and services, finance and public participation. In other words, through that passage, we have been able to broaden very considerably a concept of housing, building, and planning into a much broader concept. But the way in which it has happened has been a rather unexpected one.

TGW: I am glad you decided to throw that into our conversation.

PB: It is very much an aspect of in the question of the evolution of ideas—that adoption of a broad concept and the rejection of that concept a very few years later for obvious political reasons. It is interesting both at the level of institutions and at the level of ideas.

TGW: I would still like to go to Caracas, now. What attracted you about going back to the field?

PB: The idea —it was a dream. I had been technical assistance consultant in Lebanon in 1956. I had served in political missions and in regional commissions. So about half of my time had been out of headquarters, if you speak of New York or Geneva. But the very job of resident representative was one which I had literally for twenty years always felt would be an experience that would really round out a United Nations career. Regret to have to leave the United Nations without having had that experience—maybe because I had been in the field in other capacities also—was always in the back of my mind. Depending on circumstances, I don't know whether I would have done it or not. Circumstances allowed for it, and the opening was there.

Brad Morse had been after me for a long time. I was, for a while, in a rather strange position in the UN system. I was head of technical cooperation in UNCTAD, but technical cooperation was not a mainstream of the UNCTAD mentality. I took the assignment at the time

Prebisch left UNCTAD. Apparently, as he left, he told his successor, Perez-Guerrero, "Berthoud wants to deal with technical cooperation, so let him do it. But use him also for other things." In other words, Prebisch didn't have the sense of technical cooperation being a major element in UNCTAD's concerns. Perez-Guerrero was quite different. He had been resrep in the Middle East. He had been executive-secretary of the TAB.

Because UNCTAD was in a sense at the time largely detached from technical cooperation, I had almost closer involvement with UNDP than with my own entity. UNDP was very interested in moving the field of trade because Brad Morse, being a remarkable political mind, sensed that there was a mainstream of development politics which was taking place with the NIEO, with the discussions in the Second Committee of the General Assembly, while his development program was a bit at the margin. He still had his governing council, but the main political action wasn't there; it was in the Second Committee and in UNCTAD. Therefore, he was very much interested in seeing how we could internalize trade in the UNDP program, and this brought me fairly close to him.

Then, of course, when it came to the creation of the resident coordinator system, there was a new game for Morse because he was accused of wanting to monopolize it by using only the resident representatives as coordinators. To counter that, Morse was very keen to get some senior staff from the agencies into the resident representative system, so that he could show clean hands and say, "It is not a club. I am open to others." And there were a number of senior people—Peter Könz from UNIDO; Jimenez from ILO (International Labour Organization)—who, at that time, had been D-1s or D-2s in agencies and were offered jobs as resident representatives.

I was on his list for that. He offered me first of all Bangladesh, which I turned down. Then he wanted me to go to Brazil, which I had turned down also. Later personal circumstances made me ready to take the job. Venezuela was opening, and I went to Venezuela. The basic motivation was really my desire of having yet another experience in my UN career, to round it up with having been a resrep. I was 59 years of age at that time, which was very late to take on a new job. But I still took it because I felt that with experience from the other assignments I had lived through that I could dare to take that step.

TGW: How would you characterize the changes in approach toward technical cooperation, from your first skirmishes with it in the 1950s, and certainly through the 1980s, or today? What were the big changes in approach?

PB: The big change was what some of us ironically call the "coming of age"—moving away from the technical assistance "*à papa*," to more mature relations with governments. As you know, the program started with very clear agency shares. We would respond to the needs of governments for specific activities, and there would be a sort of sharing the cake by which a certain proportion of resources would go to WHO for health, to FAO for agriculture, or to the UN for social affairs, and so on. It was a blow-by-blow approach. I suppose you could characterize the evolution as first a greater participation, and then entrusting the direction of the program, at least in a formal sense, to the governments receiving assistance. We moved progressively away from a paternalistic approach according to which there were for the agencies bad projects and good projects, and they would approve the good ones and reject the bad ones. That was a judgement which at the beginning was made at the center.

It is a very complicated history. You would have to fill a full book to write it. There was the creation of the Special Fund, a modest offspring of the SUNFED (Special UN Fund for

Economic Development) idea. You had technical cooperation, then the Special Fund which was financing larger pre-investment projects, but was still really in the realm of technical cooperation. Then came the big bang of the Jackson report, which was—this is what we call the coming of age of the system—the recognition that the governments should be the masters of what they would receive from the international community, and there would be an integrated view of the way in which those contributions would enter the national development program of each recipient country. We moved to a program approach to technical cooperation, as opposed to a project approach, and one which at least theoretically—I insist on that—would be very much in the hands of the government.

Then we moved into programming exercises. We had programming cycles. We would, for periods of five years, decide how much money would be allocated to each country. Programming remained practically very often in the hands of the resident representative and his team, but it was theoretically the program of the governments and was certainly vetted by the government itself. In other words, we had definitively moved away from the sort of arbitrariness by which good brains in New York and in the agencies were deciding what we should do and what we should not do.

Now, the shrinking of resources for UNDP, as far as I understand—I am talking in the air because I have not been following the situation in detail—has led again the UNDP to exercise a much stronger control of the fields in which money would be spent. In the 1970s, there was that opening. Governments would tell us where they wanted us to put the money. Now, we have so little money that governments cannot tell us just what they want. Money has to be put only in A, B, C, and D, which are the categories that the governing body of the UNDP designates, and this is again a shrinking of the freedom of the governments in deciding on access to international

resources. But the major problem, as I see it, for UNDP is that the proportion of the cost of the infrastructure to the volume of the services that can be delivered becomes so high that it puts a question mark on the validity of maintaining such a structure.

This raises quite another problem. I accepted the job in Venezuela, not really because of the Venezuelan program of technical cooperation. It was a very interesting one. I learned some very valuable lessons there. But I was attracted by Venezuela because it was quite a busy place at the time. It was a locomotive in the Group of 77. Perez-Guerrero was there. It was the seat of SELA (Sístema Económico Latin Americano), which at the time one felt might emerge as a think tank for Latin America parallel to CEPAL. It finally did not, but it was there. It was also the seat of CORFO, the financing corporation of the Andean Pact, which was in Caracas. Venezuela was involved in a very interesting experiment of ECDC (economic cooperation among developing countries). They were giving through the San José facility petroleum at cut rates to some Central American countries—what Chavez is doing now with Castro.

So there were a number of international activities in Caracas, which leads me to another consideration. I made the point that the infrastructure of UNDP is becoming incongruous in terms of the cost of the infrastructure in relation to the program. But that infrastructure, of course, has an untold function, which is very much broader than that of being just the agent of the UNDP. And we had to face that when, at some point, Paul Vinde in UNDP decided that he wanted to charge all the non-UNDP entities for all services which the UNDP field offices were giving to other agencies. It is not the way it went. As a matter of fact, Gabriel Valdez, who was the head of the Latin American bureau of UNDP for a while, told me once, with great amusement of a discussion he had with Waldheim. Waldheim was incensed, and said, "Look, you are the king in Latin America. You have ambassadors in every country. If something

happens there, they tell you right away. As Secretary-General, I have nobody to inform me about what is going on in the countries."

Waldheim was very upset at this question. Having been foreign minister, he was missing a major element, which was his network of ambassadors, whereas Valdez had one! UNDP was certainly, in Latin America—which I knew well, I had worked with them before—playing a much broader role than just administering the country programs. I was aware of all that, I had seen it functioning and I was interested in living it. This is my answer to your question.

TGW: What explains the significant shift in views from paternalistic to something else as the approach to technical cooperation? How did this come about, and why did it come about?

PB: I think it is linked to decolonization, and to self-assertion on the part of the developing countries. The consensus, which was the decision which changed the system after the Jackson report, was agreed in the summer of 1970. It was in the midst of the big offensive of the developing countries in UNCTAD. The group discipline had by then invaded the Governing Council of UNDP. I think this assertion that it was their program was part of this movement of the emergence of the developing countries as a major political force on the scene.

TGW: You mentioned everyone's favorite bull in the china shop, Sir Robert Jackson. Certain ideas came out of that report—the IPF (Indicative Planning Figure) and others. Why was everyone so angry at it?

PB: Well, Jackson was able to make some fairly sharp remarks. His report was very heavily criticized in what was then the IACB (Inter-Agency Coordination Board). It was the ACC for operational activities, chaired by Paul Hoffmann. The heads of agencies were there. There was really much criticism, and at one point I heard—I was in the room—Sir Robert

Jackson exasperated say, "It is generally said that people have the governments they deserve. It is also true that governments have the international organizations they deserve."

He ruffled the feathers of many people by being critical—to my mind rightly so—of what had been a paternalistic approach to development assistance. It is obvious that, up to that time, you had a brain trust in New York who basically were deciding what was good, and what was bad, approving what was good and rejecting what was bad. Those people—the Paul-Marc Henris and the Meyer Cohens of the day—were all upset at the criticism, which was motivated not by a personal pique, but by the way in which they ran the program. Their line of counter-attack was, "You will get into a mess because governments will ask you anything they want, and it might be a bad use of our money. We are responsible to the governments for the use of the money which is entrusted to the UNDP." In other words, their diffidence was a genuine distrust of the possible effects of the system proposed by Jackson. But this was, of course, very much linked with a pique, with the fact they had been described as having been little lords running their own fiefs.

TGW: That is the part of the report that links to some of your other work on coordination. The part of the report that I recall thinking never came close to being implemented was some kind of sensible centralization of efforts. What was the reaction amongst the readers in agencies to the notion that there actually should be a consolidated approach, because if he offended his UNDP employers, he didn't pick up any friends in the agencies?

PB: No, because this idea of our exercising judgement as to the way in which we can make best use of money put at our disposal to assist countries was a quite widespread thing. Jackson's approach disturbed lots of established little systems of management of UNDP money in agencies also. His idea was one of central control over the whole program. I don't know the

details of Jackson's life, and you cannot interview him anymore. But wasn't he, in 1946, one of those who, in Lake Success, had fought a battle because he wanted a much stronger central hand in the control of the system as a whole than was allowed by the governments at the time? I think that the shadow of that centralistic view—as opposed to the functionalism that had been decided—is what really made the agencies very reticent about him.

TGW: He was a quintessentially military man with the lack of understanding for creative incoherence.

PB: Yes, creative disorder was probably not part of his thought, I agree.

TGW: What was it like on the ground to observe the differences between bilateral approaches to technical assistance and capital assistance, and multilateral approaches to both? You might want to draw on your earlier experience in Peru, as well. What are the plusses and the minuses of each?

PB: That is a big question. The plusses of bilateral assistance are obvious: flexibility. The fact that it is very much the donor who decides what he can do, and how he will do it. The donor is in a very strong position to act, and has a very clear visibility of the results of what he is trying to achieve. The multilateral benefit I don't measure at the level of the individual country. I measure it at the level of the function of distributive justice which has been exercised by the UNDP, in the sense that it has been offering assistance to each and every member of the community. In a world where we would have only bilateral assistance, some countries would miss the boat entirely. I could think, if the whole game had been left in the hands of the bilaterals, that countries like Burma would never have received a penny of assistance. Myanmar is—I am not referring to the political situation—just an example. Some countries might have

been completely marginalized from any access to assistance, if it hadn't been for the United Nations.

In other words, there is a basic parameter of distributive justice which is exercised by the multilateral system. The bilaterals will not do that because they will just go to where they are interested in assisting. This is a fundamental function, in my vision, of equity in the world. I think that this, in itself, justifies multilateralism. Of course, it has a cost. It is very difficult because multilateralism is in a way blurring the process of the use of the money. I always say, when the FAO receives the Germans who want to give bilateral money, the Germans will say, "We have money for you, for what will it be?" FAO will say: "It will be for nutrition in countries A and B in Africa." It is clear. If you ask what will happen to your money when you put it in the UNDP kitty, you will be told, "it is part of a general effort." "Yes, but where does it go?" "Oh, it might go to various countries." "To do what?" "Oh, but it is not for us to decide." There are lots of screens in the use of multilateral money, which might sometimes discourage donors, unless they have a fairly good realization of the importance of the effort which the international community is making collectively.

There are of course other plusses in multilateral technical cooperation beyond the factor of distributive justice. Ever since the consensus of 1970, countries have in their relation with UNDP a sense of co-ownership in the program which allows them to see the cooperation modulated more flexibly than in a bilateral relationship. Above all, it is the accumulated knowledge worldwide of the donor agency that is available for tailoring the assistance to the needs of the recipient country.

TGW: This is the beginning of tape number four, on 10 January. What has been your experience with retirement, which has been a different kind of activity, and one again linked to the United Nations?

PB: My post-professional life has been very rewarding and exciting, I must say, in good part because I went on learning and experiencing. It was a privilege. I suppose it was a result of the fact that I have never had my career in one groove, but in a number of different settings. I was very privileged because people in different entities felt that they could still use my experience. Incidentally, I think this is one of the remarkable features of the United Nations. I know it irritates the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, but the use of retired persons in order to not let the whole of the accumulated institutional experience fade away is very useful. The Swiss are terrible on that. Once you reach 65 years of age, as an ambassador you are generally being literally dropped and it is finished out. An NGO might recruit you to do something, but professional life ends at that time.

The UN is not that way. And I suppose because of the constellation of what I had been involved in, I got to work on a number of fronts. In UNCTAD itself, I was back to work on evaluation and on some problems in the field of commodities. I was involved by the International Trade Centre in a number of interesting consultancies. And I did a lot of post-retirement work for UNDP. I carried out assignments in Brazil, Nicaragua, and Panama. I assisted the Latin American bureau in preparing documentation for regional resrep meetings. I worked for the Bureau of Arab States on the finalization of country programs, in Syria and in Jordan. I also went to Qatar on an exploratory mission. There was thus quite a bit of consulting activity which kept me reasonably busy, but not too much. The famous saying, "If you retire,

you are working all the time," has not been true for me. I never in all my activities worked more than between one third and half the time. I was by no means a full-time consultant.

Now, apart from this consultancy activity, I got involved with UNITAR in teaching. That was great fun. I tried to do that seriously, and I maintained quite a bit of interest in a number of fields of activity, just to be up to date in my teaching. My courses were offered to the Geneva missions for newly arrived diplomats to familiarize themselves with the Geneva scene of multilateral economic negotiations, and also more broadly, for diplomatic training for groups of young officials just out of diplomatic school. I went, in all, to over a dozen countries to give courses in foreign service academies. I was in Hanoi. I was in Seoul. I was in several countries in Africa. I was in Paramaribo to give a more general course on multilateral economic institutions. I also gave for many years a course on legal aspects of multilateral economic relations within the international law training program organized yearly by UNITAR at The Hague. In those courses, I was presenting the GATT and the Bretton Woods institutions in some detail. So I familiarized myself with a whole array of knowledge, probably more after retirement than I had been able to do during my service within the UN.

Paramaribo was particularly interesting. It was the Foreign Service Institute which had organized the course. I was faced with an audience that was about two-thirds women, and one-third men. That intrigued me because it was not my experience in other countries. I asked the organizers, "What happened there?" The answer was absolutely disarming and heartening. They said, "We advertised the course and we chose the best candidates."

Then I got involved in a fairly major project when the UNDP asked me whether I would be interested in carrying out a feasibility study on organizing workshops for field level coordination. The idea was that coordination at headquarters level had all the complexities of the

ACC discussions, and that it might be worthwhile to try at the country level to bring the representatives of agencies together in workshops to sort out the basic problems of coordination. That study was very interesting. I visited all major agencies, and found quite a bit of reticence because the feeling at first was that it might be a grand design by UNDP to use training as a vector to keep dominance and control over the system.

As it happened, the ILO Training Centre of Turin got interested in the project and offered their facilities for the organization of those workshops. Now, UNDP was absolutely exemplary. Dennis Halliday was in charge of personnel at the time. Having had the UNDP initiate the project, he fully accepted that the organization, orientation, and management of the project would be left to the Turin center. This, again, raised a few questions as to whether it was the ILO that was now the one trying to put its hands on the project. But this did not crystallize as an objection.

So we started in 1991 to bring to Turin what we called "country teams." We were taking three or four—up to five countries maximum, depending on how many field representatives there were in each country—to Turin, with a very tight agenda. The Turin center is the setting of a monastery. Everybody is closed in. We had breakfast, lunch, and dinner together. And we had an intensive program for tackling the basic problems they were encountering in the country in which they were working. This filled quite a bit of my time because I participated in each and every one of the first fourteen such workshops over a span of five years—twelve in Turin, one in Costa Rica and one in Thailand. It has been for me an exceedingly interesting experience. The teams were of quite varied composition, depending on which agencies were represented in the country. And there was quite a varied intensity of previous cooperation. We had sometimes the feeling that they were really sitting together for the first time. They might have met in the

country for the import of vehicles, or on security, but on substantive issues we were facing them for the first time with the reality of trying to find out how their programs were relating one to the other.

Other teams, on the other hand, were quite integrated. It was just another meeting for them. They had been used to meeting under the leadership of the resident coordinator, and they were working already closely together.

So post-professional activities filled quite a bit of time in my retirement. I was fairly busy, I suppose about a third of my time—I could count the weeks in my calendar—up to 1996. And when I approached seventy-six years of age, all of a sudden I had a fairly strong feeling that I should disengage—disengage on the teaching side, and disengage on the consultancy side.

My last main, big assignment was to facilitate a study on the United Nations Staff College. I was the team leader of that feasibility study, which was commissioned by Boutros Boutros-Ghali. It gave me the occasion to have a personal conversation with Boutros-Ghali. It seems somehow that secretaries-general are quite distant in a career like mine. The only ones I more than just saw were Hammarskjöld in Palestine and in the Congo, and Waldheim whom I once received on behalf of UNEP in Nairobi during one of his African tours. And Kofi Annan, of course—when designated director of the Environment Fund, I offered him to come and work with me in UNEP. But he wisely declined. The others I saw at a lunch table or at a reception during ACC meetings.

As just said, I got at the end of 1996 a funny feeling of having to be careful not to end up on a list of *personnes attardées*. Part of my teaching had been very much based on my experience in the UN. Now I had more and more, with the passing of the years in the 1990s, a feeling that that experience was getting outdated. For instance, on techniques of negotiation, I

had up to the early 1990s devoted a full morning to explaining the functioning of a commodity agreement. I now realized that no more commodity negotiations were taking place and there would be no opportunity for my audience to be involved in those techniques. So I dropped that. The group system is still there, so what I had to say about the functioning of the group system, and my experience based on that, were still valid. But somehow I felt that there is a time for everything. So I disengaged —some people felt a bit abruptly—from both teaching and consultancy. I have felt quite happy since then. It hasn't prevented me from trying to follow what is going on in the UN, but now it is very occasional. A public lecture on the UN last year and one page for the South Centre giving my comments on the Millenium Report are the last things I produced.

TGW: There was a fairly momentous event during your retirement, namely in UNCTAD terms, the disappearance of Group D, but in world political terms the end of the Cold War. How did you think this would change international approaches to economic and social development, and human rights? I think at the outset, in the security arena, it was clear that this would make a momentous change in the system. It did. There has been a certain disillusionment, or perhaps a dose of reality, since in the security arena. How did you look at the end of the Cold War for the business you had been in? And then, how actually has it played out during the 1990s?

PB: I think I sensed quite early in the dissolution of the Second World that this would be rather important for the United Nations. I am interested in the last chapter of your first volume. You have early years, then the 1970s, and then the 1980s. My vision of the phases in the life of the UN is somewhat different. It reflects the main general strand, but I place the first momentous date in 1960—decolonization. Up to 1960, the UN was very much dominated in its activities by western powers. It was their organization. It figured high in the western public opinion, very

much the instrument of those who had created it. Soon after 1960— 1961, 1962, when you started to have those majority votes by developing countries in the General Assembly—that was the beginning of a new phase. And that phase cast the East-West conflict in quite a different perspective.

My point is that up to 1960, the East-West tension had never really very much disturbed the operation and the working of the UN as a whole. You had up to then a tight group of socialist countries which were very vocal and vociferous in protesting things that the organization was doing. But except for the Soviet veto in the Security Council, it hadn't prevented the United Nations from functioning according to the wishes of the clear majority which was still controlling the organization. After 1960, you entered soon into a very different phase, in which you had a dissociation between numerical power and financial power. And numerical power really carried the shots for a long time, well up into the 1970s. This cast the East-West conflict in a different situation. From being a small, isolated group of vociferous countries—isolated in front of the western control of the organization—the socialist countries became one of the two poles between which the developing countries were pursuing their interests. As of decolonization, the socialist countries acquired a much more important role in the life of the organization than they had before.

I have often contended in my presentation of the UN that in effect, as paradoxical as it seems, the North-South divide was much more damaging for the organization than the East-West one. The East-West conflict had occasionally paralyzed the Security Council, but it had not paralyzed the organization. The North-South divide, through the dichotomy between numerical power and financial power, was creating tensions which were really unbearable for the

organization. In that constellation, of course, the developing countries were having a fairly large maneuvering field between the two poles.

Now, to your question. The collapse of the Soviet Union seriously affected the developing countries. This, coupled with the parallel movement by the West for the recuperation of power through the so-called financial crisis—in effect a political crisis for the control of the organization—has left the developing countries hanging in the air. The clear manifestation of this has been the dramatic loss of importance of the General Assembly, and the consolidation of the strength of the Security Council. When you see that as institutionally fundamental an action as the creation of a war crimes tribunal was decided by the Security Council rather than by the General Assembly, you realize how much a shift in power has taken place. I think it has been a very dramatic shift.

Now, the evolution has had consequences in the economic field and in the political field. In the political field, there was a big hurrah: "The UN can work at last! We are rid of the veto! We are rid of the tensions!" Now, what happened to that is probably not so much relevant to your gathering of views about ideas. I followed it with interest. I have been, in particular, interested in one development which has fascinated me, that is the partial use of the organization. One of the most marked phenomena, I think, on the political scene of this evolution is the way in which the UN is now being plugged in or plugged out, used or not used, at the whims of the concertation among the major powers. This creates a very basic problem for the functioning of the organization. The organization is now a sort of a subsidiary mechanism which is used, or not used, depending on what the major powers decide they want to do with it.

On the economic scene, the matter is much more complicated. I remember the discourse we heard: "The UN can at last work because the socialist countries have disappeared as a

blocking force in the organization." Now, of course, the socialist countries had never been an obstacle to the North-South dialogue. The North-South dialogue had been blocked by the tension between the West and the developing countries. Therefore, the contention that the UN could now work better, also in the economic field, because the socialist countries had disappeared, was really a misnomer. It was a statement which could have no other intention than to conceal the desire on the part of those who were emerging on top to retake full control of the mechanism. And the weakening of the position of the developing countries, now that they have lost their capacity of maneuvering between two poles, is absolutely dramatic, as I see it. You hear some noises in the desert from people who still want to reassert their role. But they have become insignificant in the way in which I see the organization.

TGW: To what extent did the end of the Cold War also make possible the almost universal spread and acceptance of the so-called Washington consensus—what someone argued was the disappearance from the scene of the UN system in terms of being a legitimate critic of western and Bretton Woods policy toward developing countries.

PB: I think that the disappearance of the Soviet Union certainly was a major contributor to that. In historical terms, however, there were some very clear manifestations of that movement already before 1989. It started in 1980, with what Barraclough called the "successful counteroffensive of the West"—basic needs, poverty alleviation, shifting the agenda to the national side of the development process and de-emphasizing the international dimension of development. It crystallized in UNCTAD in a dramatic way—Cartagena. UNCTAD VIII, in Cartagena, largely stripped UNCTAD from much of its responsibilities in respect of the international dimension of development. It decided for instance to look into the question of services, but the building up of services at the national level. Negotiations on services would be

left to the WTO. Then UNCTAD IX, at Midrand, completed the dismantling. This was certainly very much facilitated by the fact that developing countries were not in a position anymore to fight against it. But it was not only the disappearance of the Soviet Union which could account for their weakness. I think that movement was a groundswell which had been nurtured within the West right from 1980, in taking back the reins of the organization.

TGW: I am struck at the seeming consistency from the days at the University of Geneva until today. Has your own thinking really remained the same, or would you say that it has changed in important ways—in thinking about development, and in thinking about the role of international institutions, and thinking about the balance between state and regulation?

PB: My own personal thinking really casts me as a *ringard*. Do you know the French expression? A *ringard* is somebody who is so old fashioned that he is not with it anymore. But I am very concerned about the fact that things are getting worse in the world. They are not getting worse in terms of actual levels of development. I don't know whether you ever heard Inge Kaul saying, "Development works." This is what they say in the *Human Development Report*, and they have indeed demonstrated that development works. There are lots of positive indicators. But this is not what it is all about. What it is all about is to organize the world as a community, as a place where the disparities between the haves and the have-nots would be reduced to a point where they become tolerable. It is not eradicating poverty, but it is—as explained by Charles Peguy—the difference between *la pauvreté et la misère*, between poverty and misery. There is a sort of bottom line above which you might still be poor compared to other people, but you have a feeling that you belong to that society, and below that bottom line you are in misery, you feel you are rejected and you are antagonistic to that society. My dream—and this is why I have worked for the United Nations all my life—is that we might be able one day to organize the

globe, the famous global village, in such a way that that line will be the bottom for everybody, that everybody will have a sense of belonging, of not being rejected.

I do not see, since 1980, that we are moving in that direction. Not in terms of absolute levels of development, but by the fact that discrepancies are being accentuated ever more. Therefore, while obviously the people who want to do it their way have now their full chance, I keep in the back of my mind wondering whether it will work. And if it doesn't work, we might have to eventually revert to some of the approaches which have been now discarded. I think they have been discarded not because they were proven unable to attain the intended results. They have been discarded because they were inimical to private interests which many people wanted to protect.

I don't think there has been an intrinsic disavowal of the New International Economic Order—let's call that horrible cat by its name—through the demerits of its ability to achieve its goals. It has been discarded because it was displacing too many interests which nobody in place was prepared to sacrifice at the time. So, as you see, I am really an *attardé*.

TGW: That leaves me to a sort of a final sweeping question, which is, feeling the way you do and seeing the world in the way that you do, what would you see as the main intellectual and operational challenges for the United Nations system? If you were going to commission a study or two, what would be the framework?

PB: In general terms, I would certainly say, "Go on trying." Whatever I have said about the United Nations has not made me in any way a demoralized person, nor do I have the feeling that I have lost my time. What we are engaged in is a very long-range construction. It will have cycles of ups and downs. I feel that multilateralism is an important approach. The Congo, with all the problems that we have had about it, will go down in history as being the first major

attempt on the part of the world community to act as a community. The Kosovo experience will go down in history as a very successful operation by western countries to protect their interests by taking some military action. But it will not go down as representing an effort of the international community as such, to apply a solution to a problem which it has perceived.

I think we should go on trying to work as we can for multilateralism to be more and more accepted in more and more situations. That is my problem with the Swiss next year. They will have to vote again on whether or not to enter the United Nations. So I will have again to tell them, or to write in the press, that it is absurd to view that in terms of years, of what might have happened yesterday or will happen tomorrow—that we are in a process which is a generational process. It will go on for a long, long time, but it is a situation in which there is no alternative. I characterize the position of the Swiss who are against joining the UN as a position of *profiteur* because whatever happens in the world, there will be no alternative to their country enjoying the benefit of whatever cooperation is developed by the UN, as opposed to chaos. The idea of sitting out on that effort, when you know that you will, by definition, be a beneficiary of the effort, is really a situation of being—how do you say *profiteur* in English?

TGW: Exploiter? Free rider?

PB: Free rider, yes. It is a guy who sits and just looks at how the others make an effort which will be to his benefit. But it will be difficult to pass that message to the Swiss. I think the Swiss will enter, mind you, for reasons which are again not particularly honorable. Now that the Soviet Union has gone, and that the UN is a much more cozy place to be for the western countries, maybe they will take the step and accept to join. This is not particularly bright or honorable a motivation. But it is the way it will happen. I would not discourage them from

joining the UN because of that, but it is certainly much less an act of statesmanship to join it today or tomorrow than it would have been when the Soviet Union was still in place.

TGW: Part of your ammunition will be a French and a German translation of *Ahead of the Curve?* So I am sure this will be the crucial element in the arsenal! Is there a question you think I should have asked you, and I didn't?

PB: May I take a look at my paper? I think we have covered most of the ground, as a matter of fact. Of course, what I am interested in might not always be of interest to you. Collective economic security we talked about. Bretton Woods versus the UN, we touched upon. Multilateralism we covered. The spreading of development to the political scene, we dwelt on yesterday. The fact that UNCTAD was a subsidiary of the General Assembly did allow for the spreading of the concept of development as a major political issue in the UN. I used in my courses to dramatize that by saying, "In 1955, if you had asked any audience what are the major political issues on the agenda of the United Nations, they would have said Palestine, Korea, Berlin, human rights, disarmament. Nobody would have mentioned development. In 1970, it was obvious to everybody that development was one of the major political issues for the United Nations as a whole. This had been the absorption by the General Assembly of what happened first in UNCTAD."

Operational activities we did discuss. We covered the question of the diffidence one has of bodies of limited membership. I think the failure of ECOSOC is largely due to the fact that it has been resented as being a non-transparent, because non-fully participatory, organ. The only other question I had—but again, it is one of my pet ideas; I don't know whether you want to talk about it—is UN reform, the famous problem of UN reforms.

TGW: Which one?

PB: Yes, one of the 200. What did Bertrand say? He had identified over 200 studies on UN reform. But my point here is very strongly a point of warning, which I have made throughout my career, about too much of a Maurice Strong approach—in other words, wanting to project indiscriminately a private business concept of efficiency into the United Nations. Some concepts, like subcontracting, a sunset clause, or "let those who can do it best do the job," have in the UN very serious limitations due to the very texture and nature of multilateral intergovernmental cooperation. My cheap joke about that is that if we really wanted to use subcontracting in an efficient way, we would subcontract the Security Council to the American Arbitration Association. They would certainly do a much better job with fifteen of their lawyers than the council we have today with fifteen disparate ambassadors.

In other words, there are some intrinsic limitations which attach to multilateral cooperation, which one should not neglect. I think that the striving for efficiency, and bringing Conor in because he was in Price Waterhouse and he knows how to make things work, is something which has to be handled with considerable care in the United Nations. That coefficient of inefficiency which I mentioned yesterday in relation with the Congo operation is there at all times to remind us that we are dealing with a different kind of setting. The sunset clause would have put UNCTAD out of business in 1967, absolutely. And, of course, the idea of letting things be done by those who do them best hinges on the question of the shift to Washington.

I regret in the United Nations today a loss of intellectual capacity. Well, I don't want to minimize the importance of the *Trade and Development Report*, or the *Human Development Report*. Those documents are exceedingly interesting. But they are sort of cries in the desert. I have followed very closely what Mahbub ul Haq was putting in the *Human Development Report*,

in the early 1990s. You had there a very maverick source of ideas, not only the Tobin Tax, but also institutionally. It was a very rich mine of ideas as to what could be done in order to move towards the global village. The American delegate made a good speech in the governing council of UNDP, commending the administrator for another good report. But nobody sat down to do any follow up. It is one of those reports, incidentally, which revisited the famous Chinese story that if you give a fish to a man, he eats for a day; if you teach him how to fish, he will eat for life! It is in Mahbub's 1994 report that you find: "Not so simple. It depends on who owns the pond." A very fundamental point. In other words, the external dimension—the man knows how to fish, but if the owner doesn't let him come to the shore, he won't eat. Brilliant, but the UN today mostly only teaches how to fish.

Back to reform, I think the UN should be very careful about projecting private business concepts of efficiency into its reform because one has to keep always in mind the very specificity of the texture of the United Nations. Another thing to remember is that in any reform, it is generally those who wield power who want change. They are in charge, and they want to make things even better for their own sake. The weak, the one who doesn't control, is generally very worried about change because he fears that any change which takes place will be likely to leave him worse off than he was before. The very serious reticence and resistance which you find against UN reform in developing countries is, I think, very largely explained by the fact that they want to be holding to what they have. They are very conscious that reform is pushing the organization in a direction which will be more favorable to the interests of those who advocate reform, and that the new construction if one is emerging will be less favorable to them. This is a strong break on reform that has to be recognized as such and properly dealt with.

The last thing you mentioned, "Is there still a role for the United Nations?" I strongly feel there is one. I think I answered that question. I know that some people have taken the cynical view: "East-West is gone. North-South has gone. What is the role of the UN?" And I have been interested in the theory according to which the major role of the UN at the present time is to look after the marginalized ones. The UN role, so it goes, is to cater for the ones who are neglected. There is a dynamism in the world which makes Mexico and Korea join OECD. But there is a group of countries which nobody cares for. The UN has a first responsibility to attend to that group of countries. In my view, that can only be a small part of the story. The larger part is the necessity of going on trying to develop a strong worldwide multilateral cooperation system, as the only way in which we shall be able to organize the global village. That is my fundamental view as to why the UN should continue.

TGW: I think that is a very nice place to end. It remains for me to thank you enormously for these two fascinating days, and to promise that we will get you a transcript soon.

PB: Thank you.

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