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TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW OF

JUST FAALAND

BY

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LOUIS EMMERIJ: This is Louis Emmerij interviewing Just Faaland on the 12th of September 2001, a day after the horrendous attack on the United States of America. Just, I think we should not talk about that problem, try to concentrate on the issue at hand. We always start an interview like this with asking the interviewee about his early days—schooling, upbringing, social background, people who have made an impression, events that have made an impression—so that we can put what happened later in that perspective. Can you tell us something about your early years, Just?

JUST FAALAND: Yes, of course that's a long time ago. I was born into a family, which I think one would classify as a middle-income family. My father was a teacher in high school, teaching classical languages. At the time, in his first job, he was up in northern Norway, in Tromsø where I was born. But by the time I was two and a half, we moved on to near Oslo, where I really grew up. I have no memories from up north.

I undoubtedly had a very happy upbringing, both indeed as I felt it at the time and in retrospect now. The really serious thing in the family was that my brother got schizophrenia—he was a bit older than I was—when he was seventeen or something, and has been afflicted by that ever since. So that of course was a point in my upbringing, which undoubtedly has created a great impression on me. I also had a younger sister, but quite a lot younger so we weren't all that close.

I can remember from the time of my schooling, even in primary school, which started at the end of the 1920s, being a happy boy. I was fortunate in terms of health and got along well in school and with my friends. But I can remember, maybe from the early 1930s, that some of my class friends really came from a different situation than myself—not many. In retrospect, I sometimes reflect a bit on how little we did to really include those who were from poorer homes,

and sometimes very much poorer homes. I last saw those classmates when we went on to high school. At the time, people didn't go to school that long. So I went through middle school, as we called it, up to university entrance. As it happened, it was at the same high school where my father was a teacher. He always arranged it so I wouldn't be in his class as a matter of principle. I suppose that was a good thing. I can remember a friend who had his father as a teacher and suffered quite a bit.

But it really was a very good time, all through to gymnasium. In a normal sort of way, I suppose I was as popular as anybody else in the circle was, and really didn't have serious problems of that nature. Neither did my boyfriends or my girlfriends. Of course, in the 1930s, a lot of things happened. Again in retrospect it bothers me—not for me but for mankind—that I wasn't more aware of it than I actually was. I was probably more than average bright, and it scares me even more that even someone with a good home like me, that we didn't really concern ourselves more than we did with the ills of society. And there were plenty in the 1930s.

Then of course the big thing that happened was that the war came. It came in Europe before it came to Norway. It even came before that in Finland.

LE: It was April 1940, no?

JF: Yes, that it came to Norway. But you had even before that the Finnish-Russian War. But in Norway it came in April. That was just at the very end of our schooling in high school, and we didn't go to school at all after that event. We got our exam results based on what we had done up to that time.

LE: Now you were eighteen?

JF: I was eighteen when the war came.

LE: You were born in 1922, up in the north, near the reindeer in Lapland. Now, you were eighteen, and you finished the gymnasium.

JF: Yes, I finished the gymnasium in 1940. Then, because of the war, the tentative plans that I had for my studies had to be reconsidered and so on. I was supposed to start at the business school here in Bergen, but I suppose on the advice of my father I decided to take a shorter course of that kind of thing for about a year in Oslo. So it really was not until 1941 that I actually started as a full-scale student. At the time, all students, whatever they were going to study, had to take some philosophy and logic. So that was the beginning. I found it quite interesting at the time and did a bit of work on it. Some said I did too much work on it because I got too good a class for just passing. And some said I didn't do enough because I didn't get the uppermost. That may be a bit the story of my life in many respects.

LE: Now can you explain that a little bit more? You were always very good, but you never made it really? That's not true.

JF: Well, all those things you could have done better. Now when I was still in school, mathematics was a favored subject on my part. I tended to do very well, but I didn't want to become a teacher, which was the normal thing for people who went to university to study mathematics. So I decided to study mathematics with a view to becoming an actuary in insurance companies.

LE: Really?

JF: Yes. Well, of course the main thing we studied to become an actuary was mathematics and theoretical statistics. That's difficult, but it's not boring. And I pushed on with my studies. The war was on and I wanted to get things done. So I crammed my studies into

fairly intensive periods of study, and went and finished both mathematics and statistics parts in the fall of 1943.

LE: Two years.

JF: Yes, two and a half years.

LE: Amazing.

JF: But after that, to become an actuary I had to study economics. That I hadn't started at the time. At the end of November 1943, all students at the university were rounded up by the Germans and the Nazis at home. We were put into a camp in Norway first, and everyone was interrogated and so on. It so happened that my father had been in prison for about six months for the same sort of activities, and my uncle. So they had my name from various other things. I think it was more that than my own doing, that I was not among the half of us who were released. I was sent to Germany to Buchenwald for a year and a half, until the end of the war, together with 700 other Norwegian male students. All the female students were sent home.

LE: This was because you were in the resistance, the underground?

JF: Yes. But really everybody was. One thing we did was to distribute news. I didn't do really heroic things, but there was a growing resistance. In fact, I also tried to get across to England but had to turn back. But I really was more or less like the average other youngster at the university. The reason they took us all to prison was, perhaps, that over the last few weeks and months before that event, when they rounded up cells of various kinds, they found students were included. The immediate cause for rounding us up was that the big university auditorium was burned down on a particular day in November, and they took that as having been done by the students and rounded us all up.

LE: So you came back from Buchenwald in—

JF: I came back in May 1945, the 25th of May.

LE: You continued your studies in economics.

JF: Yes, I did. Again, it was after the war and everybody, not just I, was very anxious to get on with things. So again I crammed my economics studies into one semester and finished by the end of 1945, by which time I also got a stipend to go to Oxford. So in fact, from the 25th of May in 1945, when I came back to Oslo, and for the coming twelve months, I went through, first, jaundice and other things as a result of having been imprisoned. I went through these studies. I married. We had a child in May 1946. So it was a pretty active year, including going to Oxford.

LE: Oxford we will deal with a little later. So huge events were of course the war, the concentration camp in Buchenwald, the economic depression, the crisis of the 1930s. Your father was a teacher, so he probably did not suffer that much.

JF: No, no. This was what I was meaning when I said that I was fortunate to grow up like that, and I was regretting that I did not sufficiently empathize with those who were not so lucky. At the time, my schoolmates, particularly in early school days, I can remember that they just could not come to school because they didn't have shoes and so on. They were much more often ill with influenza and so on. And they could not get on in school, probably because they could not prepare for it in the same way.

LE: So you were born in a middle-class family, your father was a high school teacher. Your mother was working, too?

JF: No.

LE: So then the economic depression of the 1930s, you yourself did not suffer. But you saw sufferings.

JF: Yes, I saw sufferings but did not really take it home to the extent that I wish I had.

LE: It does not explain your subsequent career choices, for instance.

JF: No, I don't think it can do that.

LE: You were steaming ahead with mathematics, actuarial studies, then economics and all this at a rapid pace.

JF: Well, I studied pretty intensely when I was sitting down to do it. That was perhaps six hours a day. I was pretty active in other sorts of ways.

LE: Which sorts of ways? You read a lot.

JF: I did. Of course, I read the newspapers. I was pretty conscious of the value and satisfaction of keeping up with current events. But I didn't read a lot of our classics or anybody else's classics.

LE: Such as [Henrik] Ibsen?

JF: Well, yes. We had to go through that in school. It was more that than the pleasure of sitting down to do it. Of course, in the civil society around me, my father came from the countryside up near Kristiansand. We went there every so often. My father was interested in collecting historical evidence of life in the valley and his own family. Of course, I remember all these people who lived there, being farmers, some of them not even having a homestead and so on. That I can remember very clearly because we worked with them a bit on their farm during the summer, and we saw their lives and the way they lived. But also their generosity and how they dealt with us. Everything had to be as best as they could make it. That was Norway in the depression years, on the farms.

LE: But you would not say that the poverty you then saw, the inequalities you saw growing between your family's steady income and others, did not really, even subconsciously, have an impact on your later choice of career? I am trying to push you.

JF: Subconsciously, I don't quite know. But I think that is one reason why I later on chose to go for economics rather than mathematics. I was moving ahead very well. I had part-time jobs in the statistical office and in insurance companies. But I wanted to go further with economics. You say we are coming later on to Oxford, but when I got there I had just got my degree at home. I decided to continue with economics in Oxford because I felt that that was the one I had given the least time, that I needed to do more. It was also just after the war that economists—and there were quite a few very good economists in Norway—were really getting into the act of planning the economy. I looked at that with some interest.

LE: So two events stand out in your early years. There's the economic depression, and there was the subsequent war and the Buchenwald experience. One and a half years at Buchenwald—that was quite a horrendous thing. Or is your impression that the concentration camp experience has been exaggerated?

JF: No. The fact that there were 700 Norwegian students—although we were divided up; there were 350 at Buchenwald—the fact that there were so many of us meant that we were treated a bit as a group. It meant that we could mutually support each other more readily than could others who were more individual or in very much smaller groups. Also, particularly for the other 350, there was a serious effort to try to make them into Aryan-Nordic warriors, you know. Of course, it more than backfired. But the SS (Schutzstaffel) had the idea that they could somehow guide these misguided people into becoming good Norwegians.

LE: So would you say there were different types of Buchenwald?

JF: Yes. I think we were—

LE: You were in the first circle of hell, and in the seventh—

JF: Yes, something like that. But we were left by the seventh to see what it was. Of course, that, by itself, was hard enough.

LE: Did all 350 come back?

JF: I think of the 700, there were all but seventeen. All came back except seventeen.

LE: So it was almost like the economic depression period. The others suffered, but not you so much.

JF: Yes, I think so. My friends would say it was worse than that. But for a period the SS camp authorities even tried to send lecturers to us in the camp to tell us about the good things in the race, ideology, and so on. A daughter of the Italian king was imprisoned up in the SS camp area. But then the SS camp was bombed, and she, like hundreds of others, was injured, and she was put into the make-shift hospital within the concentration camp and died there amongst another group of women who really were being used as sex slaves. It's a terrible story. Our medical students were operating there as doctors. So they knew the inside story. Remember, it was not itself a—

LE: It was not a death camp.

JF: It was not one of the death camps. Of course, we had crematoria and so on. But again and again, there were people being pushed up through the camp to go on their death route, to be killed. There were old and young people, women and men. So you had to take care—and you did that in part through all the friendships we had amongst each other—not to go mad from all of this.

LE: Now we have these events that have, of course, remained with you—both the Depression and this war, and the concentration camp experience. Have there been other events,

like personalities, teachers, professors, experiences in reading, that have made an impact on you, which you would consider as major?

JF: Of course, my relationship to my mother and father was very instructive for me and guided me in all sorts of ways. Through them, their friends, and the people they were with, I got some close friends. Some of them were making quite a big impression on me. My father had two or three friends from his school days that we interacted with. And they were all pretty liberal. They used to belong to Venstre, we called the party, which was sort of moderate left. There was a lot of disagreement but they were very liberal people. They were very concerned with society. They discussed this quite a bit, and I listened to it.

LE: Okay, but they were influential in what sense? In your career choices, in your personal choices? How would you describe their influence, if you can? For instance, my father was a self-made man, and he impressed me to no end. He taught himself music. He taught himself Esperanto. That is where I must have a certain amount of curiosity from. Now your father was teaching what?

JF: Latin, French, German.

LE: Now nothing has been made of that in you, has it?

JF: He would regret that very much, but it is true. It is true. Now, I think the fact that I wanted to study mathematics was a very much accepted fact within the family and therefore people were talking about that. They didn't really talk about alternative occupations at the time. That came later. My father had struggled, himself, to get to where he was. His father didn't have anything. His family didn't have anything. And he moved up through school with support from the community and the family and his own work. At one point he was preparing to go to sea because he had no means to go on with his studies. So he had struggled. He moved from

what was seen as the lower class, if you like, into the middle class. This, I felt, was seen by my parents as only a beginning of moving further ahead for the family. And they expected that I would be the one to do so, particularly since my brother couldn't do it.

LE: Now what difference did that make—to have a brother with a serious illness, schizophrenia? Did he die soon?

JF: No, he still lives. But he has been institutionalized all these years. Of course it colored the family very much, family life, even daily life when he was at home. And also my father and mother looked a little bit differently on how to handle this, so it affected them too. My own life wasn't all that difficult. He had been my bigger brother and became, in a sense, my smaller brother. Every week I went out to visit, and so on.

LE: So the family, father, friends of parents, brother, had a big influence.

JF: Oh yes.

LE: Now in terms of teachers—primary school, gymnasium, university—was there anybody who you looked up to, or not?

JF: I don't think it is anything unusual. I can remember one teacher who was quite good when I was ten or twelve years, who I thought was very clear and pointed. As it turned out, a few years later he became a Nazi. So I have thought of that. I have to be careful with my judgements. No, I don't think there were. One of my father's friends was a professor of physics, so maybe that influenced me in terms of setting goals and so on, but not on a daily basis.

LE: You never did military service?

JF: No, because I was too young when the war came and too old when it was over.

LE: You did your service in Buchenwald.

JF: In a way, yes.

LE: Were there books that struck you very much in your formative years, your first twenty-two or twenty-three years of your life? Or were you so busy studying mathematics that you had no time for this?

JF: Well, there were two or three important things in my upbringing. You mentioned Buchenwald. You mentioned the war. Of course, I have to mention my wife Judith because that was also in those years. That was when we were both seventeen and eighteen.

LE: Where was this?

JF: In Oslo. We were both taking *Artium* at the same time, just as the war started.

LE: I don't get this. What were you doing at the same time?

JF: We took our university entrance.

LE: How do you call it?

JF: *Artium*.

LE: Oh my God, that's too difficult. What do they call it in French?

JF: Baccalaureate. It's the end of the secondary school and gives you by the same token entrance to university.

LE: I see, so you were youthful students together. That's how these things happen. Okay, is there anything further we should say about your first twenty-two or twenty-three years, before you went to Oxford?

JF: I don't think we need to.

LE: At the same time, many things were going on, of course. There was such a thing as the League of Nations. Did you ever pay any attention to the League of Nations in the 1920s and 1930s? Did you ever hear about it?

JF: Well, yes. I can remember my father and his friends discussing it. They were, as I said, quite awake in these matters. One of them was a high-level politician. I can remember that we had frequent reference, of course, to C.J. Hambro.

LE: Who was that?

JF: I suppose he must have been the president of the League of Nations for a few years or something, or of the council. He was the father of Ambassador Edward Hambro, at the UN for about twenty-five years.

LE: So your father and his friends, who already had so much influence on you, you heard them discuss Mr. Hambro and his League of Nations.

JF: Yes, that's right.

LE: Anything more specific?

JF: I can remember Ethiopia being discussed. Reference was also made to the League of Nations, if I remember it right, mostly in terms of how little it could do. But that's an institution that was very much in their minds, and therefore I suppose transmitted to me.

LE: Now how do you explain this? There is Norway, up in the North, a big-sized country, few people. Of course, there was Mr. Hambro. But it is interesting to see how the Norwegians grew interested.

JF: There is a long history of that. You had Fritjof Nansen. I can remember a lot of reference to him in discussions.

LE: The famous "Nansen Passport."

JF: Yes, but also before that, in 1905, when Norway took leave of Sweden and became independent. There was a debate about whether we should have a republic or a kingdom, and the republic might well have been led by Fritjof Nansen. Instead, he was sent to London to plead the

case of Norway in the community of Nations. He advised that we take a king, because that was the way democracies were run in those days in Europe. But anyhow, he was very much a man who was mentioned in family circles. He died in 1930, or something. So he wasn't alive much of the time that I remember him being discussed.

And of course my mother and father talked about the First World War, but mostly in terms of how it affected Norway, and the Spanish flu, the influenza.

LE: But Norway was not involved.

JF: Not as a country, but of course all our ships were being involved. So a lot of seamen died. This was very much part of my mother's and father's years of upbringing, much like the Second World War years for me.

LE: So this outward orientation of Norway, has it always existed? Of course, you started with the Vikings, the famous Vikings, who rampaged throughout Europe? Can the Norwegian outward orientation be explained in the same way the Dutch outward orientation can be explained—seafarers, business, business instinct, a sense of adventure in a certain way, a sense of risk? Or is it something different?

JF: Of course, maybe Norway has a much longer history than Holland does. Norway was a kind of entity already in the year 1000. We had our own more or less fully-organized country, state, until the 1300s, when we were combined with Denmark and with Sweden for the next 500 years. Denmark-Norway as a country was run from Copenhagen, and Norway was very much subservient to Denmark. There is a lot of Danish influence here, including on our language. Then in the Napoleonic wars, the Danish king, who was also the Norwegian king, sided wrongly with Napoleon, while the Swedish king—the French general, Marshall Bernadotte, who had become king of Sweden—sided with the British. And like so many other

times, when the war was over, Denmark was punished, if that's the word, by having to give up Norway. And Sweden was rewarded by being given Norway under its crown.

But always through these centuries, Norway was an entity. It was a country. And our own history very much was determined by the course of history in the outside world. Our fate depended on what happened in countries around us. Norway is a bit smaller than Denmark, and a lot smaller than Sweden. The smaller you are, the more dependent you are on the countries around you. These things I can remember being discussed even in the 1930s at home, how important it was to retain our identity, but to do it within the international community. This sort of balance you even have today, when we voted against going into the European Union (EU), but still we want to be a part of it.

LE: So you want to have your cake and eat it.

JF: That's right.

LE: Before we move to Oxford, in 1945 the United Nations was born.

JF: It was in 1944, wasn't it?

LE: No, it was 1945. San Francisco was in May 1945. The Bretton Woods institutions were born in 1944.

JF: OK, you are the history project.

LE: And the first UN Secretary-General was a Norwegian.

JF: Trygve Lie.

LE: That must have made quite an impression on you, and on Norway.

JF: Yes, of course. We were, I suppose, proud. But you know Norway, when anybody makes it and comes a bit up compared to the rest of us, we all pull him down again. That is our

tendency. Of course we were very proud of that and took it as proof of Norway having some importance in the world. He came back after having served, in 1953.

LE: Not to put words in your mouth, but he was probably not seen as a success. Was he?

JF: I don't want to generalize on that, because sometimes people say negative things out of a bit of envy more than anything else. He did quite a few good things. Some people had problems with him, I suppose, including in the UN.

LE: Why, was he a difficult man?

JF: I have met him. I have been in some meetings with him, after he was Secretary-General, when he came back and later became governor of a province here, in Oslo. He had come a long way, of course, from his own background. But he carried the idea of moving up in the world like that. I don't think he was ever someone I particularly wanted to emulate.

LE: What was his background?

JF: He grew up at Grorud, it's called—it's outside Oslo—as a trade unionist. And he got into party politics. He had a very strong personality. He was, of course, in the Norwegian government that came in to being when our government moved to London. He became the foreign minister of Norway.

LE: He was minister of foreign affairs of Norway during the war, in exile.

JF: Yes, in exile. So that was a time when he interacted, of course, very closely with the big powers as well. And Norway's contribution to the war through the merchant marine and so on was quite important.

LE: What were the good things he did, as you remember, in these eight years he was Secretary-General. Do you remember anything he did nicely?

JF: I suppose it was his right to do so, but he depended on people he knew and so on. He brought into the UN quite a few Norwegians that he could work with. Some people are very thankful for it, and some people are very critical of it. But it meant that quite a generation of very good Norwegians got an early exposure in the UN history, both more political people and technical people, like Stein Rossen. For Norway, it probably was a very good thing that he was there. There was a lot of discussion here when the Korean War started, and how he had, as I understood it, helped to get the right decision made to make it a UN operation.

LE: So one of the things he did, he was a God's gift for Norwegians because they got international experience.

JF: Yes. That is true. Now others had other inroads, like the British taking over all their positions and so on, and the Dutch.

LE: Again, it is a little bit like the League of Nations. You did not jump up and down when the United Nations was created. It was one of those events that did not make a particular impression on a young man who was just married, expecting his first child, et cetera.

JF: I think if you accumulate it, I was very much impressed by the many new institutions that were being established, that the old ones were being replaced by new ones and in new areas. Of course, a bit early on, the UN was a major event. But also so many other institutions, so many rearrangements in international affairs were being done in those years. In Norway, we were very much—I remember as a student too, after I came back from Germany—we were very much taken by, or enthused even, by the fact that all these things happened. When people like Trygve Lie then, and a lot of people with him, got into that system that did affect a lot of us.

LE: What I am trying to get at here is why you became so interested, or why you were so frequently in—I don't know whether you were interested—in all these international organizations.

JF: I can't pretend that it was a big plan that I should do it at all. It was more a general attitude to take life as it comes, and make the best of it, and making choices as I went along.

LE: There was no big master plan.

JF: No there wasn't really. There may be with my building up this institute and so on. That's different. And in the early years after Oxford—as we will come to later—I was interested in international affairs indeed, but it was only at the end of the 1950s that I got interested, work-wise, in the wider world. So I was sort of pushed and pulled into this international life.

LE: But would you say that you took things as they happened to come along? You did not at all, yourself, push a little bit? They just came—OEEC (Organization of European Economic Co-operation), Harvard Development Advisory Service, UNCTAD (UN Conference on Trade and Development)?

JF: Yes, but I was all the time conscious of the life I was in. It was a life where things came up like that. And I liked living such a life where things came up.

LE: So how did you get into such a life?

JF: Well one thing, of course, is that I was lucky enough, and I suppose clever enough, to be given that scholarship to Oxford.

LE: Let's go on there now. Was that another example? Did the fellowship just come your way, or did you go out of your way to get it?

JF: I had, particularly in the war years, admiration for Britain and the English, more than Americans. And the thought of going to Oxford as a student, I saw that as something very

glorious. But I didn't at all develop my studies particularly with a view of being qualified for that. It must have been three or four months after I came back from Germany that these stipends were being advertised, and I thought, "Why not try to get to Oxford, particularly if I can finish my exam in—"

LE: Why? You had been gone in a concentration camp. You got married to your youth sweetheart. You expected a child. Why go to Oxford instead of staying quietly in this beautiful country?

JF: Well my wife was asking that, also. Going to Oxford as a student was really beyond any dream I had had as a young man. There were few such opportunities. I knew one or two people who had had this before me. So it was really an opportunity to accept. But life in Oxford, of course, conditioned me more for the international world. There one of my teachers, or so-called supervisor, Donald MacDougall, was very influential in interesting me in the international world, international trade, and also in international affairs. He himself knew a lot about the Keynesian history, all the Bretton Woods story, and so on. And Tommy Balogh and these people were my teachers, and I went to their seminars.

LE: This was in 1945 or 1946?

JF: From January 1946.

LE: For a year?

JF: I got stipends for two years. And you know the university year in Oxford is three terms a year. I went to one term in January 1946 until the first of April or something. Then I didn't go back until the first of September, or something, for the autumn term. And then I went for the January term again, in 1947, but skipped the spring term. Then my wife and I and the child went over in September for a full year.

LE: So into 1948. So basically, between January 1946—

JF: And July 1948.

LE: What did you do in between all this jumping up and down in Oxford?

JF: I was in Oslo. I worked in the central statistical office.

LE: What a strange idea. Why didn't you simply stay two or three years in Oxford instead of coming up and down?

JF: Why did I want to go there, with my wife and children being here? It had to be like that.

LE: Your wife did not accompany you to Oxford?

JF: Not until the summer of 1947.

LE: So it was there at Oxford, between 1946 and 1948, that you really got your international orientation straightened out?

JF: Yes. This was a cumulative process, but it was important. And it taught me a lot because these people that I mentioned had been so closely involved. So, I got a feel for what was going on in these international organizations and what sort of people were there and so on.

LE: Now you mentioned MacDougall and Balogh. Anybody else?

JF: Yes, both R. F. Harrod and J. R. Hicks, and others. I went to lectures, but it was the seminars that made most impact on me. MacDougall I saw every week because he was my supervisor, but also MacDougall and Balogh had a seminar together with maybe ten students, and the two of them. That was really very, very good. What is his name, in Boston?

LE: Paul Streeten?

JF: Paul Streeten was there at the same time.

LE: Was he? He is older than you.

JF: Yes. But everybody was until very recently.

LE: Did he talk about his war experience in those days?

JF: I don't remember that.

LE: He was wounded. He was a real hero, a paratrooper who jumped behind the German lines. So, finally you had people outside your family circle you looked up to. And you learned a lot from them. That is where you really learned your economics.

JF: That's where I became an economist. Of course, it wasn't unimportant what I did in the fall semester of 1945 in Oslo. That was with Ragnar Frisch.

LE: Frisch, the first Nobel Prize winner with Jan Tinbergen.

JF: In 1948 when I came back from Oxford, I went to the Oslo University Economic Institute.

LE: The institute of economics. But let's stay for a minute in Oxford. So you worked there, if I am being well-informed, on international trade and development. Didn't you?

JF: No, that's not quite right. It was international trade and employment.

LE: Even better. You wrote a Master's thesis?

JF: It was actually organized as if it was a Ph.D. thesis, but I never finished it. But it was starting off as a comparative theory, the theory of comparative costs and so on, that those countries that have a lot of one resource tend to produce things that use a lot of that resource and that sort of thing. Now if you shift from producing it at home to buying it from abroad, it will be produced abroad with less labor. So what happens for us, as trade grows, to employment and the employment structure domestically? It was a theoretical analysis, going through the literature, learning from these—

LE: Was it the international trade of Great Britain?

JF: No, international trade theory in general. But of course the impetus to doing just that, well I suppose that had something to do with MacDougal. But this was one of the arguments at the time, what would happen to the British economy as it opened up its trade again to new trading partners and so on? And particularly what would happen to the employment structure?

LE: Did you come up with any amazing conclusions?

JF: Clearer insight rather than amazing conclusions. If I had known that I would be working with you in the World Employment Programme (WEP), a quarter century later, I would have tried harder.

LE: A lovely choice to work with. But you never finished this paper, or was it that it was supposed to be part of a bigger thing—a Ph.D. thesis?

JF: Yes, it was meant to be part of a Ph.D. I worked bits of it. In fact, I have a whole stack here, which, over fifty years, it has been my ambition to look back on. I did look the other day, only a couple of weeks ago. It looked pretty good. Subsequently I came back to Norway, working with Frisch. He was involved in the UN system too. He had all sorts of ideas he tried out in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). I worked on a paper as his assistant then. I happened to disagree with the way he was doing it. But it was a very good learning experience for me, and it had to do with the international system and trade issues.

So then out of the blue for me, at the end of 1948, the invitation came to come to OEEC. I was, without knowing it, pretty well ready for it.

LE: Let's talk for a bit about Frisch. You spent what, a year working with him?

JF: No, only half a year working full time.

LE: What kind of a man was he, the first Nobel Prize winner with Jan Tinbergen?

JF: I think it was pretty good that they got it together as personalities. They were rather different. And you know Tinbergen, so therefore you also know Frisch a little bit. He was, of course, extremely brilliant, sometimes overbearingly brilliant. He was very keen on instilling the value of what he could do, or about what economic expertise could do for policy makers. But he didn't have much political sense. Yet, he was a leading figure, in a sense, in a whole group of economists, a little older than me, who sort of took over then, like Stein Rossen, whom you may know, or P.J. Bjerve or T. Haavelmo, himself.

LE: Would you say that Ragnar Frisch has been the leading Norwegian economist?

JF: Oh yes. In the 1930s and 1940s, he was the leading one. But then there were others who were coming up, like Haavelmo.

LE: What did Frisch do with the United Nations during this period you were with him?

JF: He, like a lot of other people, was very concerned about the inefficiencies inherent in a lot of a trade restrictions. But he was also conscious of the fact that you couldn't just argue that people should just drop trade restrictions and leave everything to the market, at least not immediately. One thing he did was to develop a system where one would have international negotiations and bargaining about how you would reduce your restrictions on something or other if I do the same. He developed a system where each country would indicate a kind of priority of what restrictions would be particularly important to get reduced and also a similar set of priorities of what they could offer from their own side. They would match this in a big matrix and help steer the negotiations.

LE: And he tried to sell this to the UN?

JF: He tried to sell this to the UN.

LE: The UN proper, or by that time GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) was there.

JF: No, it was the UN proper. I think it was the Economic and Social Council, but I have forgotten what link he had into it.

LE: Is there one thing you have learned from him that stands out? Or you were just learning a hell of a lot just working next to him as his assistant?

JF: At least I was very impressed by him, both his skills and his commitment. He worked all day and night long. He called me up at two o'clock in the morning and wanted to discuss things and so on. He called me up at parties that I attended, too.

LE: These famous people who call their assistants at three in the morning. I would have told him to bugger off.

JF: Yes, but then you probably wouldn't have been an assistant for very long. But you had to admire his commitment to these things. I also learned from his weaknesses. I could see the value he would have been if he had been a bit different.

LE: Tinbergen was, of course, a theoretical physicist before he turned, because of the economic depression and his refusal to do his military service, to economics. So he is a mathematician turned an economist. Had Frisch done something like that? Was he also more mathematically oriented first before turning to economics?

JF: I really don't know.

LE: You never asked him at two o'clock in the morning?

JF: I'm sure I know, in the sense of having heard it. But I don't remember anymore.

LE: So you learned from him a sense of dedication. He was like you; he was a mathematical economist.

JF: But he knew his mathematics. I don't. I know enough about mathematics not to be afraid of it, but don't really use it.

LE: OK, there we are in 1948, and then comes this opportunity to go to Paris, to the OEEC. How did that come about?

JF: Donald MacDougall became the economic advisor to the OEEC in late 1948, and he came to a place where there weren't many economists. He had to build up a staff, so he contacted his friends and so on and got going. Of course, he couldn't offer the job. I had to go through the system. I was only invited to come down for an interview, including where to put me in the grades and so on. I remember talking to a secretary who organized these interviews. I asked what they were talking about, what they wanted to know. So I was prepared for it. So it went quite well. Donald MacDougall wasn't there. It was sort of a staff recruitment board or something. I had to pass that test. But it was a different sort of situation, of course, from what we know now.

LE: But MacDougall was a consultant?

JF: He was economic advisor, they called it.

LE: Advisor to the Secretary-General.

JF: The equivalent, I think, today of the head of the economics department.

LE: So this is the story of your life. You went to Oxford. You met MacDougall, who was your supervisor. MacDougall becomes the economic advisor in the OEEC and gets you there. You didn't do anything for that? It just fell into your lap?

JF: But I had said to him at the time, as I've said later, "If ever you go into this and want somebody to work with you, let me know." So already then I knew what I wanted—and I knew that he was the sort of man who might do that sort of thing.

LE: You had told him, “If ever you go to Paris...”

JF: No, we hardly knew about Paris at the time. But because he was known to me not only as my supervisor, but as one who had been very close to Lord Charwell and the people in the P.M.’s Statistical Office in the UK during the war.

LE: You had not heard about the OEEC?

JF: Yes, I had heard of it. Oh yes.

LE: You knew why it was set up.

JF: Oh yes. It wasn’t called the OEEC. Before it became an organization, it was called the “consultative” something or other.

LE: We will come to the Marshall Plan in a minute. Now you did not immediately become the head of division.

JF: No. There was something called grades twelve and thirteen. I really was impressed with some of my colleagues. There were some very good people, like Jack Parkinson, whom I also worked with later. And the organization was not really hierarchically built up at the time, certainly not the work.

LE: Was Angus Maddison already there?

JF: No, no. He is too young for that.

LE: But when you started working at the OEEC, at the beginning of 1949, you were already in that division called Country Studies Division?

JF: No. I was in the economics division. I worked on the intra-European payments agreement and things like that. I assisted in preparing annual reviews—I have forgotten what we called them—but annual reports that we used to review the situation in Europe. And I was asked by the secretary-general, Robert Marjolin, to serve on an economic committee on NATO (North

Atlantic Treaty Organization) at one point, where he brought in three or four of his people with him. There as it happened I did more or less country studies showing the burden of defense.

LE: When you came, Marjolin was already secretary-general of OEEC?

JF: Yes, he was secretary-general.

LE: Was he the kind of person that he was later painted to be, an excellent person both substantively and organizationally?

JF: Yes. I don't think OECD (Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development) or OEEC has ever had a man like him. He was far superior to anyone else I've seen since. He was so different, in many respects, from Kristensen or Gregoire and these people. He was a fantastic man. I have a very great admiration and respect for him. I have only had remote connection with him since, but I have always admired him. I think he is one of those who contributed to a great deal in his very young years and somehow did not get into the right spot later.

LE: Correct. I don't remember how he ended up, but he disappeared somehow.

JF: Yes, he was a commissioner in Brussels. And then he tried his hand at being elected and didn't win. Then he was in the treasury, but I think as one sitting on the side of the hierarchy. He was greatly respected, but not quite—he was a fabulous man.

LE: Now how did it come about that you became so quickly head of division? Was it MacDougall?

JF: No, no, no, because MacDougall was there only for six months after I came. He was there for a year only, and then came Alec Cairncross, and then came Brian Reddaway. Then after that, there was a Frenchman who moved up for a period. Then came Etienne Kirschen.

LE: Who?

JF: Etienne Kirschen. Don't you remember him? From Brussels. But the people I worked with and for were MacDougall, Cairncross, and Reddaway. I learned a lot from each of them. They were very different. They each spent only a year there. So just about the three years I was there.

LE: How was it that you were so successful in the little time you spent? Was it because it was a much smaller organization then? It was probably much more focused on the Marshall Plan.

JF: Yes, it was very focused on that.

LE: There were very few Norwegians.

JF: No, after a time there were quite a few Norwegians. Yes, I was successful, but I was just one of the crowd. Jack Parkinson, whom I mentioned, whom I first interacted with, was also a friend and student of MacDougall's, and was a little bit senior to me. He became the head of the country studies division. After that, he went back to work with MacDougall in London. When he left, the question was, "Who should replace him?" I happened to be there, but I had already turned in my resignation to come here to Bergen. Then Marjolin asked me to stay, and I said, "Well, I would like to do it. But then you have to write to the institute." So instead of coming to the institute in 1951, I came here in 1952.

LE: You are talking about the Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI), where we are today.

JF: Yes. And by the way, the country studies division had special offices for each of a small group of the member-countries, and a special office for the overseas territories.

LE: Yes, the colonies were still very much there. So that was one instance where the country studies must have been very different. They must have been very different in many other kinds of respects. Or was there a kind of pattern?

JF: I think the pattern was set early, both before me and with me. This very much is now the special and constructive OECD way of doing things: putting forward your country's position and getting challenged by your peers. That system was instituted initially from the point of view of getting the right amount of aid distributed in the right way. But it continued, not only on those matters but on other things. You had to explain to your peers why you were doing things and so on.

LE: So that is really where you got your first direct experience with development. It was not called development then.

JF: Yes. Then Marjolin was asked by Stacy May, who had been the Rockefeller Foundation's social science man, to come up with or supply a European in an effort that the Twentieth Century Fund was doing in Costa Rica as a case study of [Harry] Truman's Point Four. So I suppose I wasn't needed by the OEEC. I was at least asked whether I would want to go on that mission.

LE: We will come to that also, but who asked you there to do that? These were the Americans who asked you?

JF: No, the Americans asked—I don't know who started it, but the Twentieth Century Fund got Stacy May of the Rockefeller Brothers, who had formerly been with the Rockefeller Foundation, to do a case study of Point Four in Costa Rica, as they had done in Turkey. And in organizing their study, they wanted an agriculturist. They found one from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. They wanted one for finance, and they got him from the U.S. Treasury. And they wanted a European because of the traditional links there.

LE: You were the token European.

JF: I was, if you like, the token European. I don't know about that. So they asked Marjolin to suggest someone. So looking around to see who could most easily be dispensed with, he asked me to go.

LE: You were there in the early years: 1949 to 1952. This was still in the full swing of the Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan was from 1948 to 1952, basically. The OEEC was set up for that purpose.

JF: Yes, very much so.

LE: There are two questions, really. One is how did you look at the Marshall Plan and the role of the OEEC in it? And secondly, did it ever occur to you maybe the United Nations should have been involved, or should have been the body through which this kind of aid should have been channeled? So the first question is how was it to be there in those days—the Marshall Plan, the OEEC? How did you look at the Marshall Plan, and how did you look at the role of the organization?

JF: Can I take the second first, because I don't think it ever really was considered. It was very much a European and an American wish to do it, sort of bilaterally between the U.S. and Europe. As you know, it was the Americans who took the initiative to invite countries that would be members of the Marshall Plan. They included even Russia. But Russia, understandably, declined. Therefore, so did some other countries in Eastern Europe. So it was quite clear that it was, in that sense, bilateral between the U.S. and Europe. I don't think anyone ever really questioned that, or thought that it ought to be different.

LE: It didn't strike you as odd?

JF: No, it didn't strike me as odd. What was odd was the generosity of the Americans, and the willingness to let the Europeans go a long way in deciding how to divide the cake. It

really was impressive. It is impressive to this day. It is exactly the opposite of what we see between donors and recipients these days. And the Americans are in front on both occasions. Now what was the beginning question?

LE: The first question was, "How did you see the Marshall Plan and the role of the OEEC in it? You have already replied to the first part of the question, that it was very generous. But of course it was also the self-interest of the United States.

JF: A very enlightened self-interest.

LE: Yes, it was indeed an act of enlightened self-interest on the part of the political leaders of those days. The second part of the question was, "How did you see the role of the OEEC in the Marshall Plan?" Was it a successful role, both in terms of the countries around the table, as well as the technical support that people like you in the secretariat gave it?

JF: I think it must have been a pretty good model for that kind of relationship because it was an organization not just for bargaining and striking compromises and so on. It was an organization that was so organized and so established and functioning that it emphasized getting to know everyone else: understanding why they needed what they requested and also understanding that if you build up this industry it will hurt mine. Nevertheless, you might insist on doing it, but at least it would be done in the face of knowledge that wasn't there before.

I am not suggesting that people were just thinking of the welfare of others. It was self-interest on the part of each of the countries. But it was self-interest organized within a system where really it was very constructive.

LE: And the Americans were really observers? They did not steer—

JF: They were very active observers, of course. You couldn't easily fool them. You could, but not easily. And you know the economists would look at these plans. For instance,

Norway was very good at getting a lot of aid. They had to put up a case for the aid they wanted—well, last year's aid was one indication of what you might get next year. But if you wanted a lot more, you had to have a really good case for it. You had to show not only that you would get this investment going, but it would raise the GDP (gross domestic product) and at the same time mobilize savings at home, and all sorts of things. So you had to be a pretty good economist, both to build up the case and to challenge it. And this was done with unequal vigor and ability between countries. And the secretariat was then a kind of guarantor that at least the thrust of the arguments was right. I really think it was a very good system.

LE: Now would you have thought that the OEEC should have gone out of business with the end of the Marshall Plan? Or did you agree that it turned into OECD at the end of the 1950s and became what it is now?

JF: I think in a sense it was a success in what we just talked about, the success of such an organization in getting to know your neighbor—weaknesses and strengths. That success was, in a sense, shifted out to other things, like even taxation policies and payments policies, and of course in particular trade policies, as perhaps we will develop later. The emphasis had been on the Marshall Plan, of course. Afterwards, it became more a question of getting rid of all the restrictions, including those on American goods. So it didn't need the focus on Marshall Plan monies to see the value of this kind of interaction.

So I think for quite some years, it was a good to continue. I can remember that there was some searching around for good topics to discuss. One thing, of course, was the European productivity lag behind the U.S. At least for a time, I think that was useful. Then, over the years, it has developed into monetary and financial matters. Now in 1960, when it was changed

into the OECD, the main thing that happened in that shift was that North America became a member and then Japan.

LE: The United States and Canada became members in 1959/1960.

JF: One part of that transition was the inclusion, in principle, of everybody at the same level. That also indicated that the Marshall Plan wasn't really any longer the special concern. Then why did they call it development—that wasn't really the thinking of development in developing countries. It was development in their own countries more than anything else they were thinking of.

LE: We have just about twenty minutes left on this tape. So far, the United Nations has only come marginally on the horizon, with Ragnar Frisch doing some work. Was there any contact with the United Nations during your OEEC years?

JF: Yes, there were statistics and things, and establishment of GDP systems as a measure of accounting. There was a lot of that—trade statistics. On that there was a lot.

LE: Did you ever go to the United Nations?

JF: No, in those years I didn't. Well, there is a little hole in the story here. I can remember in Oxford days one of the things that came up there was what became GATT. And this was a little bit linked to what I was working on. This was discussed quite a bit in the seminars that I was talking about, and certainly on many an occasion. In a sense, I would have been equally attracted at the time if a similar opportunity had arisen in the WTO (World Trade Organization) or in the GATT, as I was in the OEEC.

LE: You would have just as quickly gone to Geneva?

JF: If it meant I was there building something.

LE: Your wife, of course, was with you in your travels. Was it a good time for family life, or did you work like a devil?

JF: I didn't work like a devil. I worked much more efficiently than that. But it was a good time for the family at the time. And in retrospect, my wife remembers an episode from when we lived down here and there was a train that went by. So if you went to town, you went on the train. And once when she was going on the train with our daughter, who was then six years old, or maybe a year or two later, they sat down—this was at about ten o'clock in the morning—and our daughter suddenly said, "Mother, think of it, these people have never traveled any further than we can go with this." So I think for the children it was hard sometimes, uprooting in various ways. But on balance, it has been good for the family.

LE: I'm happy to hear that. Now tell me, until 1952, you had not lived in Bergen.

JF: No. That's right.

LE: So there you are, born in the north, raised in the south, learning economics in Oxford and in Paris, and in Oslo. Why all of the sudden—you are in Paris—there is this Christian Michelsen Institute in Bergen? How did this come about?

JF: We had decided, as a family, that we were going to be in Paris for two or three years. Therefore, towards the end of the second year, I told people at home that I would be coming home soon—home being Oslo. I was still an employee of the central statistical office. I had a job there dealing with the democratic studies and the 1946 population census. So I was on leave for all these years, including my time in France.

LE: Hold on, we have to recreate this. The last time I heard you were in Oslo, you were with Ragnar Frisch and it was economics. From there you went to Paris.

JF: In January 1946, I went to Oxford the first time. When in April I came back from Oxford to be at home for nearly six months, I accepted a job offer from the central statistical office to work on the population census. Ever since then, until I came to Bergen in 1952, I was on leave of absence from them when I did something else.

LE: Good, that's clear. So how did this strange institution, born out of this strange man Christian Michelsen, how did this invitation land on your desk?

JF: The institute, as I told you outside this session, is really pretty open-ended in terms of the subjects it takes up. The board had, for some time in 1950 or 1951, or maybe even earlier, been thinking of getting an economist into the place or possibly someone more sociology-minded. They had the idea that you could make up a kind of research field on the nature and conditions of freedom and so on, some pretty grandiose idea which would have fitted quite well—verbally, at least—with the institute's origins.

So they tried in various ways to find a practical way or approaching this, but didn't. But they had started looking around to find someone for this glorified stipend that they offered. Economics was one of the disciplines. So they, like you and I would have done, worked through their friends: "Who do you know? Can you think of anyone who would want it?" Since I was working in the OEEC and doing all right, having got a relevant background, the board started finding out about me. Then, a young but senior banker who was on the CMI board—he was also a politician—knew about my position. In fact, one day in Paris, the Norwegian parliament sent its finance committee down to Paris to see what the hell was going on in that place. So I got to know some of them. For a week I went back to Oslo to the finance ministry to advise them on economic and financial issues relating to the budget, notably the defense budget.

So I had a number of contacts and friends, but not contacts and friends with a view to finding a job. I was more or less settled—unless something turned up—to go back to the central statistical office. But then one day, this banker came back to Paris with another politician, for other reasons, and they invited me out to Cafe Royale.

LE: Very chic?

JF: Oh I still remember it. I can feel it—a lovely meal. Anyhow, that is how they then—I suppose they must have made a few other inquiries—but how they decided to invite me to come to the CMI. I would have come more or less straight away in 1951, but this thing I mentioned before happened about staying another year to be head of the Country Studies Division.

LE: So again we have here an illustration of how you just stumbled from one thing into another. Had you heard about the Christian Michelsen Institute?

JF: Oh yes.

LE: It was famous in Norway?

JF: At least it was a household word in my family. One of the early members of the institute, the one who became a bishop, was a friend of my father, not that I can remember meeting him.

LE: Was this one of the first times that a well-known capitalist, ship-owner, gave his money to—

JF: No, Bergen is quite well endowed, but from a different time when money was worth something. Some ship owners have given stipends, but this was the only institute that has survived and prospered. Maybe the others haven't quite established institutes. They have established stipend funds.

LE: So you stumbled on it again. This was not an active policy on your part. It was an active policy on their part. And you were the first economist. Who were the other chaps, then?

JF: There were two, and then three, people on the other side, on the technical side, who were building up basically their own institute.

LE: What kind of technical side?

JF: Well I can remember something they did in 1952, when I first came here. There is a lot of fish out here, herring, cod, tuna, and so on. And one of the things they wanted was to separate fish with hard roe from the rest. So, what they did was to put all the fish on a sliding belt, and x-rayed or whatever they did as it passed through, and if it had hard roe it went into one particular bin.

More importantly, they were very central to the building of the atomic energy plant near Oslo—Halden, it's called. It still exists. They also worked on micro-links for the telephone and so on.

LE: But you came not as an institution builder. You came as an individual who got a huge stipend for practically no work. Yes?

JF: Yes, that's right. That's right.

LE: When did you get the idea to institutionalize, within the Christian Michelsen Institute, which was mostly concerned with herring and Mackerel, the idea to set up a department on development studies?

JF: That came quite a bit later, so I think we first have to say a few words about those five years, from 1952 to 1957. When I came, there was already a lawyer here—a little older than me, but a young man—who specialized and wrote quite a few things on human rights, the UN, and also the European Human Rights Conventions. So he operated, in a sense, as a political

scientist. But he was a lawyer by training. He remained there for three years with me. So there were the two of us.

Then he left to go to the Foreign Office and later to the High Court. When he left, it took a couple of years, maybe, he was then replaced by a sociologist whose name was Stein Rokkan. He came in maybe 1957, something like that. He came, in some ways, like I came. The institute board had vague ideas as to what sort of person they wanted, and they wrote to university professors and others asking if they had someone to propose. There were lots of proposals in that case, and they selected, fortunately, Stein Rokkan. So he came here on the same basis as I did, in 1957.

LE: Five years later.

JF: Yes, it may be as late as that. Rokkan was very good at mobilizing people around him, both students and more advanced researchers. He had a great capacity. Even though he didn't build up a unit within the institute, he had a lot of people around, particularly down at the university. So he and I, seeing that we had parallel interests, came up with a proposal to the institute board and to the council—I think that may have been as late as 1962—where we said, “Let's build up an institute—basically around the two of us—basically on economics and development, which by that time was my field, and in comparative sociology, which was his field.”

Now the institute had a very hard time accepting our proposal. They had, I think, great confidence in both Stein and myself, but their problem—and it was a real problem—was whether the institute should really do that. Should they go away from their traditional stipend policy to building up an institute program? So it was the first thing to discuss, and it was very difficult. Now, one way to get this going was, in my case, that I got somebody else to finance it—the

Rockefeller Foundation. They came up with US \$100,000 in 1962 or 1963. That eased the decision.

Stein, on the other hand, in a sense had an even better case than me. Yet, he decided to move to the university. He left the institute. He kept very close contact with us, but he left. And for the next fifteen years he was out, but then for his last two years he was back here. Yet, he was down at the university and always a strength for the institute. Anyhow, we could have built up two parallel programs. Also Stein very much wanted it, and they would have interrelated quite well. But it happened that the two programs, in fact, developed in separate institutions. In the early 1980s, my program was extended beyond development to human rights.

LE: So the institutional arrangement was introduced in the early 1960s?

JF: Here, yes, in what used to be called the humanities department. Because, as I said, on the other side, they had started institutionalizing theirs in the 1940s or even earlier.

LE: Why then were they so hesitant to institutionalize—

JF: Because they were of two minds about how good that experience was.

LE: They were not convinced that economics and development would be something for the Christian Michelsen Institute?

JF: For the long haul. But then, particularly, they didn't feel that they really wanted an institute program on anything new.

LE: Now that was your idea. You had to work hard for that.

JF: Oh yes. I had to work hard for that.

LE: Now, we are almost at the end of the tape. So we must call it a day. What I would like to start off tomorrow morning with is how all of a sudden economics and development had become your hobbyhorse.

JF: Well, I was very happy with what I was doing in the mid-1950s and so on, on trade issues. I had worked quite a bit on trade discrimination, which was very much a topic at the time, and customs unions. And there was political interest in the establishment of a Nordic customs union. There was discussion about the European Common Market and so on. And I did a lot of analysis of that sort of thing from a trade point of view, how much of a consequence would there be for Norway.

LE: When you were already here on the stipend?

JF: Yes. But then in 1957, in the summer, I was invited to some grand thing in the U.S. for still a young man at the time.

LE: We will start with that tomorrow. Thank you very much.

JF: Thank you.

LE: Good morning. This is tape number two, the interview of Louis Emmerij with Just Faaland as his victim. We are still at Bergen, Norway, in the Christian Michelsen Institute. It is the 13th of September. Now Just, at the end of the afternoon yesterday, we were on the trip to the United States of America because the question was, "How and when did you really get interested in the economics of development?" And you were in full swing, telling about something that happened in the United States.

JF: Well, it shouldn't be dramatized too much. My interest in the world was sort of developing over time in incremental steps. But this invitation I got to participate first at a seminar at Princeton University, and then later on a big do out on Long Island, it further accelerated my interest in international affairs, not just international economics. The meeting in Princeton was a very highfalutin sort of thing, with a lot of very central politicians, as well as

academics, essentially to discuss NATO and the future of the world in terms of the atom bomb and that sort of thing.

LE: Which year are we now?

JF: That was in the summer of 1957. I was duly impressed by all of the important personalities that I met. I can remember discussing with Robert Oppenheimer—not a bilateral one; there were several of us together. I remember asking him, “What about this atom bomb? Why can’t you people make a clean atom bomb that explodes very effectively but doesn’t spread out all this radioactive stuff?” He stopped and he waited a bit, and he said, “I don’t know anything in physics that should say that we can’t do that. But we don’t do it now.” This sort of impressed me very much. And that particular exchange illustrates that. There were very many other things like that.

Among the participants from Norway—there were two or three others—was a trade union man. That was the first occasion I had to get to know him quite well.

LE: But from the atom bomb to development there is more than one step.

JF: Yes, so that was just one thing. But it was a sort of eye-opener in those directions about what was going on in important peoples’ minds about the future of the world. That was about two weeks, and we were sitting there at the Princeton Inn and looking out on the lovely green. And the contrast between what we were talking about and the surrounding was very impressive.

But after that, I participated for I think what must have been as much as four weeks—I think it was two sessions of two weeks—out on Long Island. It was Amherst College in Massachusetts that had a facility out there, a very fine house where they, I think for a year or two before then, and maybe four or five years thereafter during the summer, organized seminars. At

least those two that I participated in were on economics, on the organization of the world in respect of international economic policies.

It was more academics than politicians who participated. There I got the first sort of substantial, or more profound anyhow, insight into the role of the developing world as well as the rest of us around the Atlantic, mostly. And of course the people that participated were very well-known economists. Harry Johnson I interacted with a great deal. And there were others like Alec Cairncross.

LE: Who you had already known at the OEEC.

JF: Yes. A few of these people I had already known before. Many of them I had only known by having seen their writings and so on. But it gave me a certain amount of insight and inspiration to be concerned about the world at large, and it gave me a lot of contacts.

LE: But these four weeks—that's an incredibly long affair. Was this on the economics of development, was it something about international—

JF: The four weeks were divided into two, and the second two weeks really had a different orientation from the first. I happened to be in both.

LE: What was the topic?

JF: Well I have forgotten exactly what it was. What sits with me is really discussion about international trade policies and international organizations. All this was in 1957.

LE: But just before you left the OEEC, you headed straight to Costa Rica in 1952.

JF: It was already in 1950. That was really my first encounter with development. Yes, it was certainly the first time I had visited a developing country. But it became a sort of interlude. I really worked on more Atlantic questions—the dollar problem and that sort of thing.

LE: That was a very interesting thing, if we can backtrack just for a moment to 1950. You were in the OEEC, and you were sent on a mission to Costa Rica as a member of the OEEC secretariat in the framework of Truman's Point Four.

JF: Yes. The mission was in 1950 and the book came in 1952. But I wasn't there as a member of the OEEC secretariat. I think I was still paid by the OEEC, but I was released so as to participate in the mission.

LE: OK, so in 1957 you were bitten by the development bug?

JF: Yes, to some extent. I think it opened my eyes and my interests beyond what I had been doing hitherto, which was customs unions, and the dollar problem, and really overall international trade.

LE: Customs unions, international trade, the dollar issue. So these seminars opened the whole thing up. You wrote somewhere that it was really your experience in Pakistan.

JF: Yes. In December 1957, I went out to Pakistan. A month or two before that I was approached and invited to join that group.

LE: You spent two years as a member of the Harvard Development Advisory Service.

JF: Yes, in Karachi, working with the Pakistan Planning Commission.

LE: That is where you got really hooked.

JF: Yes, I suppose that's right. It was more sort of a gradual thing with a few stops on the way.

LE: This is before the institutionalization of development here at Bergen. Yesterday, we talked a little bit about that. But the institutionalization of development at the Christian Michelsen Institute started with what is called DERAP (Development Action and Research

Program). That really took place in the 1960s, the early 1960s with money from the Rockefeller Foundation.

JF: Yes, mainly.

LE: Do you remember how much money that was?

JF: I'm pretty sure it was 100,000 U.S. dollars to last for two or three years.

LE: You were totally free. There were no strings attached.

JF: Well I got it on the basis of a plan I had for building it up.

LE: So in the 1950s, you were a visiting fellow at Nuffield College, in 1954 and 1955, a member of the Harvard Development Advisory Service in Pakistan in 1957 and 1959, and in 1960 you were a member of the Ford Foundation Economic Service Mission to Eastern Nigeria. Now what was this Nuffield thing in 1954 and 1955?

JF: It's true, we sort of skipped that yesterday. It really was in continuation of my graduate studies, but by then turned somewhat away from the topics that mostly interested me as a graduate student towards customs unions. As I said, in the beginning it was more international trade and employment. Now it was more the particular form of international interaction through customs unions and so on. I had a very stimulating year there. I remember interacting with Hicks on a small but major contribution of his to demand theory where he issued a book which he gave me to review, a manuscript. And little me had quite a few points on logic that I pointed out to him, which gave a very stimulating discussion with him.

LE: He gave you a footnote in a final version?

JF: It was in the foreword. But it again illustrates that it was a very intellectually stimulating environment there. I was, as they called it, a research fellow.

LE: This was still during the period of international trade, before the Long Island experience?

JF: That's right.

LE: Tell me a little bit about your experience in Pakistan between 1957 and 1959.

JF: I came in December of 1957 and I left in December of 1959. The Harvard Advisory Group had been there then for about two years already and was very central to the formulation of the first Pakistan five-year plan, which was before my time. That was ongoing when I became involved in getting the second-five year plan done. My responsibility to begin with was mostly to work on the development of industry. Mind you, our concern was with both what was then East and West Pakistan. It wasn't just the current Pakistan, of course. And the development of industry, the way it could be developed and was developed, was conditioned by the fact that you had the split with India, and by the not very active interaction between India and Pakistan in terms of industrial development.

Pakistan was trying to become an industrial economy, more or less on its own without dependence on India. This was important both in East and West Pakistan, but for different reasons. So I was an advisor for this sort of thing, including the direction for industrial development, the way industrial policy should be or might be formulated, the institutions for industrial investments, and so on, that were developed. And that went on for about the first year.

Then I was moved to foreign trade and macroeconomic matters. There, after a short period, my counterpart became Mahbub ul Haq, who had just come out of the university. So for the last year or year and half, he was my counterpart there. Of course, that gave us a basis for interaction in decades thereafter.

I was there, of course, when General Ayub [Khan] took over in 1958. I can remember, quite vividly, that I was in very considerable doubt whether this takeover by the military did, or should, affect the way we as an advisory group should operate. There were one or two others in the group who also speculated. But it strikes me that the group very easily accommodated to a totally new situation.

LE: You accepted and stayed there, and—

JF: Yes, and stayed and did the same sort of thing for the new set of masters. We did end up, after a process of thought and maybe even intellectual compromise—I don't know—saying that even under the new circumstances this sort of work had to go on. These things happen all the time in this kind of work that we are doing, and you have to wonder about the relationship between your advisory role and the role of the powers that be.

LE: Was it Gus Papanek who was the—

JF: He was there, but he wasn't the director.

LE: Again the same question. I am really intrigued by that. Harvard approached you.

JF: Yes, in late 1957.

LE: They approached you mainly on the basis of the work you had been doing hitherto—international trade.

JF: Yes, and I suppose again the kind of colleagues and friends I had. Like you and I, when we want to make up a team, we think about our friends and colleagues that we trust. So I was, in that sense, well-enough known. Also, Harvard would like to have not only Americans, so they deliberately looked beyond their own borders.

LE: It is interesting that, with your specialization up until then, they put you on the development of industry. That was totally new for you.

JF: Yes, that's right. And in a way it is still right. This has happened to me several times. I was put in as industry advisor. The advantage of being an economist is that you come to know a little about everything. Later on in life, I became an agricultural policy specialist and I don't know anything first hand about the agricultural production process.

LE: It's good to hear that. Anyway, these two years—they were exactly two years—were very important for you, and were most probably an impetus for you to start thinking about an institutional base in the Christian Michelsen Institute. What was this Ford Foundation economic survey mission to Eastern Nigeria in 1960?

JF: You know, Nigeria became independent on the 1st of October 1960. It was run in three regions—East, West, and North. These days, there are twenty or more states. Each region, and certainly the rather active Ibos in Eastern Nigeria, wanted to prepare themselves for the day of independence where the three regions would, between them, have to decide everything. And they wanted to have their own plans and ambitions clearly worked out for how to move as part of an independent country. So they asked the Ford Foundation whether they could have a little support in developing an Eastern Nigeria development plan. The Ford Foundation then got together three of us—one American, a Scotsman, and myself.

LE: Who were the other two?

JF: Frank Moore from America, and Smith—I have forgotten his first name—from Scotland. He was an agricultural chap.

LE: That was a rather short mission?

JF: Yes, we were there for six weeks, I think, including writing the report there. We actually left on the 2nd or 3rd of October, after the independence celebrations. I can remember that it taught me a lesson in being there which has stayed with me later on. When you are on

these missions sometimes you get to talk to responsible ministers. I remember talking to the minister of education. I had been there for a week or two, or something. He wanted to talk about his own policies. He was in deep trouble because the teachers were wanting more money and the usual thing. They also had just started to make primary education non-paying, free. They had done this for the first year students. The question was how to do it now for the second year and also the third. Of course, that would require a lot of money. Of course, the teachers wanted all this to happen. But he didn't get the finance for it.

As we were talking, it just came to my head that I had heard that they started at school at six, or even five, quite early. I also knew that the teaching they got at that first level was very poor and was done by untrained teachers because the trained teachers tended to do the higher levels. I said, "Well, maybe you should think about starting school at seven. Then you would, in a sense, have one year less to finance. Also, you would not expose these children to poor teaching. The result might be quite all right in the end. In my country we start at seven in school, and some of us seem to be alright doing that."

I was half joking, and he responded and we discussed it a bit. I thought that was the beginning and the end. The next morning, splashing out in the newspapers, the minister was proposing to do so and so, practically the kind of thing I was describing. Well, what did this tell me? It told me to be more responsible, to be more sure—

LE: Later on the minister was assassinated?

JF: No, no.

LE: It actually happened?

JF: No, it didn't happen, perhaps fortunately. But talking about that without knowing anything about the pedagogical side of it, or having examined anything, it was terrible.

LE: It doesn't strike me as particularly odd. Anyway, so there we are. It is 1960. You have had Costa Rica, a passing experience, Pakistan a longer and more deeply-felt development encounter, Eastern Nigeria made you responsible in your suggestions. You came back to the Christian Michelsen Institute, and you are ready to set up a development institute, so to speak.

JF: I was determined to give it a try, anyhow.

LE: Who was your partner in that? Was that still the political scientist whom we encountered yesterday? The two of you got together and—

JF: No, I think in a way I was alone in this to begin with. I had the Harvard Development Advisory Service as a kind of model. A little later, maybe a few years later, the idea came into being. But I felt that I had the experience that there is so much to learn about the real world by going into it, that you could get research to be, perhaps not better, but more relevant to policy issues if you had some sort of a combination of research and fieldwork. This was still the idea behind the Harvard thing. They hadn't proven themselves—certainly not to Harvard itself—but they were trying to do this. Of course they had come a long way, and they had some very good people. So in Bergen, starting this, I had to be somewhat modest in my expectations as to what to do.

In trying to get support for this within the institute, which means with the board, I tended to say that in a way I would like to institutionalize a bit the life I had started to live. Beside whatever was done in our universities, we should also have in Norway an institution that built up this kind of interaction between academic research and development policy fieldwork. There was at the time—there has been all the time, really—some support for work relating to poverty around the world, and some interest in and concern for the lot of other peoples. This was very

much in line with the institute's main objectives as set out in the testament. So I drew on that to say that the institute was the right place to try to do this.

One reason why it might be a good place was that the universities themselves in Bergen and in Oslo were hardly interested at all in development studies in those days. They had the traditional anthropology and that sort of thing, but certainly economists and others were not really interested in this. That is very different today. But if one wanted to do this, one could not do it at the university as readily as one perhaps could do it here. That was my argument.

Now I realized, of course, that if it were to be done by more than one or two people here, it would have to be financed by others than the institute. The institute's funds couldn't possibly sustain a very large operation.

LE: You mean Christian Michelsen's legacy and fortune did not stretch that far?

JF: No, no, no. It couldn't. As I think I have said in this interview, the institute's principal idea was to base itself on a few individuals who did their own thing. So the board—and there is a council of the institute which has connections throughout the universities in particular—they had difficulties in accepting this, both as an appropriate development for the institute and in terms of commitments of funds, because they would, in a sense, be the residual financial guarantors. I discussed my proposal with my international contacts, seeking their support. And the Rockefeller Foundation, with whom I had some other links, turned out to be very interested in supporting this initiative financially. I also got some extra money from Norway, including from the Ship Owners Association.

LE: It's all in the family.

JF: Yes. Not very much initially here in Norway, the main thing came from the Rockefeller Foundation. And of course the institute kept financing myself. But even getting the

money from the Rockefeller Foundation was something that I could not do on my own. It would have to be the institute that applied for it. So it took me a while, and some agonizing on the part of the authorities here, to finally sign the application. One reason they all said—these people in the council said, “Of course you can’t get money from the Rockefeller Foundation on that sort of basis. They don’t believe in that.” So I said, “Maybe not. But let’s give it a try.” This reflected their traditional university experience.

LE: The decision, therefore, was already taken, after a lot of agonizing, before you got the money from Rockefeller. Or was it the money from Rockefeller, and then it came that it convinced them that your idea was right?

JF: Well, when I could give them assurance that the Rockefeller money would come, they signed the application.

LE: So there we are in 1962. The development wing institutionalized, based, you said, on the model of the Harvard Development Advisory Service.

JF: Yes. Realizing it was more modest, but yes.

LE: If I may make a little intermezzo here, the Development Advisory Service is basically advisory. It did very little research, really. It never proved itself as an original think tank.

JF: That’s right, but in a way you could say the same of this place.

LE: Well, that’s what I wanted you to say.

JF: Yes, because the philosophy behind this, the working hypothesis, was that having this combination of fieldwork and research work would make for a rather special animal in the field. You would have a background in research and continuity and so on. It would also make you a special animal on the research side. So that was the working hypothesis. It is arguable

whether you can prove that it succeeded. Forever it couldn't work, but for a while it did work, I think.

LE: So you set up that institution. Later on, you got money also from the Norwegian government. And it became an established sort of thing with people being advised to spend something like half the time in their field. Now a couple of more specific questions: We had in the 1950s—1955 it was—this famous Bandung conference. At the time, you were probably somewhere in Oxford. Do you remember that it rang a bell with you, or was it just one of the things that you read in the newspaper and didn't give much thought to?

JF: I think it was when I was at Oxford. I think it was one of the things that we talked about. I remember, in particular, the Yugoslav, [Josip Broz] Tito's, involvement in it. Maybe I remember that because he was nearer to home than Indonesia and so on. But I think it gave me the further evidence that I came to realize more clearly, that the world was changing, that things were moving. But I can't remember that I had any particular expectations from this, or anything like that.

LE: It is interesting. We have been asking this question to practically everybody, and I think everybody so far—and you must be number forty-one we are interviewing—it was just one of those things. It is interesting that events that are considered important afterwards were not seen as that at the time. Now you mentioned somewhere in the preparatory papers you have sent to us for this interview that the institute was working on something that was later called “basic needs,” on education, health, before 1975 or 1976. Is that correct?

JF: Yes, that's very correct. How can I best put that in perspective? As I said in an aside earlier, in Norway there always has been an interest in development; an interest based in Norway very much around history of getting rid of poverty through development. And there is a built-in

unhappiness in the realization that so many human beings live so miserably throughout the world, coupled with a realization that you can do something about it if we get ourselves organized. Norway started this India project in 1951, I think it was. So a good amount of interest in developing countries is linked to the lack of basic needs for so many peoples around the world. We didn't call it "basic needs," of course.

Therefore, it was quite natural that a group working on development here at the institute came to try to focus on what we later called "basic needs." We had a lot of discussion amongst ourselves, and internationally, about the need for primary education, for instance, and again drawing on our own history from the nineteenth century when near universal primary education was gradually introduced, knowing how central it was to our own development. It was natural to take that up and the same with health issues and so on.

Not only did we argue about education and health developments, but also about infrastructure as so basic to development, so much of a precondition, that it ought to be given more emphasis in development aid and development policy. I can remember many an occasion where we were countered by the argument that these were really only public consumption, rather than investment areas—this sort of attitude. And we were arguing against that.

LE: Against what?

LF: Against that view, that it was just a consumption item. So then, as economists, the natural thing to do was to get into the quantification of the problem and the nature of it. Now I did some of that work, but most of the concrete work on this was done by my colleague Ole David Koht Norbye, who in the early 1970s—I don't think it was before that—began to work out estimates of what universal education would cost, what does it take and how long does it take to train the teachers, and all this sort of stuff. He began to come up with the numbers, on the whole

showing that it was not really all that much that it takes in terms of straight resources. Therefore, it would be a worthwhile thing to do.

LE: I don't remember. Was he doing a rate of return analysis that had become the fashion in the 1960s?

JF: I don't think he did much of that directly. He was using that, but I don't think he contributed to that. It was mainly how you would put that sort of thing into a national plan.

LE: So working on education, health, were there any relationships in those days—the 1960s, early 1970s—with any United Nations agencies?

JF: On the basic needs, I don't think there was much of that until into the 1970s at some point. But of course, we did work with—I did quite a bit of work with—UNCTAD. But that was not on basic needs, that was different.

LE: We will be coming to that.

JF: We will be coming to that. So I think it was more in the context of development planning generally, and within it the need for basic needs, that we worked. We worked on that as research topics, but it also colored the way we operated in the field. Whenever we were out, we were very interested in primary education and health.

LE: Tell me, you mentioned that you encountered young Mahbub ul Haq when he returned from his studies in England and the U.S. Do you remember your first impression of him, without, of course, taking into account what he subsequently became? What was your first impression of young Mahbub ul Haq?

JF: Well it was in 1958 when he came back. I was well into my thirties and a father, and he was, perhaps, twenty-eight and a bachelor. I remember him, of course, as very bright, very clearly bright as compared to others. I am talking now of the Pakistanis. He was, of course,

technically well-schooled. He was somewhat brash to begin with, and had his successes, but also his setbacks, because of that. His relationship with the chief economist was difficult and so on. He obviously was a better economist.

LE: He thought he should be the chief economist immediately himself.

JF: Well, I don't remember him saying that. But maybe he should have been. No, he shouldn't have been. So it didn't take long before he realized that it was important to interact with and support other people. This was before he got married, and he had time to interact with all of us. Everyone knew that he was going to go far.

LE: Now back to the 1960s, the Christian Michelsen Institute's developmental program is established in 1962. In 1965, you spend some time at UNCTAD.

JF: Yes.

LE: How did that come about? It was 1965, wasn't it?

JF: Yes, I think that's right. It was after the 1964 conference. Well, I think there was a felt need within UNCTAD to get somebody to help them work on what used to be the "Gap Analysis." UNCTAD based much of its advocacy at the time on ideas about the gap. Quite a few efforts had been done in other institutions to make estimates of orders of magnitude.

LE: Now which gap?

JF: The foreign exchange and the investment gap.

LE: You see, because this is an interview for the ages. People might be new to it. The foreign exchange gap and—

JF: Savings investments gap. If you want to invest, you will need to save or get hold of somebody else's savings in order to invest. So if, in fact, you have tremendous investment opportunities but you don't have much savings, there is a gap. Also, if you want to import you

have to pay for it. If you have a lot of useful things to import for investment and for consumption, but you don't have much to export, then a gap arises.

LE: A foreign exchange gap. Now had Hollis Chenery already written about it?

JF: No, I don't think by that time. No.

LE: Because he made the two-gap model famous, of course.

JF: I suppose so.

LE: You were already in that before him.

JF: Yes. So was Raúl Prebisch. And at the 1964 conference Prebisch had already presented something like it. I have forgotten the figures, but he had presented a quantitative estimate of foreign aid needs, net investment needs. I am trying to remember whether it was for several years or for a period. I have forgotten. It was challenged, of course, and he needed to work more on it to substantiate it.

So I was there. He had other people in his own office in New York to work on this, and one or two of them were very good, including Gerry Arsenis, by the way. So I was asked to be a consultant for—I have forgotten, maybe for a couple of months—in New York. With the others, but as my main job, we worked out a kind of a review of the various estimates that had been done in various ways and the limitations of this and how it needed to be supplemented and so on.

Then in the follow-up to that, with UNCTAD in Geneva, I was asked to do specific country gap analyses. With a colleague here at the institute, we did three countries. I think it was the three East Africa countries—Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. These country cases were, along with perhaps three or four others, included in a major UNCTAD publication later.

And of course, ever since I have been interested in the gap theory. One thing I have done later on is to suggest that it may be helpful to talk about the third kind of gap, which I call the governance gap. But that came much later.

LE: What would a governance gap be?

JF: It would be a gap between the effective policy decision-making that is required to move the economy ahead, in a sense minus what actually is provided by the country itself. In other words, it is linked to the aid and influence type of discussion.

LE: For instance, in the light of the election results in Norway, there would be a big governance gap between what people thought Mr. Stoltenberg, the prime minister, should do and what he actually delivered.

JF: Yes, perhaps, with the emphasis on who, if any, would deliver the difference. You see, in the case of the developing countries, this is where the donors come in and make all these decisions. But this came later.

LE: This was really your first direct encounter with the UN.

JF: Yes, where I actually worked with the UN, although I had encountered them.

LE: Of course. But you were actually here in New York, physically in the UN. Then, later you did these three specific country gap studies. You passed through Geneva.

JF: I think we did. I have forgotten, but that work was done with the secretariat.

LE: Now tell me something about Raúl Prebisch. What did you think about his personality and about his ideas? What did you think about his ideas when you encountered him in the flesh? And what do you think of them now, in retrospect? So first, about his personality.

JF: I was very impressed by the man. To begin with, of course I was impressed in a sense by his office and the fact that I knew that he had an apparently decisive say in how this thing was developing. That's how I first met him.

LE: Which thing was developing? UNCTAD?

JF: Yes, UNCTAD. My way of discussing with people is usually to question and find counterarguments. He seemed to accept that quite well. At least I can remember, after a time, when I had met him two or three times in discussions like that, he probably got to know me better to understand that I was trying to ask questions not because I wanted the opposite conclusions, but because I wanted a more formally based conclusion. He seemed to accept that, which impressed me. Not everyone I meet is like that.

LE: Don't look at me.

JF: He was very committed to his own idea about the way Latin America was underdeveloped, and why Latin America remained underdeveloped. He was quite good about explaining, but not totally convincing. Not to me—he wasn't totally convincing. What can I say? He tended, in a way, to come back to the bottom line in his conclusion as kind of a final counterargument when you put up something against it or in addition to it. But I did like the man. I did like interacting with him. It wasn't all that much. I don't want to suggest that I was very close to him, but often enough to give me a lot of satisfaction from interacting with him.

LE: Do I understand it correctly, when I summarize this as follows? You could have a very good interaction with him. He would listen to counterarguments. He would not start screaming and shouting. But at the end, he came back to his own ideas.

JF: Yes.

LE: Now he was a very charming man, too. All the ladies loved him.

JF: That I wouldn't know. I had no experience with that.

LE: Now what about his ideas. Of course, he had had this fantastic career at CEPAL (Economic Commission for Latin America, ECLA) behind him and he had become known in particular by his terms of trade, Prebisch-Singer hypothesis. You may not know that in one of the books we are writing, with John Toye, about international trade and finance, he has done some Sherlock Holmes research on who was the first. And Hans Singer was the first. Prebisch—without saying that he committed plagiarism or anything like this—was second. He had available the figures that Singer had prepared.

JF: I think I know that, because with Jack Parkinson I wrote a book on the political economy of development. There we did report on the Prebisch-Singer thesis. And Hans wrote to us afterwards saying, "You haven't got this quite right." He gave full credit to Prebisch, but he said, "When you do the new edition, you may want to think about this, that, or the other."

LE: Isn't that interesting? That's the first time I heard that because Hans is so almost subdued. He never stands out. But he stood up.

JF: Well yes, but not in order to stand up but to help us get it right. It really was. It didn't have any tone of this at all.

LE: Prebisch was famous for that, and of course for standing up to America and to the UN. He was very independent. Then there was this gap analysis and the center-periphery stuff. So what did you think of his ideas at the time? We are in 1965.

JF: I was skeptical but interested. I think his ideas provided a very important new dimension to the development debate. But like any important dimension, if you make it the sole, or practically the sole, determinant, it gets to be wrong. In fact, that is one of my feelings about a

lot of writing. People come up with good ideas, but they oversell it totally. So I think it was needed to get that dimension into the debate, but it was overdone.

LE: You are talking about—

JF: The gap analysis and the dependency thing.

LE: What about the import substitution—also overdone? You were an international trade expert, one of the leading young figures. Now surely you don't say that free trade is good at any—

JF: No, no. In fact, if I can go back to Costa Rica, to 1950, I was supposed to look after trade matters in the group. And I remember drawing up a picture of what kind of imports Costa Rica had. There were lots of capital goods and textiles and what have you. I remember arguing with my colleagues not to make too much of this as, in a sense, a program of what we should produce ourselves in Costa Rica. Even now I feel that in our book it is overdone.

So I had that experience. I also had the experience from OEEC, where a good deal of the planning was a planning for producing in Europe things we depended on, imported from America. Some of the action was on the supply side, with productivity advances and so on. But for some of the action, we were relying on trade restrictions. So I had that sort of background when I came to the Prebisch thing. I felt that it might be a good starting point for thinking about domestic development to see what it is that we are actually using and not producing. And can we produce more ourselves?

So import substitution is, up to a point, a good way to find avenues for industrial and other development. But again, Prebisch's theory was a bit excessive on this one, or he pushed it too far.

LE: Did he really? Isn't that what is being said today, when he is, to my mind, too much criticized? Look, there is a 200-year history about the question of free trade and protection—Alexander Hamilton, Friedrich List. And there is nothing wrong with having a temporary protection to build yourself up, as long as it doesn't last too long.

JF: That's right.

LE: I don't think Prebisch ever said that it should last forever.

JF: No, no. But I think he perhaps took a bit too lightly the problems of making it into an effective activity mainly for the shorter haul. At least I had those doubts when he was arguing it, since you are asking what I thought—

LE: Sure. So in other words, you had already in those days the doubts that are now, today, to my mind too loudly expressed. You were never an unconditional ally of his ideas.

JF: No, that I wasn't.

LE: Okay, fine. That is interesting. Of course, the 1960s was also the First Development Decade. Was there anything going on in your mind about that? Did you think it was all bluff and hot air?

JF: I don't remember thinking very much about it, I must say. You know, at the same time we had in Europe—I don't know if you remember that for the 1960s, we should grow by about 4 percent a year in Europe. That was a kind of target for OECD in Europe, I think, or was it OECD total? I thought that was a pretty good ambition and guess, but I never believed in the way it had been developed as a figure. I felt a little bit the same way, to the extent that I gave thought to it, the international strategy for the 1960s. So I can't say that that influenced me at all, or that I related to it much.

LE: Did you ever meet Jan Tinbergen or have any interaction with him?

JF: Yes. I was on something called the International Advisory Council of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics. He was there, and we had a meeting every year, or I have forgotten how often. I even sometimes traveled with him—on economy class.

LE: Of course.

JF: Even though we could travel differently. So I am deeply touched by him in all sorts of ways. If ever there was an angel amongst us, he is probably one. And of course, he was very open in discussion, very clear. Of course, I didn't know him as well as you probably do. But for whatever it's worth, he was a very impressive man.

LE: Yes, I think he was too modest. His modesty bordered on arrogance, almost.

JF: He had a sidekick called Bos, didn't he?

LE: Henk Bos, yes. As with most number twos, when the number one disappears, the number two also vanished.

JF: That I don't know.

LE: One or two specific questions. Were you aware of the Jackson report (*Study of the Capacity of the UN Development System*) in 1969?

JF: Yes, that one we did read carefully and I think we probably participated in some debate at home about it. It was to me the first really critical assessment of the international economic policy and the institutions set up to support it. So yes we did see that report.

LE: Have you ever been a member of one of these commissions of eminent persons—the Pearson Commission, the Brandt Commission ? I don't think so.

JF: I don't think the commissions are of eminent people, necessarily, but are sometimes called that. Recently, such a commission was established for the LDC (least developed countries) Conference III in Brussels where also you were in involved.

LE: No I was not.

JF: But that illustrates what I mean. You were in a group of eminent people.

LE: You were not on the Brandt Commission, the Pearson Commission, the Olaf Palme Commission?

JF: No, nor the Brundtland Commission.

LE: Was that a deliberate policy—or they felt that you were not eminent enough?

JF: I think both, certainly the latter.

LE: I want to have a separate discussion about your experience with the World Bank and the Bretton Woods institutions in relation to the UN. And I want to have a separate discussion on your Norwegian influence, and the influence of Norway on the UN. Then I want to have a specific discussion quickly on your role in the Committee for Development Planning (CDP) and how ideas, if any, trickled down from that. But maybe we should jump a little bit now to your experience with the ILO (International Labour Organization) in the 1970s. You were involved with the ILO World Employment Programme, which had its moments of fame. You headed one of these so-called high-level comprehensive employment missions. We had had the Colombia report, the Ceylon report, we had had the Kenya report, and I think we even already had the Philippine report. And in 1975 you headed the mission to the Sudan. Give me your impressions about the World Employment Programme as you saw it and see it, and about your direct experience with that mission. Was it a good idea to have these missions, or was it just a one-shot affair?

JF: Well let me first say that the way I got into that illustrates how I got into most other things. It was because somebody had heard from somebody that perhaps I could do the job for them. Yes, I was very glad to be in that program. It was very much linked to an important

dimension—the important dimension—that has to do with employment and unemployment and underemployment, and therefore what always is at the bottom of it: poverty, and for that matter unequal distribution. Now that particular exercise—of course it was the fifth or sixth of something that you had—was one of the major efforts in terms of scope that I have been involved in.

Did it make sense? It was of course a mixture of consultants brought in presumably on their own credentials and people brought in to cooperate from other UN agencies. So the people who were there were not homogeneous in that sense. There had also been preparatory work done to the mission, which I think was very valuable and necessary, and something that I have missed often when I have been on other missions. There hasn't been enough preparatory work. The Sudan mission itself was, of course, massive. Actually, what I remember best was when you came down and didn't have your suitcase with you and I was commiserating with you a couple of days later, saying, "How do you get on? Don't you sweat? And you don't seem to smell much." So you said, "No, at night I put my shirt out to air."

And of course the government took our work seriously, which was very critical. So I think the report itself, both the main report and various specialized chapters, were on the whole pretty professional, well-done, well-informed, and I think acceptable to the analysts and to the government alike on that score. Sufficient effort was put into it to make it substantive. What I question a bit is that with such a major effort by the government as well as by the outside, you get a valuable product but unless you continue, unless there is a continuation of attention to this—I am going to say the same about IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development) efforts—it slips between the fingers a bit as time goes on.

LE: As an involved outsider, what did you think of the ILO World Employment Programme as a whole? Should it not have been done by the United Nations proper? What did you think of the basic needs approach of the program and—as far as I am concerned—at the World Employment Conference itself in 1976? In the ILO approach, of course, we used a wider definition than the one we just used when we talked about the work in the Christian Michelsen Institute. In retrospect, how do you see that program?

JF: Well I think it was a very good effort, and in fact, I am impressed by the people who did it in ILO. As you roam around the world and you see the UN, you see the Bank, you see all these agencies operating, you are very happy when you see any of them taking an initiative that seems to be new and central and basic. You are very happy about that rather than being sorry that the sponsoring agency does not appear to be the best to do the work. I want to question a little bit whether ILO, in deciding to take up such a major new program or approach, shouldn't have given more attention to how to best organize this to ensure continuity into the future. Yet the overwhelming feeling is that you are delighted to know that an important new approach has been taken up and is being pursued. The second-best is one hundred times better than nothing at all.

LE: Of course in 1980, we got into a totally new—or old—economic orthodoxy. Would you say that the *Human Development Report*, which your friend Mahbub ul Haq so many years later launched in the UNDP (UN Development Programme) in 1990, was a kind of, not a return to basic needs, but did it incorporate some of the elements of a basic needs approach?

JF: Yes it did. I think the work through ILO on basic needs, if it hadn't been for that it would have been even more difficult to get into the work that Mahbub stood for. But I don't even know whether he was ever involved in the World Employment Programme.

LE: No, he was not. But you don't have to be involved in order to approve or disapprove, or to take elements of this in subsequent thinking.

JF: Well, some of Mahbub's people were involved in the basic needs work, of course.

LE: Tell me, is it worthwhile that you say a few words about science and technology? Because apparently you were a member of the UN Science and Technology Advisory Committee. You were an eminent person in an eminent committee. Were you involved in the 1979 Conference on Science and Technology in Vienna at all?

JF: I think this was a follow-up to that in 1981/1984.

LE: Were you in Vienna?

JF: No.

LE: So this was the follow-up committee. Anything of interest to say about it?

JF: No, I felt myself to be very much on the side of what interested the committee. So I never put my heart into it. And fortunately, I stayed rather quiet about that so I didn't offend anybody. But it wasn't part of my experience that this kind of discussion takes place so much at the technical level. They liked to think that technology is also a technology of economics and of planning. We never really got to discuss that. And perhaps that was right for that committee, but not quite right for me, I felt. After all, it was only a few meetings that I participated in. It wasn't very central to my development.

LE: Let's talk about the World Bank. All of a sudden, before you joined the ILO World Employment Programme in 1975, between 1972 and 1974 you joined the World Bank. And not only did you join the World Bank, you became the resident representative of the World Bank in Bangladesh. One of the things you say about that period is that it made you very much aware of the gap or the gulf that existed between how you look at things from the country and how you

look at things from Washington or from headquarters. So, what I would like you to do is to say a few words about your impressions about the World Bank as it functions in a specific country situation. Tell me something about your relationships with other agencies. And tell me something about the Bretton Woods institutions in general and the dominant role they have played in the last twenty years with respect to the role of the United Nations.

JF: Well that's a pretty tall order. Of course, the first thing to say is that the situation in Bangladesh in June 1972 when I got there was a very peculiar one. It had just become independent after a warlike period in which those who became the Bangladesh leaders had not felt supported by the Americans.

LE: On the contrary. Kissinger called it a "basket case," do you remember?

JF: Yes, and the Seventh Fleet was sent in there and so on. But I think a lesson from that, which the Bank at headquarters hasn't quite drawn—because it still happens everywhere—is that an effective support of an economy is very situation and country-specific. Therefore, you can easily go very wrong when you have a general model of operation and even a general prescription for what needs to be done. I am not suggesting that they are totally wrong by that, but when you come in there first as a Bank person from Washington, you bring with you all the knowledge you have. What you need to do and what it takes time to do is to make it country-specific. I don't think they at the time, certainly, were very good at that.

Now I came in to build up their office there. So I arrived before Bangladesh had become a formal member of the Bank. From the Bank's point of view, I was given this assignment because I already knew the place and had good contacts there, and also because some of the Bank officials already knew me. I had been on the teaching side of EDI for a period in the mid-1960s for a few months. So I knew quite a few people around the Bank and in the region.

Mahbub was in the Bank at the time. So the Bank wanted me to start it up, and the Bangladeshis very much wanted me to take it on because they were my friends already.

For both the two parties—the Bank and Bangladesh—it was difficult to accommodate to a new relationship where they had a lot of baggage that they had to live with. My job, then, was to explain what the World Bank could offer to the Bangladeshis and to explain the Bangladeshis' constraints to the Bank. It was not always totally easy, partly because I disagreed with some of the Bangladeshi policies, and I disagreed with some of the Bank policies. But I suppose that at least at a sort of intellectual level this was accepted by both parties. And the Bank very much was seen by the other donors as the lead agency. A lot hinged, therefore, on how that relationship with the Bank developed. I sensed that the Bank was very much aware of the positions of the bilaterals, of the donors, and my feeling was that that was too much reflected in the Bank's positions. The Bank became too much a donor institution rather than an international agency, responsive to both donors and the recipient. But to bring the bilaterals along, maybe the Bank had to operate like that.

One thing was the baggage of the history of the war; another major issue was that Bangladesh didn't want to accept what the Bank insisted were Bangladesh's liabilities for past loans and credits to the old Pakistan and how these were to be shared between Pakistan and Bangladesh. This became a very hot issue. And it was linked very much with politics, too, because of Bangladesh's relations with the new Pakistan and so on. I can remember once feeling that I didn't get through the machinery in Washington. I went to see [Robert] McNamara to try and plead for a more subtle handling of this. He wasn't really as receptive as I had hoped. He was saying, "Couldn't we convince the Bangladeshis that it's in their best interests? They know

that if they accept this then we can really get going with our loan program, and they will get much more resources than if they don't."

I remember saying that, in my experience with the Bangladeshis—and it's true in other such situations I have been—that you can get your counterparts to accept nearly any one thing if you really feel very strongly about it. But you can't get them to accept everything. Therefore, the Bank would have to be a bit selective. If the Bank insists on getting its own way on one issue, you have to accept that the borrower will have accepted it unwillingly and they will be less willing to accept other things. And of course there were many other things, like the running of industry, and public and private enterprise, and all sorts of things.

So I felt that sitting there in Dhaka, I didn't have the same response from the Bank as I had from Bangladesh. I could get the time and the ear of the Bangladeshis to listen, as much as I think it could be useful to both parties. I can remember the UN, of course, which had its own United Nations Relief Operations in Bangladesh (UNROB) or whatever they called it. I remember talking to the resrep there, saying, "I wish I had your job rather than mine because they feel very much that the UN is on their side." I don't think I meant it, and he certainly would have loved to swap jobs. But it was a bit like that.

LE: Did they feel that the UN was more on their side than the World Bank?

JF: Yes, very clearly.

LE: But the UN only had technical assistance.

JF: That's right. They didn't have so much money, and it didn't make so much difference to what the other donors were doing.

LE: But did you as the resrep of the World Bank feel as if you had nothing to say there, as if everything came from Washington? You only had to implement things, even if it was against your own conviction? Am I exaggerating?

JF: Oh yes, you are exaggerating. For one thing, the individual projects that it was a question of reactivating—that was done very much by missions coming out from Washington. My job, then, was to give them access, which was easy enough although I got very tired of it. They wanted to put in their back to office report that they had seen minister so-and-so and even the prime minister. So to begin with, I arranged that. But then I felt that was a bit too much. These are small things, but irritants, and maybe symptomatic of the way they were operating. One of the big things that went on when I was there—of course, there wasn't a consultative group of Bangladesh. That had to be created. The Bangladeshis didn't really want the old formula where that mainly takes place in Paris or Washington. They wanted it to be run by Bangladesh rather than by the World Bank. So while the Bank tried to figure out a way to establish a Bangladesh consortium, Bangladesh took the initiative and called a development conference in Dhaka. So in a sense that was a forerunner to the consultative group, and later on it became the standard thing rather than any innovative thing.

At that conference, the Bangladeshis stood up very firmly. I can remember sitting with the people that had come out from Washington, and the major donors, in my room in the hotel there talking about what was coming up the next day. They were saying to each other that Bangladesh would have to accept the Bank's model for the division of liabilities of the old Pakistan. I knew enough about it to say, "I don't think they will accept it." But this was just brushed off with statements to the effect that: "Of course they must. They have no option but to

do that. Only then will the funds flow.” So I said, “At least you should discuss a bit amongst yourselves what you will say in case they say no. But to no avail.

The next day, in the meeting, Bangladesh said, “No.” Then the prime minister, the foreign minister, and so on, were mobilized to meet with the Bank and a few others. I was sitting there, and one after the other on the Bangladesh side said, “You probably haven’t had enough time to see the implications of this from our side,” and said, “No.” It shook the Bank and it shook the others a lot.

Later on, in 1974 after I had left—and no connection—there was a threatening famine. Bangladesh really needed support and had some unhappy experience about the Americans cutting out food aid that was already committed to Bangladesh. So Bangladesh had to come to terms on the Bank’s conditions. Since then, things have gone quite easily. Maybe Bangladesh should have given in earlier, I don’t know. But it was certainly a series of events that showed the Bank, the power of the Bank, but also the Bank as an effective agent for the donor community.

LE: Now you were in Bangladesh during all the rumblings about a New International Economic Order (NIEO). Were you still there in April 1974 when it went through the United Nations? Did you follow that debate and the Bangladeshi side of it? They were, of course, in favor I suppose.

JF: Yes. But no, it wasn’t really seen as all that important in Bangladesh as an issue. I suppose the foreign office and others were involved, but I think that was done mostly by those that happened to be their representatives in New York and Geneva. I was aware of all of that going on, but it didn’t create much of a stir at the time. We could go on to my involvement in NIEO, but it was not part of my Bangladesh experience.

LE: Now can we now jump a couple of years into the 1980s and 1990s, and the growing impact of the World Bank and the IMF in what I call the “new economic and financial orthodoxy”? The dominance of the Bretton Woods institutions and the timidity of the United Nations—how do you explain that? And do you think that the UN should have reacted much more strongly against the weak aspects of the Washington Consensus-type policies?

JF: It’s difficult, that one.

LE: Yes. Look, this is an interview for the ages, for future research.

JF: Of course, when you think back on these things you may think differently from what you did at the time. The 1970s, with the oil shocks and the New International Economic Order and all of that, it wasn’t because of some inherent weaknesses, but more because of the international conjuncture that the NIEO fell down. Some people kept pushing it forward into the 1980s and so on, but it clearly was a dead horse. Therefore, the vacuum, if you like, was filled by the new orthodoxy. Could the UN proper have delayed or even avoided that setback? That’s very speculative. I don’t think the UN had the power to do it. What perhaps makes me say that is that I doubt whether it had the intellectual and institutional capacity to do it. I think if the analysis of the consequences of the NIEO policy had been further developed, analyzed, discussed—politically as well as analytically—it is possible that one would have had a stronger defense for it.

But it was, on the whole, argued in terms of an extension of the momentum we had built up in the 1970s. As such, it didn’t really have much chance. There were bits and pieces in the NIEO framework that went contrary to the push for the market economy, such as the experience I had with IFAD developing its rural approach—rural agriculture which was not just relying on market responses. IFAD made an effort, and to a limited extent, they succeeded in doing that.

As for the ILO—I was really deeply disappointed that it wasn't further strengthened, nor even maintained, as an intellectual and political force in the 1980s and beyond. I don't know the history behind that; I was not part of it. But I regretted this demise of the ILO because I did see the force of the new orthodoxy coming in, and I also saw what we were losing. And I think we were losing too easily.

So the early 1980s was really a period when what we are lacking even today—an intellectual powerhouse aside from the Bank—the lack of that showed its sad consequences. Whether it would have worked out, I don't know. But it wasn't really tried.

LE: It was the force of ideas versus the force of money. Now it is certainly true that in the 1980s, the United Nations did not develop strong ideas. Neither did, for that matter, the World Bank or the IMF. But the poor ideas that they had were backed up by money.

JF: That's right.

LE: See, what were the reactions of the UN? Only two: one was *Adjustment With a Human Face* by my colleague Richard Jolly, done by an innocent organization called UNICEF (UN Children's Fund). It had an impact.

JF: It certainly had an impact.

LE: And the second reaction was the *Human Development Report*, which was actually kept separate from the UNDP.

JF: But there were others in the 1980s. I have mentioned IFAD. I think that was one. Even FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization)—it had something called WCARRD (World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development). They developed what they called a "Farmer's Bill of Rights."

LE: Now when was this?

JF: In 1979, I think the conference was.

LE: The World Food Conference was in 1974. And in 1979, they—

JF: Yes, about that time. Again, I know something about the FAO efforts in this realm. IFAD succeeded insofar as it carved out a niche for itself. But it didn't really much influence the rest of the world. But even so it was important, of course. FAO succeeded in neither respect, because it didn't really want to enough to do it. I was involved, for a little bit, in one review of the WCARRD and the follow-up to the conference. I wrote some notes, I remember, on that, where I lamented that FAO was using the follow-up only to find projects for itself, rather than for anything else. And maybe that's not atypical of what happens to organizations. It was such a waste.

I went on one of their missions to Sri Lanka that was headed by an assistant-secretary-general. There was a dialogue at the highest level and so on, but really about what FAO could do. What kind of projects could they do? I was so disgusted. And I was scared by it because I felt it was even worse: that it was typical of what happened to these UN organizations. Maybe I am being too strong in my choice of words.

LE: Well, it's about time. Tell me, we have about eight or nine minutes left on this tape for this morning. You were not involved in the World Food Conference in 1974, were you? But you followed it.

JF: Yes. And my friend Sartaj Aziz was one of the organizers.

LE: Now give me your view on all of these world conferences. We had this whole series in the 1970s, starting with Stockholm (UN Conference on the Human Environment) in 1972. Then it was followed up in the 1990s, at the top level, starting with the World Summit for

Children. What is your impression? Are these just talk shops, or is there something more? Do the ideas get a higher priority because of these conferences?

JF: I think the issues they take up do get higher priority for a while. But in every one of them, and also for the UN system itself, I feel that follow-up is miserable. What is the point of having all these policies agreed if you don't follow up how far you have been able to do it, and perhaps more importantly, what are the particular reasons and circumstances you have that don't allow you to meet these ideals? You know, this kind of debate, which I knew so well way back in the OECD days, where each and every country is challenged by its peers about what they have been able to do—both developed and developing countries. That is not done, for some reason.

LE: But aren't you exaggerating there? Take the environment. In 1972, we had the Stockholm conference. It put it on the map. Then it slipped. You are correct. So we had the Brundtland Commission in 1986/1987. That put it again on the map—sustainable development. It slipped again. Then we had Rio (UN Conference on Environment and Development) in 1992. And next year we will have Johannesburg. So there has been a lot. And of course, there has been UNEP (UN Environment Programme) created. The same with women and development in 1975 in Mexico (UN World Conference on the International Women's Year), in 1985 in Nairobi (UN World Conference on Women), in 1995 in Beijing (Fourth World Conference on Women). I think, as the modest interviewer here, that on the environment and on gender issues, I would have thought that—you may not agree with this—that it hasn't been too bad.

JF: Well, I feel it has been too bad because it implies a lot of lost opportunity, rather than that it isn't good what has nevertheless been achieved. I think, if you are ready to carry through a follow-up process, you have to have this sort of grand world conference exercise. But we are invariably slipping too much in terms of follow-up, so that you don't get anything like the full

potential. I would agree that certainly the environment conferences—and of course I know most about the 1987 Brundtland report (*Our Common Future*)—it clearly was a major thing. It did bring the world to focus on an important issue. But then other things did that too. You remember things that don't have anything directly to with the UN, like the Rome group (Club of Rome) and so on. They also splashed like anything in international discussions.

LE: So you would agree with those—Kofi Annan was chairing a big meeting in Amsterdam only two days ago where one lady said (this was about Johannesburg), “If everything that had been agreed upon in 1972 and 1992 had been implemented, we don't need Johannesburg anymore.” You would agree with that?

JF: Yes.

LE: Because of lack of follow-up and lack of implementation, we need to have these meetings all the time again.

JF: Or put differently, I think you are going to get much more out of it if, in addition to these every-decade meetings on particular subjects, you had really thorough follow-up in between.

LE: Yes. But that means you need targets, yes?

JF: You do need targets.

LE: The 1990 summit conference on children actually was a good example. It had specific targets.

JF: Yes, but what's the follow-up like on the twenty/twenty and all of that?

LE: So on the whole, your judgement about these conferences is that we could have done with much less had there been a specific implementation instrument and policy to follow-up?

JF: Well I don't think you are summarizing it right. I am not saying necessarily that we should have done less on these things, these events. But we should have done more in between. We probably do need stock-taking and forward-looking conferences once in a while. But we need much more close follow-up for these conferences to make real sense.

LE: One final comment on my part. You remember the conference I organized five years ago in Washington?

JF: Yes.

LE: And you remember Ajit Singh saying that the Washington Consensus has been proven wrong? And when Andres Bianchi and John Williamson said, "Five more years." Well, it's five years later. Argentina is in a mess. Brazil is getting into a mess. [Alberto] Fujimori is in Japan. [Hugo] Chavez is in Venezuela.

JF: But you know, I think the kind of conference you had was different—it was somewhat private, perhaps, and it got a set of well-chosen people together and you put it down in a book. I think that certainly has an influence and it should be encouraged. I don't know how well the Inter-American Bank (IAB) has followed it up.

LE: No comment. This is the end of tape two. We are going to have our bottle of Aquavit, and we will continue on tape three this afternoon. Okay?

LE: This is tape number three. It is the afternoon of the 13th of September, and we continue the interview with Just Faaland. I think we should now have a section of the interview concerning your role on the Norwegian scene and Norway's role on the international scene, including in the United Nations. You are obviously the grand old man of development in this country. And Norway has been already for some time a surprising player on the international scene. I say surprising because it is a small country and is doing so much. So let us start with

your role in Norway. You have grown into that role, I suppose. How would you describe your influence and standing on the Norwegian scene, without undue modesty? We have had enough of that. We want you to be immodest.

JF: The first thing to say is, of course, that Norway is a country of four million or a little more. It is small country. So in terms of international policy discussions and so on, a lot of the available people tend to get involved. And if you want to be involved, it is fairly easy to get into it. Secondly, coming to the institute in 1952, as we were saying at an earlier stage, we then had a Secretary-General from Norway. There was quite a body of people who were brought into the UN to support his activities there, or at least responding to things from there. We have had, as we have talked about before, our own history of development and of overcoming poverty and so on, and we tend to hold the perhaps naive idea that those lessons could be of value internationally.

So when I came here, at the CMI, with its special mandate, and into this setting, it was easy for me, when I had something I thought might be of interest, to get involved. Also, I was, as the years went by, one of the few in the academic environment directly concerned with these kinds of issues. So it was perhaps natural to ask my views and at least be interested when I had some views to express. And in that sort of informal but quite frequent way, I, like a few others, became a kind of resource person. Not necessarily very influential, but one would be willing to listen.

So as we talked about before, when we started up this kind of activity in the 1960s, this was still the only place in Norway where this was being attempted on a real scale. And in building it up, I had to relate to the people who had policy responsibility vis-à-vis the UN and vis-à-vis the Third World, or whatever it was called at the time. And when I went, say, to the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs or to the group of people who later became the NORAD (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation) to talk about what I wanted to do, and how I could do it, and what they could do to help me, it was natural that we also discussed their issues, as they met them in ECOSOC or on other occasions. So to some extent, my involvement was because there wasn't anybody else. And we had built up a sort of relationship that was worth drawing on.

Also back here, in my own institute, to run that, we established an advisory board of our own for this activity. We got some of the people I mentioned earlier, like P.J. Bjerve and P. Munthe. And there were some senior people from the ministries to take part, to be members of that board. So for one period—I think that was in the 1970s—one of the members of my advisory board was the head of NORAD. And after a while, I became a member of the NORAD board itself. So there was this kind of interaction, and it was a natural way to interact.

For instance, in the 1970s when this New International Economic Order was very much an issue that was pursued, Norway—or my colleagues in the government, or my friends in government—felt in need of support of that idea. From my point of view, and from the institute's point of view, we encouraged this activity and we helped formulate positions. To give an illustration: in the push for commodity stabilization and for a second window, we, from our side here, provided support with some analysis, with some second opinion on positions that Norway's representatives were trying to take, and in general gave support to the Norwegian drive to get the NIEO going.

We also—in fact I myself—pushed for, not only support of the Third World in that respect, but also for the preparation of a second line of defense in case we couldn't—which I didn't think we could, actually—achieve anything like the desired New International Economic Order. We should have at least a sort of second line of defense. Thus, in respect of the

commodity agreement approach, which included, as we had it nationally, guaranteed minimum prices and so on, and better prices for the farmers—I didn't think they could get an international agreement, even though I worked hard with them to argue for it. So I said, "Let Norway declare its willingness to put its money where its mouth is; let us, first, fully support the recommendations that were being made on behalf of the developing countries on this issue. But then, we also commit Norway, on its own, to guarantee the prices of our imports of coffee and a few others products—not in terms of entering into the market with given prices, but instead, when the year was over, check what had in fact been the average price; then, having accepted a year earlier what was the minimum price we would guarantee, we would put up the difference from general funds."

This could be so done as to challenge the developing countries themselves to find an institutional way of making use of these funds, deciding whether they should be used to support say, coffee farmers that hadn't gotten that minimum price or, on the contrary, decide to use it for other products in substitute. In this respect, we would simply put the ball in the court of the developing countries. I am saying this to illustrate that we were trying to exercise our minds, and we got a hearing for it.

LE: And Norway did—

JF: It didn't. In the end, it didn't. But it was a fairly close call. At least it illustrates that we had a good interaction, and therefore that it probably deepened the insight of the politicians themselves when they negotiated. There were other proposals for alternative approaches and we were brought in to comment on that. There was also a white paper in the mid-1970s on the position and needs of the developing countries in connection with the government budgets for development aid, where we, from the institute, produced part of the analysis.

I suppose other countries have similar things. In Norway, there is a special committee in support of UNESCO (UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)-type activities, and another one for FAO and so on. I got into the group of people who prepared positions in FAO and had a hearing, if not always an influence, on what the positions were in respect of that.

Because of my other work, where I got involved directly with FAO, with ILO, with the Bank, I could, in a sense, help inform the politicians and the administrators at home of what went on and could have a view of what was workable and what wasn't, and what were the burning issues. And also, what would be the reception to various kinds of policy approaches from Norway—not necessarily ones that I had myself thought up. So that was the nature of the relationship between myself and Norwegian politics.

LE: You talk a lot time about “we.” Does that mean a *pluralis majestatis*, or are you really talking you plus a certain number of other people who tried to push the Norwegian position in a certain direction?

JF: There were, of course, quite a few people around in Norway who did the same as I did. There were also a few around here at the institute, which along with me did these things. They did it, to some extent, on their own.

LE: That is one thing. Second, did NORAD have an advisory board? In Holland, for instance, we have a committee, an advisory committee at the national level which advises the minister of development cooperation. And the minister of development cooperation can ask the committee to advise him or her on a particular issue. Do you have something like that?

JF: At least we had something like that, and I was part of that for periods. I think it was every year that our development cooperation council pronounced on various aid matters. However, that was a different kind of involvement from my side than what I talked about,

because in a sense that council was naturally responding to set questions that they should address about the overall management of the aid program and so on. And this was less of an idea-supporting or initiating group.

LE: You stopped talking about your presence on the scene in the 1970s. What was happening in the 1980s and 1990s with respect to your suggesting things or pushing for certain things? Or has that become less pronounced as time passed by, either because the minister didn't want any advice or because times had become so uninspiring that you didn't want to waste your time?

JF: I think it was perhaps in the 1970s when I was particularly active, although I am not sure—also in the 1980s. And to some extent, in the 1970s I had built up credibility and some usefulness, so I could always draw on it also in the 1980s. I would also add that, of course, by the time we get to the 1980s, there had been other centers in Norway that were dealing with these issues at the universities and at NUPI (Norwegian Institute of Foreign Affairs) and places like that.

LE: You had more competition as time went on.

JF: Yes, more competition if you like.

LE: Who would be the two or three people these days on the Norwegian scene who you would say have a certain amount of influence on Norwegian development assistance, or Norwegian development policies? There is a lady—I think she is from the University of Bergen—who is fairly articulate. She has a poverty program. Have you heard about that person?

JF: I am not sure which one you are talking about. Else Oyen probably, who is a professor at the University of Bergen and who has built up an international poverty research

network (CROP). Of course, today even the question of the volume of aid is being hotly debated at the political level. And there are plenty of people on both sides who can argue either side. So I don't really think I have any special influence on that except voting the other day.

LE: Tell me, Mrs. Johnson, who was the previous minister for development cooperation, she was extremely popular abroad. How was she seen within Norway?

JF: I think she was seen as a positive force. It was more a question of her pull within the government. Her job was to bring out clearly the role of Norway in human rights respects. And the link between human rights and aid was very strong in her case. She had a background in a developing country, in East Africa.

LE: She spoke Swahili.

JF: Maybe she did, yes. She might well come back.

LE: Given the election results last Sunday.

JF: Yes, that's right. And she is technically sound.

LE: So that is your position within Norway, and that was particularly strong in the 1970s. You were pushing for things, and you almost succeeded in getting Norway to be ahead of the curve. By the way, you have never been tempted by politics? You have never been asked to run?

JF: Yes, I have actually. But that is a long time ago, and I threw it out immediately at the time. I have never really been wanting to get back to that. In a way, I regret it now. I regret also that so far none of my children or grandchildren seem to be taking it up.

LE: So why have you changed your mind on that?

JF: I see the great satisfaction one gets from being an advisor, but I also see the importance of sensible people taking the final decisions.

LE: Taking the consequences of your ideas.

JF: Yes, that's right.

LE: Let us now move to Norwegians' position in the UN and on the international scene. It was something of a surprise that you are still number one in development assistance, in spite of the fact that you are having your own problems with education and health in the country. Your minister of foreign affairs played this important role in reaching the Oslo Agreement in the Middle East question and others. How do you explain that? What is so peculiar about Norway that it stands up so much and does these good things?

JF: For one thing, for a small country it is inevitable that it becomes interested in international affairs because so much of your own life is determined by the way the world around you reacts. The other is, as I was saying earlier in the interview, that we seem to be carrying with us what we think is a quite striking and very salutary experience of moving from underdevelopment to development, and what it takes, and the importance of getting organized to move the society. We carry with us the experience of what we think are the values in that process of collective action, be it trade unions, or be it government involvement in the market, particular for agriculture and fisheries and so on. And then also, at least we refer to it ourselves, to the cultural tradition of responsibility for your fellow man, and so on, the values that we carry with our Christian tradition. How important that one is, I don't know. But it is part of it. It is a firm and well-accepted basis on which to argue for concern for the developing countries in Norway.

We referred to Trygve Lie. I think of the fact that in the United Nations, the first Secretary-General was from Norway. While that was a bit by chance, it happened that way. It did underpin in a way the attitude that the world needed the United Nations and that the

organization was there to be used. I refer to the India project already in 1951. The interesting thing was that we made the project triangular—ourselves, India, and the UN. It was explicitly triangular. Now, in the 1950s and early 1960s, in terms of the volume of development assistance, Norway was one of the lowest ones. So the story is about how we managed to move from bottom to top—we are not actually at the time, but near the top.

LE: Who is at the top, then?

JF: I think the Danes are ahead of us. It varies a bit from year to year in the way we do statistics. But it is very satisfactory to be up there. Now that took some time, and it took some arguing. And I think we were, from our side here, and myself in my capacity, we were involved in that. We were arguing about the need for aid, and trying to counter the arguments from many directions, and in the process having to accept the fact that there are many mistakes and misuses, and comparing that with similar wastes in our own country. When we build a road here it may cost 50 percent more than you plan for and so on.

LE: Or an airport.

JF: Or an airport. So it took time. It didn't become a party political issue ever. Of course, the Labor Party seemed to be more for it. And, of course, as they came into some strength, the Christian Democratic Party. They were more willing to move ahead, and gradually we crept up. By the way, it also refers back to what we talked about with the OEEC and OECD, and the country examinations and so on. It was very helpful in Norway to refer to the upcoming discussions there and the confrontations and to refer to the findings in that exercise.

LE: These were DAC examinations.

JF: Yes, that sort of thing. The arguments for a greater volume of aid were, of course, also about the other dimensions of relations with the Third World. And in Norway, as in many

other places, it took a long time to really accept that we needed to adjust in our country in order to accommodate the export potentials of services and goods from developing countries to us. And of course we are still not there. There is still this problem with agricultural products. So that was an ongoing debate, both about how serious was the general move towards a more open economy for the least developed countries, and what would be the value to them of moving in that direction. That was a continuing debate, and it still continues.

Internationally, Norway very soon, I think already in the early 1950s, found its place in the debate more on the side of the developing countries than on the side of the rich countries, always trying to strengthen, intellectually and by vote, the developing country position, and trying to explain, mediate, with the other groups. Sometimes, of course, we found ourselves to be the bad guys in particular things, like happened in shipping policy. But on the whole it was a clear movement in favor of the developing countries. So by the time we got to the NIEO, Norway was ready to go pretty far out. And then added to all this is the fact that we are pretty naive. We think the good will prevail and the good is good for everybody.

LE: So it is not necessarily naive.

JF: No. But it is in the longer haul that it is good for everybody, but there are some adjustments to make. You know there have been fads and fashions, of course, in Norway's position on this, mirroring, sometimes preceding, sometimes coming a bit after the international moves, things like gender, poverty, aid and trade. Depending on the period, different things have been emphasized. There is nothing special about that, I think. But there is a clear commitment to continue the support of developing countries. At these recent elections, the Tory Party, who moved forward in terms of results—they actually had a program to cut back on the international aid.

LE: Now you call this the Tory Party?

JF: Yes, we call it the Right Party.

LE: How do you call it in Norwegian?

JF: *Hoyre*. Right.

LE: It's called the Right Party. What percentage of the vote did they get?

JF: Twenty-five.

LE: And Labor?

JF: They got about twenty-five. But the first twenty-five was up from fifteen, and the other twenty-five was down from thirty-five.

LE: And the Right Party is in favor of cutting back on the volume of development.

JF: That's right, but it was constrained by the other parties, including the coalition party they are going to have if they do form the government, which is the Christian Democratic Party. And they want more aid. So I think in the end it will stay roughly where it is. The Right Party wasn't really able to get any general support for their proposed cut. So that's why I think they will give in. They will feel they have to.

LE: Now the Christian Democratic Party is the party of Mrs. Johnson. What was the name of the prime minister again?

JF: Bondevik. He may or may not be the prime minister in the coalition government.

LE: So Norway has been a global player rather than a regional player, right? You don't want to have anything to do with the European Union, but you want to jump straight from your national base into the global situation. That's how I would summarize it.

JF: Yes, you are right. Of course, there have been major votes about what position we should we take, and in both cases it was roughly fifty-fifty. It was roughly fifty-fifty in favor of

not going into the European Union. In terms of continents, the interest in Norway has been largely, at least in the major part of this period since 1950s, with Africa, rather than with Asia, even though we started with the India Project. I think that has, in part, to do with the fact that the countries are a bit smaller and it is easier to relate to them. They are poorer than most countries in Asia. Norwegians don't speak French and there are a lot of English-speaking former colonies in Africa. So there has been that regional concentration.

LE: So now, for the first time therefore there is a party that has come up and said, "We are spending too much money on development assistance."

JF: It's not the first time. That was a comment about the current situation.

LE: But Norway has also played a prime role in the Oslo Agreement in the Middle East. That was quite an astounding achievement.

JF: It came about from a long period of interaction between trade unions in Norway and in the Palestine territories and also in Israel, which had to do with a trade union sort of role in social development and so on. At that point in time, I think it was a bit by chance that it happened to be Oslo. It was a very good thing. I'm very happy that it happened like that. And it was capitalizing on relationships that had been developed over a longish time. We had credibility on both sides. So I'm very, very happy about that.

What I am impressed by, though, is not necessarily that we were able to conduct, or help conduct, those negotiations, but the fact that everybody kept mum about it. You should never think that in Norwegian society this should have been possible, as it went on for months and months.

LE: But Norwegians are not great talkers, are they?

JF: Oh yes. However, I think it's more a comment on our journalists, actually. They were not quite up to the challenge.

LE: I think that is it. Should we say anything else about this chapter on Norway's position and your role in shaping Norway's position?

JF: I think it will do like that.

LE: OK, Just. Thank you very much for that. Can we now move on to your role in the Committee for Development Planning. You have had fifteen years—until very recently actually—as a member of the committee, the two last years until a few months ago, you were chairman of the committee. The committee, as I understand it, was set up in relation to the Development Decades. If I'm wrong you will correct me. But what is sure is that it had in its ranks the best thinkers from UN member-countries. It had Jan Tinbergen, of course, a long time as its chairman. So there was a formidable strength of expertise and of ideas in the Committee for Development Planning. Can you tell us a little about your fifteen-year experience? Have ideas been developed in the committee; have they been proposed? What happened to these ideas? Were they picked up by the UN, et cetera?

JF: Well when I came into it in 1985, there were already questions about the usefulness of the committee from governments, from the intellectual community, even from members of the committee. I don't think it would be fair to say that it is because they didn't have ideas and didn't have very good analysis of their ideas. But the situation around the committee was not one that was good at handling and receiving and making anything out of these ideas. I can remember early discussions—I think the chairman was [Shridath] Ramphal, with [Robert] McNamara as a co-chair—a good deal of discussion on how do we push these ideas. In 1986, I think, which was the first or second year when I was there, the committee developed what was a

plea for more development assistance. We were seeking to quantify it, and we called the paper that we wrote, “Doubling Development Assistance.”

I can remember from discussion in the committee that I felt and I expressed some considerable hesitation about making that plea. I felt, “What are we saying? Are we saying that if the doubling does not happen, one might as well go home and sleep? Obviously we are talking about the impact of something that isn’t going to happen. Shouldn’t we rather spend our time with something nearer to what may be happening? I wasn’t the only one, I think, but as I remember, I certainly made that point. And I felt like that on a lot of other things. One tends to see the great potential of moving towards a better situation in economic distribution and fighting poverty if only one could get things to happen, get policies made. Therefore, one draws up a perspective of what that would mean. I think that was true at that time, and it was true in other reports that we wrote.

In that case, for instance, the “doubling development” exercise, everyone who was supposed to make use of this realized that it was out of bounds. So at least it told me that if you are going to be helpful, you must have ideas and analyses, but it must be within the playing grounds of the system. It must be near enough to what the system is willing to act upon if it is to be useful. Now did we advance new ideas? Well, in 1988, a main theme we had was on human resource development. I remember being rapporteur at the time and helping draft some of that report. We called it “Neglected Dimensions of Development Strategy.”

LE: Well that was slightly out of date. I worked on it twenty-eight years earlier.

JF: Yes, but you were not in the committee. It should be called “Still Neglected Dimensions” because it was neglected even at that time. And it fitted quite well because the next year, like we had ten years earlier, we worked on an input into the international development

strategy for the 1990s. I was rapporteur again, so I was in the middle of that. Now on that occasion, we came out with our report just before or roughly at the same time as the first *Human Development Report*. The two were very similar, partly because there were some of the same people, including Mahbub. You could argue that Mahbub used it as a sort of launching pad, making sure that the ideas he was going to take into the other report were also reflected. But you can also look at it much more positively as a way of interacting with the system. But I think it was helpful, and in line with what later became these Human Development Reports.

We didn't really see much impact from this. Of course, the impact of these things was a question of how it was being dealt with in the UN, which in particular meant in the ECOSOC, and whether it had any influence on the wider public. There were discussions about how to spread it around. We printed it up in a different way. It wasn't all that good, I think, but we made an effort to try to get it around.

In ECOSOC, yes the findings and the arguments at least, if not the total conclusions that we came to in our various reports then and later, were referred to by various members of the council. But I don't think it was very significant. In fact, as I experienced ECOSOC—particularly in the later years when I met there on behalf of the committee—it is really not a debating and negotiating body in committee. Maybe it is in the corridors. It was very much prepared statements and very little take-and-give both in conclusion and in argument. Nevertheless, it was, I think, of some direct usefulness to some members of ECOSOC.

In 1997, we came out with a report on globalization and on global governance. One of the things we strongly argued was that the world needed, beside the IMF, the World Bank, and we needed a World Financial Organization. We argued quite strongly for that and even in some particulars what kind of responsibilities that institution would have. For the record, I think our

discussion of this would be seen by the IMF and those that use the IMF as being already within their own institutional responsibility, but we were quite clear that this kind of thing should not be left to the IMF. It is like the World Trade Organization. It doesn't do any trading of its own. The World Financial Organization shouldn't do any financial transactions. But it should be a watchdog.

Now this was followed-up by the committee, particularly the following year—because the critical analysis was done in 1997, before the crisis in Asia. In fact, in 1997 we had warned very strongly against the kind of difficulties arising and had presented an analysis of why that might happen, not in Asia in particular, but in general, and why one needed a watchdog. The year after, we took this thread up: “Now what did we learn from the 1997 crisis in Asia?” That was very poorly taken by the Americans at the ECOSOC. It wasn't our business to come up with that sort of analysis or recommendation.

Anyway, you could say it had an influence on people's temper. In the following year or two, several things happened that seemed to be consistent with our analyses, though not the acceptance of the instrument of a World Financial Organization. So I think all this is indicative of what we were doing—that ideas were produced, some of them innovative, and analyzed. The reasons for them were being put forward. But they were being accepted like a receptacle received it, rather than in action.

Another illustration is that in 2000, when it came to draft the international development strategy for the decade to 2010, the CDP was not asked to do much at all. It was not accepted by ECOSOC that it be placed on our agenda, except as a request to interact with and assist the Secretary-General in preparation of his draft. Now the Secretary-General, which means the Secretariat, didn't in fact produce anything except an outline before we met. So all we could do

was to comment on that as an outline and say, “It is far too weak. It doesn’t really deal with measurable targets for the coming years.” But we had no mandate to ourselves develop such targets. Subsequently, the Secretary-General completed his draft for the coming decade—to 2010. It is a pretty poor thing. It is really just a collection of decisions taken at the various world conferences in the 1990s. So in the development of the strategy for the decade to 2010, the Fifth Development Decade, we were not really involved.

LE: You know the other day I was using a search engine and I typed “Fifth Development Decade,” and the answer came back, “No trace found.”

Now you said the nature of the ideas you put forward should be within the established wisdom of the day. Otherwise, they will be considered unrealistic. You say that in relation with doubling development assistance.

JF: Yes, that they should be within reach.

LE: That is a kind of defeatist argument. How do we know something is within reach?

JF: Oh yes, we should be bold. There is no question about that. But if you know your bounds, that what you analyze and propose is just going to be thrown out, what is the help you provide by writing it up? At best, you may feel better yourself.

LE: It can be thrown out by some countries, but it can be accepted by others.

JF: Even as a basis for discussion, they wouldn’t at the time have wanted to consider a world with double development assistance.

LE: Who are “they?”

JF: ECOSOC, the powers that be.

LE: Maybe. I’ve always tried to push things to an extreme without going overboard.

JF: I don’t think we pursue it all that differently.

LE: This human resources development thing—was that still education and health, or was it already moving towards human development as a broad, comprehensive development strategy? Or was it basically the role of education and the role of health?

JF: It was very much education, but it also analyzed the role of moving up with technical knowledge, of how both experience and training made development possible, how it was channeled by direct training but also by international investments and all sorts of things. So it was the whole gamut of human resources—and equivalently on the health side.

LE: I find it interesting that that was considered something new. This global financial organization I think was a very interesting idea.

JF: By the way, even that was not a totally new idea. When we advanced the World Financial Organization, we also put up the argument for an Economic Security Council. But we didn't elaborate on that.

LE: You think that is an idea whose time has come? It's not out of bounds? I certainly should be pushing for it any time I can. I think it has been debated long enough.

JF: Already at that time, in 1997, we were aware that it had been discussed quite a bit. And we were joining forces with those who pushed for it.

LE: In summary then, your conclusion would be that the committee did develop ideas—on finance, on human resources, for instance, on the Economic Security Council? They were debated? Human resources development certainly has been largely accepted by everybody now. I think education has become totally overestimated. Other ideas were put forward and were discussed, but were not yet accepted. But maybe they will be accepted next time. So it has not been a waste of time. The ideas did come forward and were seriously discussed. And some of them have reached the implementation stage. Wouldn't you say that?

JF: Yes. I think all that is correct. But maybe there is a longish trend of gradually losing usefulness to the system of the committee. Some of these ideas that come up are ideas that float up anyhow and the committee is not given enough resources to develop them far enough. There are less resources now. We can meet for only five days a year. There is no money for intermediate workshops and so on.

LE: Outrageous.

JF: Yes, it is outrageous. And it's a waste of opportunity.

LE: We interviewed Gerry Helleiner. And he resigned from the committee.

JF: Yes, I know. But at the time, we did at least have three working groups every year.

LE: Richard Jolly and Gerry Helleiner had an argument over this. Richard thought that Gerry should not have resigned. Gerry is not a person who just acts abruptly or spontaneously. He thinks about it. We have less than an hour left on this tape. Shall we now move to your two assignments where you have been the savior of institutions that were in danger—your role as a kind of fire brigade? One was the presidency of the Development Centre, and the other one was IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute). Shall we do that, or did you have something else on your mind?

JF: No, this is fine.

LE: The first question is, why did you take up the presidency, because the Development Centre was in pretty awful shape?

JF: I had been interested in the center for a long time. Before it started in 1963 or 1964, I was asked by Thorkil Kristensen to prepare a set of studies on OECD country relations with developing countries and to mobilize some consultants to work with me. One was Bela Belassa. There was Peter Ady from Oxford, and so on. Not many of them, but a few. And Bela Belassa

was very active. We produced a big set of studies, which gave the secretary-general a kind of hold on that issue, including his helping to get this center going. I was asked to join as a member at the time, but I didn't want to do so.

LE: You were supposedly one of the fellows. I think it is Maddison—

JF: That's right. And Ian Little.

LE: No, Ian Little was vice president.

JF: Yes. And [Bertil] Ohlin was a fellow.

LE: Ohlin was a fellow. Angus Maddison was a fellow. Nino Novacco was a fellow, et cetera.

JF: That's right. But I didn't want to do that. I wanted to do other things. But later on, in the 1970s, I think it was just before I went to Bangladesh, the position there was open. What's his name died.

LE: Andre Philip.

JF: Yes. And it took some time before Paul-Marc Henri took over. I would have been interested if I could have been the president at that time. But I didn't think I had any chance. But then again when he left, before the Canadian came in—

LE: Louis Sabourin.

JF: Yes. Then, of course, I felt qualified enough to compete. I was interviewed by your compatriot.

LE: Emile van Lennep.

JF: But, in his wisdom, he decided to take Sabourin which, he tells me, he bitterly regretted later. This goes on tape, but it doesn't go beyond it. Does it?

LE: Well, listen. Emile von Lennep is now in heaven. And he has confirmed that story to me. When I became president, he was in Holland. He was already retired. He wrote to me a very nice letter and said how happy he was that you had put the thing on the map again, and how much he regretted, et cetera.

JF: So I am saying this because I was, in a sense, preconditioned to accepting when the opportunity came in late 1982.

LE: So you were pursuing that post for a long time.

JF: Yes, if you like. I was in the middle of quite active work elsewhere at the time, but was glad to take that up. I found it an institution, which had lost quite a bit of its stature and acceptance, certainly amongst the member countries—OECD member countries, but also to some extent in the Third World.

LE: Who were the other candidates? Were you selected out of a number, or were you seen as the only savior possible?

JF: I don't know for a fact. I'm sure there were other names thrown about.

LE: You were proposed by the Norwegians.

JF: By van Lennep, I think.

LE: Was van Lennep still there?

JF: Yes, he was the one who recommended my name. So for the first at least one and a half years, I worked with van Lennep. Then came Jean-Claude Paye. Now the reason I was glad to take this on was that again I had somewhat naïve ideas that it really would make a difference to the development dialogue if there could be ways of bringing the concerns of developing countries more analytically and better into the decision-making process amongst the rich countries. Now you know the center as well as I, but when I came there of course—well, also

before I came there—I found that the center had lost quite a bit of its freedom of action and independence, if you like, from the delegations and from the Secretariat. So that clearly became an objective of my working there, of saying warmly, “Thank you,” to advice from both the secretariat and the delegations, and making it quite clear that I would have to live or die with the decisions that I was then making.

And it worked. I suppose it was not equally well-received, but it was very forcefully presented, and van Lennep supported it. Also I felt that, because we had lost out vis-à-vis the secretariat and the members, we had lost out a bit also in the way the Third World looked at us. I sensed very much that in order to come back to a position, or perhaps a new position, of being a facilitator and an intermediary between the two groups, we needed to build up the credibility in the Third World. Well, you came after me so you know how well or otherwise we did it, in terms of result. In terms of the fight, it was constantly ongoing.

Of course, I also found that administratively and in terms of research, the center was in a messy condition. So a good deal of the job was clearing up the backlog and getting things into order and getting work programs established. What interested me most in that period was what I think of, and perhaps you have heard referred to, as the “Dourdan/Rolleboise experiences.” I think they were both very great successes for what I wanted to do. The two secretaries-general were very happy with it. Even Jean-Claude Paye, who was very hesitant and very worried as the process went on, I think was basically happy with it. But some delegations were not. You couldn’t include them all. You couldn’t pre-program it and so on.

I tried to build up to a new set of such dialogues, without getting there, in my time. We did lose some momentum in what would have been a very useful function for the Development Centre. It was valuable on those two special occasions, and it would have been if it could have

been continued. And very much in line with that, it is what I have generally been occupied with around the world. I think that's about it on the Development Centre.

LE: Well not for me. Do you still think today that it is important to have this bridge between the industrial countries, on one hand, and the rest of the world, on the other hand, to have some kind of an institution, as the Development Centre was, and during my time continued to be, the window or the bridge between these two worlds? Do you think that is still important today?

JF: Yes. There are other bridges, of course, but why break this one? And I think there were people walking across that bridge that wouldn't have walked the other bridges. So I think it was a helpful thing.

LE: And it still is today?

JF: I suspect it would be. I don't know why it wouldn't be, but I don't know enough about the concrete situation.

LE: Because the OECD, of course, is getting in—

JF: That's right, it's developed very different. So I am not really sure of that. I don't think that it can be that kind of bridge through the Secretariat. But maybe that particular bridge is not so needed. That I wouldn't judge.

LE: And also, during these three years that you were president of the OECD Development Centre, any relations with the UN at all? I had very few, I must say.

JF: Yes, very, very few. They were not absent, but they were not very active or intimate. I think they had to do with particular projects more than anything else.

LE: You were there in a particularly difficult time, of course. I stood on your shoulders. It was relatively easy sailing, although—

JF: You had, I'm sure, your problems too.

LE: Well this is not my interview. It's yours. So you came back, and lo and behold, in 1990 again you were called in for an emergency operation, this time as director-general of the International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington. It was set up by John Mellor.

JF: It wasn't set up by him, but he had run it for thirteen years before me.

LE: I thought he had set it up and run it many years—

JF: He built it up, but somebody else started it.

LE: And he ran into trouble—we shall not go into that—but he had to resign, and you came in there. Now how was that experience?

JF: Well let me first say how I got into it. I had done a major agricultural sector analysis of Bangladesh with an awful lot of people. That was a UNDP-sponsored thing, in 1987 to 1989. Because of that exercise, and because of my involvement before that with IFAD and so on, I was thought to know something about agriculture and agricultural policy. Also, I had been coordinator or chairman of a panel to review of FAO's objectives and strategies.

LE: From 1989 to 1990.

JF: That's right. I suppose I got away from that exercise too without people finding me out. So I was still being considered an expert on agriculture.

LE: But that is amazing. Look at this: 1979 to 1986, chief of IFAD special programming to Botswana, Mozambique, and Sudan; then in 1987 and 1989, the Bangladesh agricultural sector review, which UNDP still uses as a model.

JF: Yes, they think it was very successful.

LE: Then from 1988 to 1990, coordinator of a panel on FAO objectives, roles, and strategies. So all of a sudden, you did become drowned in agricultural and food activities.

JF: That's right. I think my only advantage compared to others is that I know that I don't know anything about agricultural production. Then I was asked to be chairman of an IFPRI review—all these CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) centers are being evaluated every five or six years. IFPRI's turn had come up, and I was asked to chair the management review evaluation, along with two or three or four others. So I had started on that in the early months of 1990, by participating in a board meeting of IFPRI, seeing how it operated there. Then, for reasons not totally unexpected to me, they had to have a quick meeting in July because the thing was falling to pieces, for reasons that we agree we don't want to go into. I was called in, since I was chairman of that review committee, to take part in the board discussions about what to do. At the beginning, anyway, it wasn't a question of John Mellor actually leaving. It was a question of the chairman, the Dutchman, leaving. His colleagues said that he had to go. I remember saying, "If he has to go, why don't you all go?"

LE: Why don't *we* all go.

JF: No, I wasn't on the board. But anyhow, they did decide that John would have to go on a year's leave of absence. A couple of week's later, that was changed into two years, and after that it was changed into forever. All that was done by the board. I stayed totally clean on that. So in the board's desperation while looking around for a replacement, I happened to be in Washington. So they asked whether I could step in as director.

LE: Wasn't Gerry Helleiner on the board?

JF: Yes. He was the vice-chairman and would move up to be chairman if he didn't resign along with the chair.

LE: He did not resign.

JF: No. None of them did.

LE: So he was your chairman.

JF: He was then my chairman.

LE: During those—what was it?

JF: Two years. All those two years. Mine wasn't a difficult job. It wasn't difficult in the sense that the OECD Development Centre was. At IFPRI it was so obvious what I had to do. It was difficult to do it, but I didn't have any sort of difficulty in deciding what needed to be done. And I did have the support of the board.

LE: And the staff?

JF: Yes, that went very well. The staff was very supportive; in fact, too supportive to begin with. Too supportive in the sense of being too anti-getting-John-back. And this was still in the period when he had one or two years' leave. But they were very supportive of me and they were understanding of the need to do the things I felt were needed. So that was fairly easy in one sense. And it moved on for about six to nine months before everything was in place. By that time, we had taken stock of things. I had given a presentation on where I saw IFPRI moving, including talking about my distinguished predecessor. We also had had an exercise in which I set about developing a strategy for the longer haul for IFPRI, where I, unlike the other development centers at the time, called in people from the Third World and so on. We had a meeting in Paris on this.

The first year was clearing up and getting started and the second year was keeping it running and getting the products out and learning about the system. When I first arrived at IFPRI, I didn't know what the initials of these sixteen centers meant.

LE: Then after you came that Dane from Cornell University, who is now finishing his second term. They are now looking for somebody else. Maybe you will be called back.

JF: No, no. Yes, I just had an email from Per Pinstrup-Andersen because I congratulated him on the World Food Prize. He got the World Food Prize.

LE: He as a person, or IFPRI as an organization?

JF: No, he as a person. It's a thing they give to individuals.

LE: Now tell me, IFPRI is a totally independent international organization. Is it linked to anybody?

JF: Each of these institutes is independent, totally independent. However, the decisive authority is the board. The IFPRI board is composed of mostly—I have forgotten whether it is just the majority or nearly everybody—board members nominated by the U.S. government. That is to retain their “clause something” status, not to pay taxes. And also the other institutes have some host country-nominated board members. But my experience, both in IFPRI and wherever else I was board member, is that the governments nominating are very glad to be told whom to nominate. And they have never, to my knowledge, gone across or gone counter to the interests as seen by the institute's board.

LE: But that was also one of the reasons why your task was easier at IFPRI, as opposed to the OECD Development Centre where you had all these governments on your back. Right?

JF: Yes, the decisions are totally in the hands of the management and board, but decisions, to be implemented, need money. So the donors are very closely involved in this process. The CGIAR system is very much donor-dominated in terms of priorities.

LE: And who were the big donors in your day at IFPRI?

JF: It was USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development). And Japan was strongly coming in. We had a budget at the time of twelve million or so U.S. dollars. It is now \$22 million or something. But of course the prices have gone up. Yet it is bigger than it used to

be. The sponsoring agencies for all of these institutes are the World Bank, the FAO, and the UNDP.

LE: As I understand it, IFPRI is part of the CGIAR system.

JF: Yes.

LE: Now what does CGIAR stand for?

JF: Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research.

LE: So the sponsoring agencies of that system of CGIAR are the World Bank, the FAO, and the UNDP. They were also putting in some money and overlooking the system.

JF: Except to the World Bank, they are not putting in much money; just a little bit and it is for particular projects. But they are indeed the sponsoring agencies and pretty active.

LE: And they are represented in the board?

JF: Not on the boards. They are represented at the consultative group level. But neither the board nor the directors of the institutes are members of the consultative group, which is composed of sponsoring governments and foundations.

LE: How many institutions are functioning under the CGIAR system?

JF: Sixteen at the moment, of which IFPRI and ISNAR are two.

LE: What is the role of ISNAR? Can you remind me?

JF: ISNAR is the International Service for National Agricultural Research in The Hague. They are supposed to support national systems in developing countries to become effective facilitators and organizers of national research.

LE: And that system of sixteen institutions, of which you were one, has a board.

JF: No, not yet. They have been discussing that for a long time. There is no overall board. There is an overall consultative group mainly of donors. At least the decisive say is with the donors.

LE: What is the difference between a consultative group and a board?

JF: In the consultative group, donors can advise each other about what to support within the system. But once you get the support to IFPRI, say, then it is up to the director-general, with his board, to decide how to make use of it and to be responsible.

LE: What I am driving at—it's an interesting constellation of organizations sponsored by an interesting troika, which you rarely see together: the World Bank, UNDP, and the FAO. But as I question you, you didn't have anything to do with them. They were sponsors but without being financial sponsors.

JF: At the meetings of the consultative group, which until now were taking place twice a year—and they have become big-numbered things because there are forty-odd members of that consultative group: the bilateral countries that have supported the international institutes, the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, and so on. And, over the last five or six years, developing country governments have also become members. Like the government of Norway, the government of Nigeria is there, even though Nigeria does not contribute any money—although there used to be a rule that even they had to put up \$100,000 a year or something. Yes, they come together and they discuss a program for the investment of their funds. That program has been developed largely as an aggregation of what the individual centers want. It has been reviewed by a technical advisory committee, which reports to the consultative group and which is, in principle, independent of the institutes. And there are various other more administrative committees.

Now at the consultative group meeting, they review this and they accept it and they say, “How much money are we going to have in total for these activities over the coming year?” And they then say, “Last year we had \$330 million. It’s been pretty tough-going getting it, and we now have some dangerous warning signals. But then we also have some positive things, and we want to be ambitious. So let’s make it 335 for next year.” So a program is built up around the 335. But there is no commitment on anybody’s part to put up any money. They are just agreeing amongst themselves, as donors, that they will try together to support this size of program. We know how it has been built up and therefore know something about priorities and balance, but none of us is committed to taking up any particular part of it.

Then the consultative group secretariat, as well as individual institutes, go out to donors and say, “My part in this, as you know, is this, that, and the other. This is particularly important. Aren’t you particularly interested?”

LE: So every year, sixteen institutions must go to individual governments and foundations to say, “You remember, my part is 5 percent. Pay up.”

JF: Yes. Or they say, “My program includes this project. This you really ought to pick up yourself.”

LE: Every year. There is no core funding.

JF: There is some core funding, but not necessarily for the long haul. The World Bank puts up 15 percent. I think it’s \$45 million a year, of which they tie up to two-thirds of it—in recent years, it’s been given as an inducement to other donors. If an individual institute manages to get a package of commitments from the bilaterals for 10 million, then the Bank will put up an additional million. That kind of thing.

LE: Coming back to the sponsoring troika, did you have interesting exchanges with these three international organizations? Were there conflicts between them, or was it all peace and quiet?

JF: There was bureaucratic competition. I mentioned that the technical advisory committee that services the consultative group is reviewing the program. That technical advisory committee is located in FAO, and FAO pays for half of it and the World Bank pays for the other half or something like that. The consultative group itself and its secretariat are in Washington and deal with financial matters, and of course a lot of political matters, and are supposed to be a central point for exhorting money from the system. So the CG (consultative group) secretariat itself, in a way, goes around the world and tries to mobilize money.

LE: But you have never had any problems with any of these organizations? They left you in peace? I am talking about the troika.

JF: Yes. The troika was, on the whole, supportive of us. In terms of what the program should be, I didn't really see any problem within the troika.

LE: A final question, as far as this part is concerned. You have been working in so many organizations: national, regional, international, within the UN, outside the UN, the World Bank. If you compare these various experiences, what determines a good and efficient environment? In what kind of environment can you work or did you work best? Are there certain conditions that have to be fulfilled for an organization and a good leadership to be efficient, apart from money, of course? And where were you happiest? In which of these organizations did you feel you were working most smoothly, easily, and efficiently? So, as you look back over your long career, would it be Christian Michelsen Institute?

JF: I was just going to say that I have been very happy with what I could do here within the institute. I don't think that what was done here could have been done anywhere else in Norway at that time.

LE: Why?

JF: Because it had that open mandate, the last will and testament of Christian Michelsen, the statutes, the reference to work that had to do with research and intellectual freedom, as he called it. There was no other place here where it could have been done. If I had been at the university, I am pretty sure that I would not have been able to build up this sort of institute.

LE: In parentheses, it is significant that neither I nor you have talked about your relationships with the university system. Is there any relationship between Christian Michelsen and—

JF: There is today a very strong relationship.

LE: Really? In what sense? People like you are teaching there?

JF: There is a bit of that—not much though. There has always been a bit of it. I have done it, too. But we have here Master's and Ph.D. degree students who do their theses in an area where there may be a good counterpart here who can work with them, where our library is equipped to deal with their type of topic.

LE: These are Norwegian students?

JF: Not necessarily. Not always.

LE: These are students in Norway. Are there students from abroad who come here?

JF: Yes. I think most of the students here are in fact students from within the Norwegian system. And most of them are Norwegian citizens. But in addition, more before than now, we use the institute as a place to facilitate work in Norway by people from the Third World. We

used to have quite a lot of these. Our friends in Bangladesh—Nurul Islam, Kamal Hussein, Rehman Sobhan and all these people have been here for months on end doing their studies.

LE: So you have visiting scholars?

JF: We also have cooperation agreements with several institutions in the Third World, for example in Bangladesh, although that agreement has run out. Anyhow, mostly our visitors were from the Third World. We had, in fact, set aside money to have the equivalent of two man-years a year of scholars from the Third World. A number of younger people are also from the Third World.

LE: But you say that nationally, what I, Just Faaland, have done in the Christian Michelsen Institute, I could never have done anywhere else. And that is probably because of the autonomy you have here. You were not limited by a bureaucracy, nor to a national bureaucracy. That is clear. You were most efficient and happiest in those places where you had relative autonomy—IFPRI, for instance. No?

JF: My ventures into the international organizations have always been things I wanted to do for a short time, either on a particular project like the one in ILO, or agriculture in Bangladesh, or for a limited time in a secretariat. So while I said earlier that I was learning the hard way the difficulties of field versus headquarters in the World Bank, in a way in my period there I felt I was very satisfied that I could contribute. Similarly, in a field which we haven't talked about, when I was two and a half years in Malaysia, the kind of thing I could do there I was very happy to do. It stayed with me ever since. I think maybe I am made up in such a way that I notice very much, and I feel very badly about, lost opportunities. Therefore, even though much good comes up, there are lost opportunities that I try to capture.

LE: Yes. That's why you have taken so many opportunities. You miss as few as possible.

JF: Yes. That's right.

LE: Short periods—but you have spent several years in a World Bank capacity in the field. You have spent several years in the OECD, several years at IFPRI, several years as a member of the Harvard Development Advisory Service, first in Pakistan and then in Malaysia (and indeed we have not talked about those latter years). So you can make a comparison. What are the conditions for you to be happy, productive, and efficient? You haven't thought about that.

JF: No, I haven't really ranked these experiences—partly because they are so different, and partly because I got so much out of each of them, for my own satisfaction, I mean. I think the things I did for IFAD and with the ILO—the review of FAO and so on—I felt this was being able to work on something important.

LE: You seem to have been quite impressed by IFAD. Now what does that stand for, again?

JF: The International Fund for Agricultural Development.

LE: You seem to like that organization, no?

JF: I had lots of quarrels with them, but I liked their efforts to really get to grips with something that was important and was leading all the time. They talked about village development programs, rural development programs, agriculture, and so on. You already had FAO working, the World Bank working. Then IFAD comes in. What on earth are they going to do? And they did contribute in one selected dimension, in one special field of activity, which was limited but important. This was illustrative of what other institutions should try to do. What

you did in the World Employment Programme is also exactly of that nature—something that wasn't there before, that was obviously needed, that could be brought to have importance in development. And I liked to be part of that.

LE: When you were there, there was this Algerian fellow.

JF: Idriss Jazairy.

LE: Was he good? He is now ambassador of Algeria in Washington.

JF: Oh, is he? Yes, I was quite impressed with him when I worked for him on these programming missions. I later brought him into the OECD Development Centre dialogue meetings. Then I lost some, not respect, but interest in him, because he spent all his time arguing just for IFAD. Before I had seen him as an innovator and a thinker. He had a very sharp mind.

LE: Very sharp. Good English.

JF: Yes. And he had been chairman of the Group of 77 (G-77) in New York.

LE: I think we will call it a day, if you don't mind, unless you have a last word on the topics we have covered today.

JF: I think we have spoken enough today, don't you think?

LE: We have. We had almost four hours today, which makes it a total of almost six hours. So I propose that we call it a day now, go back to the bottle of Aquavit, and have, say, an hour tomorrow morning, or whatever time we need, on leadership, NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), and any other questions you feel we have not touched upon sufficiently. Is that okay?

JF: Yes.

LE: This is tape number four. It is a bright and sunny morning in Bergen, Norway, at the Christian Michelsen Institute. Well, Just, this is the last stretch. I am going to ask you a couple

of questions about the role of research in the UN, leadership, the role of NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), things like that. And of course, we will end up by asking you whether we have forgotten anything of importance. There are a number of research-oriented institutions within the United Nations system—UNRISD (UN Research Institute for Social Development), the United Nations University (UNU), with a whole series of branches, of which WIDER (World Institute for Development Economics Research) is probably one of the better-known. What is your opinion? Are these institutions a true source of ideas within the United Nations family, or do they live a kind of peaceful existence separated from the rest of the organization?

JF: Occasionally I have been in touch with these institutions that you have mentioned, and quite often I have been a customer of theirs, in the sense of reading their stuff and so on. You mentioned WIDER. I was associated with that on a sort of personal basis on an advisory group they had for one or two of their projects. I saw it in the years when it was created. And for the first maybe five or ten years thereafter I had some involvement. Like a lot of people, I was quite happy to see that the UNU had sponsored that and taken that on. And like always, one had views about how well they exploited the opportunity that it represented. But on the whole, I was very favorably impressed by what I saw.

Now did it contribute new ideas? I think it more developed new ideas. I remember an occasion when I was with the OECD Development Centre, we had discussed quite a bit the question of—this was in the mid-1980s, in the early part of my stay there—what to do with the financial surpluses that were flowing around, in particular the Japanese surplus at the time. In one of the sessions in OECD, we had discussed this quite a bit on the basis of ideas that Saburo Okita was putting forward. I am not quite sure—I have forgotten just now whether Lal

Jayawardena was with us on that occasion. But in any case, WIDER took that on and developed a paper which elaborated on this and carried the idea a bit further towards what might be a sort of concrete, practical policy. I felt that was a very good thing on the part of WIDER. I think it had some influence in the sense that it was being discussed. And while the Development Centre had, in a sense, mobilized in our meeting some of the decision-makers, WIDER took it further into the intellectual and political discussion area. So I think that illustrates what they were doing.

I had my problems with the way they ran the institute, mainly based on distance-consultants doing their job. They did manage to build up only a small core in Helsinki, but maybe that's not the sort of thing that we should discuss very much. This was more a practical point that I was making.

LE: I think it is important that this is being discussed, because I was very close by when WIDER was born. As you know, the Finns wanted it so much that they put in an extraordinary amount of money, a house for the director—

JF: They even topped what the Dutch were offering.

LE: Exactly. So we bowed out, appropriately. And WIDER was sitting here up north in the snow, eight months a year. Now who wants to live in the snow eight months a year? So I thought it was a very bad decision to put it up there, and the Finns have regretted it ever since.

JF: Yes, because they didn't get what they thought they were going to get. I think they are getting more out of it now than—

LE: A weaker and a less scientific leadership, because Lal Jayawardena was outstanding.

JF: In terms of ideas and so on. Yes, that's right.

LE: So on the whole, you are relatively optimistic. You have seen an institution like WIDER. You have not mentioned UNRISD. You have seen relatively independent institutions within the United Nations devoted to research doing quite well, in the case of WIDER.

JF: Yes, in the case of WIDER. I think UNRISD also did quite some useful work and carried some ideas into analyses and books and so on.

LE: But did they carry their ideas into the system?

JF: Not very much, I think. It became part of a background music. You cannot, from one or two or five institutions save the whole world. They made positive contributions.

LE: Let us enlarge then this discussion and talk about the interrelation between academia and the UN. Is the United Nations system, the family of organizations, receptive to ideas that come to them from the outside, from the university research community?

JF: Not very much, I would say—not very much at all. But if you have a lot of background music and play it very loudly, it can't but affect the more political debate. I think the UN system is a rather closed system that allows for interaction between political figures, often not even politicians but sort of administrators of government. It is hard to get them to accept, in a real sense, new ideas.

LE: But aren't you a living illustration of the contrary? All these consultants from academia that have been employed by the UN, all these Nobel Prize winners—Jan Tinbergen, James Meade, Amartya Sen, and others. I would have thought that there was a very lively interrelationship between the two universes—academia and the UN. But the real question is, are these enlightened academics getting anywhere? You got somewhere in the system.

JF: I don't think I got very far. But again, I think it is my sort of general attitude. I see what might have been, what additional things would have been useful and don't happen. So I

tend to be a bit cautious in giving credit to the system. But I participated in several consultancies and committees and things that did discuss strategies and policies for these institutions, like the FAO, for instance. A few of the members of such groups who did that work came from academia, and came from their research, and carried it with them. But in terms of influence on what the institutions were then doing, it was a sort of incremental change at best. To put these ideas into effect, you need the administrators and the functionaries to really put these ideas fully on board. And that is hard work. They, on the whole, don't appreciate that and would rather go without it.

You can't really change an organization unless the leadership of the organization itself wants it. I think the UN would be a much poorer organization if it hadn't been for this kind of input that they got and this constant exposure, as you were saying, through consultancies and other ways of mobilizing the outside world. But sometimes, I feel they mobilize people like that from the outside because they are forced to, by one or the other delegate, who wants to introduce a person or an idea. But maybe it's true even with our own national administrations. It is a bit similar. It is hard work to turn a ship like that around. It requires persistence.

Some of the academics who are in this, they are in this for a quickie. Then they move back to their research and back to other interests. The constant pressure is not really there. But that, in a way, is a function that UNRISD, WIDER, the OECD Development Centre, and such institutions can perform. They can, in a sense, be a channel for such inputs and see to the continuation of pressure to change.

LE: As you implied, it is a general question between academia and ideas, on the one hand, and practitioners, in general, on the other, not only in the UN, but indeed in national administrations. There may be too much of a gap or too little receptivity on the part of

practitioners to the force of ideas. Now of course, sometimes these so-called ideas may be crackpot ideas.

JF: Of course they are.

LE: But, that is how most practitioners see any idea: “Here is this crackpot again, Louis or Just or Galtung.” But have you seen the same thing also in Norway, for instance, between you, as an illustration of an ideas-man on the one hand, and the lack of penetration in the administration on the other? Yesterday, in the course of this interview, I didn’t get this impression that you were hitting a wall.

JF: No, I think I haven’t hit a wall. I have been fortunate enough to have a feeling that while they may not have accepted what I say, they did listen. And they have been quite keen to listen over the years. There is no question whether I have been heard where I wanted to be heard, which of course is very different from them actually seeing it happen. So that is a function that I think quite a few people, at least in my country, play. Although we have not here had the same tradition as they have, I think, in Britain, where at least their economists are moving in and out of government and academia. I mentioned MacDougall and Cairncross and all these people on royal commissions and that sort of thing. We don’t have that to the same extent here, at least not organized in the same way. But that way one could get influence.

I wonder whether it is the same sort of thing in the UN system. I haven’t really reflected on that. There is some of it, but maybe not enough.

LE: I am sorry to interrupt, Just, but as I said, there have been nine Nobel Prize winners working actively in the UN, starting with Jan Tinbergen, with James Meade, with Richard Stone, and ending up with Amartya Sen. Amartya’s role in the Human Development Reports is crucial.

JF: Yes it was.

LE: And constant over time. So there has been a lot of penetration, and these people have been heard also—Sen in particular. But it depends also on the leadership.

JF: You mean within the UN?

LE: In general. But now since you are talking about the UN, take the case of the World Bank—Robert McNamara. Hollis Chenery became the chief economist and vice president, a wonderful academic with his feet firmly on the ground. He did his 1974 book with the IDS (Institute of Development Studies) people. There was an example of a man—McNamara—who was a strong leader, some people think too strong, who was not afraid of attracting first-rate academic people. So the role of leadership, I would have thought, in the UN and in general, is terribly important to give people with ideas a chance to penetrate the implementation structure.

JF: I don't at all disagree with that. That is very true. But now you are talking about leadership within the UN. I think equally leadership within the institutions we were talking about, like UNITAR, WIDER, and the Development Centre, is similarly important. But even those illustrations that you brought up raise the question of how deep the new ideas penetrated into the organization, whether the organization changed when these ideas were accepted at the top level. Even with McNamara there was certainly a question of whether his machine changed course. That is true all the time, which I think is a reflection on the time it takes to get a new idea adopted and put into effect, and therefore underlines the importance of finding ways to bring some continuity of pressure, keeping up the pressure.

Now academics within academia are, on the whole, not in the position where they naturally will keep up pressure. There are exceptions, I think, like Tinbergen, when he helped get the CDP and other things organized, and maybe even Ragnar Frisch in his own way. I agree about Amartya Sen, exploiting the insights that he had gained through his research over a long

time in a UN context. I think that is true. But these are, on the whole, exceptions. It is very important that the institutions that are to be channels of this within the system are given effective leadership and resources to carry this on.

As we say, even these institutions like UNITAR, UNRISD, WIDER, and the World Bank's own research department have great fun developing these ideas, and it is important that it be done, but they have a very hard long-term job to get their ideas actually implanted into the UN system. So I think it is a reflection on the potential of these institutions for channeling ideas, but also a reflection on the not always very successful operation of these institutions.

But in a related thing, I have been involved occasionally in suggesting to development organizations a research program of their own, within their own circles, and also how to organize it. Part of that was the FAO review, and another one was UNCTAD, thirty-five years or so ago, when I was with Prebisch. But also fifteen years later, UNCTAD was trying to develop its own research capability and organization. They asked me for a reflection on that. I don't think they got enough resources to do it in the end. But I found that in trying to be helpful there, not only did I have to think about the comparative advantages of that organization in terms of research needed, but also how to organize it. Part of it was exactly this relationship between the machinery within their institutions and us, let's say, on the outside.

LE: Has leadership improved in the UN system? Has it remained stable? Or has it declined in terms of quality and receptivity and permanent pressure?

JF: I think it has decreased in quality and applicability. When you go back, as I think we did referring to the early 1950s, and even go back to the League of Nations, there were very important analyses of the world's future in the late 1930s.

LE: Tinbergen.

JF: Tinbergen was involved in that too. Then in 1951, or something, this report we may refer to as an Arthur Lewis report—that certainly was a major, if you like, think piece about the future of the world. And it happened in a period when the world was getting organized in a new way, in all sorts of ways. I think there is a lot more such research going on now within and near to the UN, but it doesn't have the same impact and perhaps even vision that it had at the time—but maybe that's because of us, the people who are involved. Maybe it has to do with the general organization of world politics.

LE: If you look at how people are selected at the top of organizations, I think the explanation is right there. Member countries, particularly the important ones, or countries that consider themselves as important, are afraid of strong leadership.

JF: Yes, and they hesitate to entertain new ideas too.

LE: Exactly, because they are considered radical. So weak leadership is the norm, and weak leaders like weak collaborators. If you now look at the UN system as a whole, where do we see strong, enlightened leadership? Which organization has it?

JF: It has to do with your judgement about individuals as much as with the institutions.

LE: Yes. Give me your judgement.

JF: No, I don't want to do that. After all, the OECD Development Centre had strong leadership for quite a few years. And you mentioned WIDER, with Lal. Now, whether or not he had strong leadership, he was an ideas man. Leadership in terms of administration, I don't know. You mentioned McNamara in the past, I think it is perhaps true. And I go back to the 1950s, when I think the UN attracted more people who really were committed to change the world.

LE: It could be, of course, because as you said a minute ago, we were changing the world orders at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s. So there was a role to come

up with new ideas. Then, as always, we get into a routine, and it is only once in a while that we see good leadership coming. It is by accident, almost.

JF: That's true. And it's not necessarily sought for by the people who selected them. But you know, it takes institutions, but it also takes the good chance of having picked up strong or ideas-rich people. Well, I suppose we are not looking at agency heads around and giving them marks. I am not sure that is, in a sense, all the explanation. Rather, it is a matter of interests and attitudes in capitals around the world and what they want their organization to do. There is always a balance to strike between the national and the international, and what should be decided at the country-level, and be their own responsibility, and what should be done internationally. And the national thing, they have more or less control over. The international, for most countries anyhow, is a thing to treat with some caution and circumspection, and not allow it to run too much its own course.

LE: But we are heading for an important question. With, on the whole, weak leadership at the top and higher levels of the organizations, is the system ready to face the intellectual challenges ahead of it? How do you see the next ten years in these organizations—huge development challenges, environmental challenges, poverty challenges, global income distribution challenges, trade challenges. Is the system ready to face up to this, to give enlightened leadership with good ideas behind it?

JF: I don't think it is quite. You always hope that there is something coming and you feel disappointed. The system is sort of dragged into change, rather than leading it, I think. And the dragged into has to do with their home base, very much. It also has to do with ideas like the general attitude on the market economy and all that sort of thing. And it has to do with fads and fashions of development and what have you. And it has to do with accidents, big or small, like

troubles in the Middle East or in New York and Washington, today. When the system gets shaken up, or the world gets shaken up, then of course things can happen. In a way, I think that's what happened after the war. It was after the Second World War that it was possible, perhaps, to create a new world order, which basically they did.

I have often been asking myself, and others, who is today's Robert Schuman or Jean Monnet. Maybe there are, and twenty or thirty years from now we will see that we had them. But it is not very evident. So the world has moved on. I think it is possible to put forward the idea of a great effort of within ten or twenty years to do something with global income distribution and to have the world discuss a program, a Marshall Plan if you like, for that sort of thing. I think that it is possible to mobilize sufficient support to get that discussed. It is hard to do it. It is not really very welcome. This is one role that the civil society more widely can play.

LE: Yes, I was thinking about that. You are leading into that. Is there a role for civil society organizations, nongovernmental organizations, which are getting more and more active, and indeed more and more noisy. But in times like these, with political parties being passive and all sitting in the middle, with the international weak leadership, surely the role of well-documented, well-researched NGOs, next to an aggressive minority, this is becoming important, isn't it?

JF: Oh yes, I think that is true. It has already been pretty important. I think a good deal of the concern about the environment and so on is based on that sort of thing, which isn't dissimilar to what we've known in our own work about foreign aid based on trying to do something about the world's poverty. There is a sort of general, at least in my country, underlying acceptance that you owe it to yourself, as well as to the world, to be aware of and, if possible, do something about it. That is based on the general attitude in the population—not

always very activist. Sometimes it's the sort of thing you do on Sunday, and other days of the week you do other things. But it's there.

And I think the environment is a field where civil society has, in a sense, led the politicians and gradually forced the politicians to take that at least a bit more seriously. And, indeed, it is backed up by a lot of research, with not always very certain results. Similar things, I think, can happen in economic and social development in the world.

LE: Environment is an example. Gender is a second example. Human rights is probably a third example of civil society as a—

JF: Yes, it probably is.

LE: Now what do you think, in this connection, of these demonstrations we see against the World Bank and the IMF, against the World Trade Organization, against the role of the G-7 (Group of 7), against the European Union? But let's just restrict ourselves to these three international organizations, more or less linked to the United Nations system.

JF: I think it is a pity that so much of the attention gets to the actions of the fringe of that group and that dilutes the whole thing. It doesn't invite dialogue and joint action at all. That's a great pity. And it's a pity seen by a lot of the demonstrators too. I am impressed by the amount of serious thinking and even research that backs up some of these movements. So I think that's a very good thing. But I do feel a bit frustrated sometimes about it, because as you were phrasing your comments, these tend to be demonstrations of protestation against these institutions. It is too little. What we need are demonstrations in favor of actions to be taken by these institutions. Rather than against something, you should be for something. That doesn't come enough to the fore to be effective. But maybe that's a comment on the individual demonstrations.

As a whole movement, I think it is clearly positive. It also mobilizes people to be concerned about very major issues. I think all of that is very much to the good. But it is like anything else. You have an instrument that is being developed and it can be used for good or for evil. You will have to work for it being positively used. Some of these civil society organizations, or protest movements if you like, are really quite impressive. They have seen the need to be properly briefed on what the facts are and what the opportunities are. It is really quite impressive.

LE: In a sense, they are taking over the role of research and ideas that should be part of the system.

JF: Well, I don't think so quite. They don't take over. They also make some use of that, and when they do they are at their best.

LE: But many of them are well-documented.

JF: Yes, that's right. But in their documentation they draw from research done elsewhere, largely. So they become part of a channel of communications.

LE: One more question. Have you seen any drastic change within the UN after the fall of the Berlin Wall, or has it been business as usual? After the end of the Cold War, has there been any active change in the system?

JF: Well the world is a different one, of course. The East-West confrontation is, if not gone forever, not dominating so much, which means that you can have discussions about the other major, basic issues of world order cutting across East-West. That is important. There is also a loss to that, of course, because the East, with a lot of weaknesses in it—fatal weaknesses, maybe—still represented an alternative view. That very much is gone, and it means that in the economics field market forces have been given even greater sway for an even greater part of the

earth, for good and for bad. It is easier to be dogmatic today about the market economy than it was before. And many fall into that trap.

LE: And that is where the role of NGOs becomes even more important. There is no countervailing power anymore, as you've said yourself. Now Just, we are coming to the end of this interview. You are going to turn eighty early next year, I have been told by your wife. Have you been winding down already a little bit? You retired as director around when?

JF: It is now thirteen years ago.

LE: You retired as director of this institute thirteen years ago. Here you are, you are still in your office, still looking over the hills and the mountains of your beautiful country. I haven't seen any winding down in your c.v. (curriculum vitae). Are you winding down a little bit, or are you just going on as always?

JF: I am winding down. Last year saw the end of a couple of activities that took a lot of time. But I am not winding down in terms of my interest or my effort to try to keep up. But I think my main specific concern—I have a lot of general interests that I want to pursue—but my specific interest is focused on developments in Malaysia, where I spent two and a half years some thirty years ago now, and I have been following things since. Related to this project, this interview, maybe I can say about that, that in the world today, it is clear in so many parts, in so many countries, that ethnic diversity is very difficult to handle. It creates a lot of overt, vicious fighting and also a lot of problems for managing these economies.

Malaysia is a prime example of a country with ethnic diversity. It had vicious riots in 1969. As it happened, I was there at the time and was part of the effort to find out what, for the future, to do about that. Malaysia developed, with some participation on my part, what they called their New Economic Policy, which was a policy that, seen from one point of view, was

discriminatory. From another point of view it was affirmative. It was, of course, hotly debated and contested within Malaysia, and was not at all welcome internationally and in the World Bank, and so on, because affirmative action and implied discrimination sort of goes against the grain of a lot of people who have lived in societies where it has not been thought necessary to do it. So we developed that policy, and Malaysia fortunately made a very great success of it. There have not been, at least not serious, racial problems, in contrast to the neighboring countries—in particular Indonesia, but also others.

I feel that we, as economists, have not really done our homework well. We haven't developed analyses, and for that matter policy options, addressing ethnic diversity as expressed in great differences in economic well-being, both on the production side and in sharing the output. We know how to deal, in theory, with international trade. If you have national borders, you know how to develop your national policy in relation to the international system. But how do you develop a policy in support of a relatively backward domestic group? We haven't done our work on that and it is not, of course, a question just of economics, but of the social sciences generally.

I have been very interested in following what has been going on there, particularly in terms of economics. How successful has this policy been? How well has it been kept up and pursued? One thing, which is clear, is that a very long-term effort is needed to come to grips with it. It needs persistence in its affirmative action. You easily slip back. It also needs to be very effective, because if you are going to get the groups that are being discriminated against to accept this, it has to be seen that at least it gives results. The day of relief from such discrimination must not be pushed into eternity before you can stop doing this. And there are

many things to question in the way Malaysia has pursued that policy. Again, that ought to be analyzed.

Now that's one very interesting aspect of Malaysia, and it is very much alive today. And when one comes to write another history project, I think this sort of thing will be part of it. How did the world deal with these kinds of things?

LE: Well not very well, of course, as we see in Europe these days.

JF: Exactly.

LE: I am happy that you reminded us of your stay in Malaysia between 1968 and 1970, again in the framework of the Harvard Development Advisory Service group. You have done so many things in your life. We had touched on ninety percent, but we had not touched on that aspect. And I know you are going to get an honorary doctorate degree in Kuala Lumpur next month. So your work there and your constant interest in that country has been appreciated, obviously.

JF: And contested. Another thing, in a different field, this Asian crisis in 1997 hit Malaysia, as it hit Thailand and Korea and others. Very much against the advice and pressure of the international system generally, of course mainly through the IMF, Malaysia took its own course in the crisis. It introduced a set of monetary and other state controls. For those who remember, or have read, the history of the Bretton Woods institutions, that would not have been seen as a wrong policy in those days. But anyhow, today it is.

Malaysia was told that this was going to make the situation a whole lot worse and so on. They nevertheless insisted and did this. And they have come through at least better than the others. There is no doubt that it was better. And also, a few academics then, but now in growing

numbers, who studied these policies say that it is a good illustration of a particular weakness in the Washington Consensus and that there is clearly something to learn.

Now I am interested in being close enough to what is going on there to see what there is to learn from this. I wish the system would interest itself more in this. In the UN system, I was involved in the CDP, as we talked about. And we actually took this up. It was only one case, but it was very disappointing to see that the system didn't really follow it up at the time. Later on, there have been various moves. For instance, in the 1997 CDP report, we did in fact discuss this in general terms and warned against too rapid acceptance of the Washington Consensus-type of thing. We talked about holding back on freeing up totally to private capital flows and things like that.

That first report was put on the desk of ECOSOC in July 1997, while the crisis broke on the 4th or 5th of July. You should have thought they would have taken it up in ECOSOC and discussed it. Well, you shouldn't think because you know they don't do that sort of thing. All we got was a statement saying that this was not the role of the CDP. So the system isn't set up to take this on. In a sense, this is linked to your intellectual history project. I keep being interested in following in Malaysia how it is all going and seeing the contrasts—not all of them positive, but a contrast with the other countries having pursued other policies.

LE: So these are two huge things that have come out of your Malaysian experience. One is ethnic diversity and how to deal with it. That has taken on a totally new meaning since the end of the Cold War in many of the Eastern European, Central European countries, and Russia. The second thing, of course, is the whole question of free trade, free flow of capital, and the limits to that. These are the two things. Does that mean, Just—and that will be my final question, but

you may have other questions you want to answer yourself—would that be the next ten years for you?

JF: I have come to the stage where I take a month at a time and enjoy it.

LE: Don't be afraid of it. Hans Singer is still going strong at ninety.

JF: Well Hans is unique, as we know. Let me just add one thing related to Malaysia. Being very close to these very issues in Malaysia, I am also observing the human rights development—the idea that there is an Asian value system as against the western value system. I am impressed, recently, by Malaysia having established its own human rights commission. That is operating, to some extent, very much like a human rights commission would do in our western countries. They are so far, at least, allowed to do so. And this is highly political, of course. But it is also a question of what the human rights convention really is set up to do and what it requires governments to do.

The bottom line is, of course, that by, I suppose the will of God, but also by the efforts of man, Malaysia has managed to keep things at least within bounds in terms of human rights. There are questionable things going on, of course, but not on the scale that you find in neighboring countries. And they haven't had racial riots. The authorities firmly stop rioting when it begins to appear. That means that they take some action which is very easy to criticize, at least in retrospect, but it is exactly the way the British used to operate when they were there, too, and had riots coming on.

Malaysia has been quite active in UN human rights work. For a period, it even chaired the Human Rights Commission in Geneva in some meetings. And I think there is a possibility, in the next few years, to come to a more inclusive acceptance of what human rights means in the

UN system. That is becomes modified to some extent from what we see it as being in our countries. I am not suggesting that there are not abuses. Of course there are.

LE: But your view about the leader there, Mahathir [bin Mohamad], seems to be much more subtle than you hear about him in the press.

JF: Well that doesn't take much. I am very impressed by him. I do, of course, see that he is a very strong leader, even visionary. Well, since this won't be public for another five years, I think he, like other leaders I have seen, may have stayed too long for his own good. He has made a tremendous difference to Malaysia. When history is written fifty years from now, this will be the period when Malaysia moved from low to high income levels—a lot of modernization.

But as happens elsewhere, I think he is too much surrounded by “yes” men. It is difficult for him to—this is not really part of the history, though.

LE: Everything is part of the history.

JF: Yes, but not of this particular project, I suppose.

LE: Leaders are an important part of the system.

JF: I may wish he had left a couple of years ago and certainly that he will leave in the next two years. And he probably will. He has made his name in Malaysia's history. There can be no doubt.

LE: But Just, then would I be right in thinking over the next decade you will continue to be working on ethnic diversity, free trade versus protectionism, capital liberalization versus capital controls, and human rights? Starting of course with your specific experience in one country and trying to generalize that?

JF: That plan sounds a little bit too definitive. But I would like my life, in the next few years, to be characterized like that.

LE: This is some very important work. I have looked at your bibliography that you finally got organized, thanks to the preparation for this interview. Surely there is room there for a grand synthesis at the end, some definitive piece of work. It would be fitting if that would be covering these interrelated areas.

JF: Maybe. I don't really have an ambition to write a definitive work. But I personally get great satisfaction, even though I am forced to feel modest and humble in relation to the size of the problems, I feel very gratified to have some involvement with what goes on like that. It gives me a perspective on life as it will become in this world, which I like to speculate about. I have the advantage, which you are only gradually developing, that having yourself a long life behind you, it is easier to think about the near-term future of the year 2100 and even beyond.

LE: Why is it that of all the countries you have been working in, it is Malaysia, the one country I did not touch upon, that is closest to you, apparently?

JF: I think Bangladesh is also. It's very similar there. But I haven't been so active in the last decade on that. But I certainly would want to follow that. That is a country that has tried everything and hasn't really moved its stride. It has tried militarism. It has tried dictatorship. It has tried democratic elections. It is back at that now. It has been in war and so on. Still, I think it has a future. People there are like people everywhere else.

LE: So was this success anticipated?

JF: Yes, that's right. With my friend Jack Parkinson, I wrote a book on Bangladesh way back in 1975, and we looked ten or fifteen years forward. We called it a test case of development. I think, as a test case, it has worked. For about ten or fifteen years after we had

written the book, as we expected, it would be very hard going and not much more. Yet, it would be a period in which a number of conditions would have to be met, and that once they were met the country could move forward. Fortunately, that part of the forward look has turned out to be right. So I am very optimistic in terms of world poverty and so on, in terms of the future. It may take fifty to a hundred years, but in a sense what is that?

LE: It is a lot for a lot of people.

JF: Oh yes, it's terrible.

LE: But what I find striking, towards the end of this interview, we have almost an agenda for the UN. We have human rights, ethnic diversity, the Washington consensus, poverty, free trade, capital movements. That's it. We have an agenda for the future.

JF: That's right. It's an exciting future, and I am glad to be in at the beginning of it.

LE: Well, that's why you should write it all up, starting with your acceptance speech in Kuala Lumpur next month. Now, Just, is there anything—I laugh because we have covered so much—but is there anything we have not covered and which is still on your agenda? Are you burning to make a final statement, although I think the final statement of the last ten minutes was perfectly splendid?

JF: I don't think so. Maybe I also would like to say that history, and the recent history, should teach us as academics, and economists in particular, to be a bit more modest in our projections, even our assessment of what is necessary at this point, at any one point. I think our role as economists should really be to not develop solutions, but to develop options, at least as a group. So that if you develop one option, I could develop another, and there is some way in which we together could put forward things. We have been so utterly wrong in our policy prescriptions.

LE: Speak for yourself, Just.

JF: Well yes, I wouldn't talk for you Louis. There are exceptions, like Louis, of course. But there are also other exceptions—the kind of insight that was embedded in Keynes's work. It essentially stood its time for more than seventy years. Even today, it is still very important to draw on his kinds of insights and arguments. So there are exceptions. But on the whole, we push particular ideas and economic theory and economic analysis, and we seem to have the answer, and we seem to know why it went wrong, why people were stupid in the past but now we are right. An element of modesty, I think, is necessary. And one way to express that is to put forward options rather than to insist on particular solutions. So that is my last will and testament, if you like.

LE: You are, of course, modesty personified. And I think you should spend the future ten years being a little bit less modest and making clear what you have done in a life span. It was an honor to interview you, Just, and I am happy that the gods have been with us—two beautiful days in beautiful Bergen whilst the world is burning, in all senses of the word.

JF: Thank you very much, Louis.

INDEX

- Ady, Peter, 94
Adjustment With a Human Face, 72
 Africa, 87
 aid, 28-29, 31, 55
 Amherst College, 40
 Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 75
 Annan, Kofi, 75
 Argentina, 76
 Arsenis, Gerry, 55
 Asia, 87, 91
 Asian-African Conference (Bandung), 51
 atomic weapons, 40
 Aziz, Sartaj, 73
 Balogh, Tommy, 18-19
 Bandung conference, *see* Asian-African Conference
 Bangladesh, 65-70, 99, 108, 129
 and the World Bank, 69-70
 basic needs, 51-53, 64
 Belassa, Bela, 94
 Bergen, Norway, 3, 33, 39, 42, 48, 110, 131
 Berlin Wall, 122
 Bernadotte, Marshall, 13
 Bianchi, Andres, 76
 Bjerve, P.J., 22, 78
 Bonaparte, Napoleon, 13
 Bos, Henk, 61
 Boston, Massachusetts, 19
 Botswana, 99
 Brandt Commission, 61
 Brandt report, *see* *North-South: A Programme for Survival*
 Brazil, 76
 Bretton Woods institutions, 14, 18, 62, 66, 71, 125;
 see also International Monetary Fund *and* World Bank
 and the United Nations, 71
 Brundtland Commission, 61, 74
 Brundtland report, *see* *Our Common Future*
 Brussels, Belgium, 26, 61
 Buchenwald, 4-5, 7, 10-11
 Cairncross, Alec, 26-27, 41, 115
 Canada, 32
 Ceylon, 62; *see also* Sri Lanka
 Chavez, Hugo, 76
 Chenery, Hollis, 55, 116
 Christian Democratic Party (Norway), 86, 116
 Christian Michelson Institute (CMI), 27, 33-34, 38-39, 42, 46, 48, 54, 64, 77, 106-108, 110, 123
 Club of Rome, 75
 Cold War, end of, 122, 126
 Colombia, 62
 Committee for Development Planning (CDP), 62, 88, 126
Common Security: A Programme for Survival, 62
 Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), 100-103
 Copenhagen, Denmark, 13
 Cornell University, 101
 Costa Rica, 26, 41-42, 48, 59
 debt issues, 67
 Denmark, 13-14, 84
 foreign aid contribution of, 84
 developing countries, 32, 41, 52, 55-56, 74, 85, 96, 103
 and gap analysis models, 56, 59
 center-periphery analysis, 58
 impact of donors on, 56
 development, 28, 32, 38, 42, 48-49, 57, 76, 83
 and Latin America, 57
 and women, 74
 alternative models of, 58
 Development Action and Research Program (DERAP), 42-43
 development aid, 52
 development assistance, 84, 88-89, 92
 Development Centre (OECD), 94, 97-98, 101-102, 110-111, 114, 116, 118
 Development Decades, 88, 92
 Fifth Development Decade, 92
 Dhaka, Bangladesh, 68
 East Africa, 82
 East-West relations, 122
 East Pakistan, 44; *see also* Bangladesh
 Eastern Europe, 29, 126
 Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), 58
 economic security, 93
 Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), 21, 23, 78, 90-91, 126
 employment, as global issue, 63
 Ethiopia, 12
 Europe, 2, 13, 25, 59-60
 and World War II, 2
 European Human Rights Convention, 36
 European Union (EU), 14, 86-87, 121
 Norway and, 86-87
 Finland, 2
 Finnish-Russian war, 2
 Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), 72-73, 80, 99, 103-104, 106, 109, 114, 117
 Ford Foundation, 43, 46, 104
 mission to Eastern Nigeria, 43
 France, 33
 Frisch, Ragnar, 20-23, 32-36, 116
 Fujimori, Alberto, 76
 gender, 74, 85, 121

- General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), 23, 32
- Geneva, Switzerland, 32, 56, 70
- Germany, 4, 18
- global governance, 90
- global income distribution, 120
- Great Depression, 6
- Grorund, Norway, 15
- Group of 77 (G-77), 100-121
- Haavelmo, T., 22
- Hague, the Netherlands, 103
- Hambro, J.C., 12
- Hamilton, Alexander, 60
- Haq, Mahbub ul, 44, 53, 67, 64-65, 90
- Harrod, R.F., 19
- Harvard Development Advisory Service, 17, 42-44, 48, 125
- Helleiner, Gerry, 94, 100
- Helsinki, Finland, 112
- Henri, Paul-Marc, 95
- Hicks, J.R., 19
- Human Development Advisory Service, 109
- Human Development Reports, 64, 72, 90, 115
- human rights, 82, 121, 127-128, 130
and foreign aid, 82
- Hussein, Kamal, 108
- Ibsen, Henrik, 6
- ideas, 1-2, 48, 54, 56-58, 72, 75, 88-89, 91-92, 111-112, 114
and academics, 113
and the Bretton Woods institutions, 72
and economic security, 93
and financial resources, 94
and global conferences, 73, 75
and institutional leadership, 119
and the UN Conference on Trade and Development, 54
and UN research institutions, 111
- alternative models of development, 56-58
- biographical influences on, 1-2, 5
- impact of Raúl Prebisch, 56-58
- impact of theory versus fieldwork, 48
- India, 44, 84, 87
- Indonesia, 51
- Inter-American Bank (IAB), 76
- International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), 94, 99-103, 108
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), 63, 71-72, 99, 109-110
- International Labour Organization (ILO), 62, 64, 72, 80, 108-109
see also World Employment Programme
- International Monetary Fund (IMF), 71, 90-91
- International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR), 103
- Islam, Nurul, 108
- Israel, 87
- Jackson report, *see Study of the Capacity of the UN Development System*
- Japan, 32, 76, 102
- Jayawardena, Lal, 111-112, 118
- Jazairy, Idriss, 110
- Johannesburg, South Africa, 74, 75
- Johnson, Harry, 41
- Jolly, Richard, 72, 102
- Karachi, Pakistan, 42
- Kenya, 55, 62
- Keynesianism, 18
- Khan, Ayub, 45
- Kirschen, Etienne, 27
- Kissinger, Henry, 66
- Korea, 125
- Korean War, 16
- Kristensen, Thorkil, 94
- Kristiansand, Norway, 6
- Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 125
- Labor Party (Norway), 84
- Lapland, 3
- Latin America, 57
underdevelopment in, 57
- League of Nations, 11-12, 16, 117
- least-developed countries (LDCs), 61
- Lewis, Arthur, 118
- Lie, Trygve, 14-16, 83
- List, Friedrich, 60
- Little, Ian, 95
- London, U.K., 12, 15, 27
- Long Island, New York, 39-40, 44
- MacDougal, Donald, 18-19, 21, 24, 26-27, 115
- Maddison, Angus, 25, 95
- Malaysia, 108-109, 123-128
development in, 123
- Marjolin, Robert, 25-29
- Marshall Plan, 25, 27, 29-32, 120
- Massachusetts, 40
- May, Stacy, 28
- McNamara, Robert, 67, 88, 116
- Meade, James, 113, 115
- Mellor, John, 99-100
- Michelson, Christian, 49
- Middle East, 83, 120
- Moore, Frank, 46
- Mozambique, 99
- Munthe, P., 78
- Nansen, Fritjof, 12
- Napoleonic wars, 13
- Nazis, 4, 10
- Netherlands, the, 13, 16, 80, 96, 112
- New International Economic Order (NIEO), 70-71, 83
- New York, New York, 55-56, 70
- Nigeria, 43, 46, 48, 104

- development in, 46
 Nobel Prize, 20
 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), 111, 120, 123
 Norbye, Ole, 52
 North America, 32
 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 25-26, 40
North-South: A Programme for Survival, 61
 Norway, 1-2, 4, 6, 12-16, 21, 31, 35, 39, 40, 55-56, 76-78, 80, 82-83, 85-87, 104, 106-107, 115
 and the European Union, 86-87
 and the UN, 15-16, 62
 as a source of development aid, 51, 79, 83, 87
 independence of, 12-14
 Norwegian Institute of Foreign Affairs (NUPI), 81
 Novarco, Nino, 95
 Nuffield College, Oxford, 43
 Okita, Saburo, 111
 Oppenheimer, Robert, 40
 Organisation of Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), 26, 28, 31-32, 60, 74, 84, 94, 96, 98, 101, 109,
 Organisation of European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), 17, 24-26, 28, 30-32, 34, 41-42, 59, 84
 Oslo, Norway, 1, 3, 5, 11, 15, 19, 49
 Oslo Agreement, 83, 87
 Oslo University, 20, 33-34, 36, 83
Our Common Future (Brundtland report), 62, 75
 Oxford University, 5, 7, 11, 14, 17-19, 20, 24, 32-34, 51, 94
 Oyen, Else, 81
 Page, Jean-Claude, 96-97
 Pakistan, 42-44, 48, 53, 67, 69, 109
 planning commission of, 42
 Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, 61
 Palestine, 87
 Palme Commission, 62
 Palme report, *see Common Security: A Programme for Survival*
 Papanek, Gus, 45
 Paris, France, 24-25, 33-34, 69
 Parkinson, Jack, 25, 27, 58, 129
 Paris, France, 101
Partners in Development (Pearson report), 61
 Pearson Commission, 61
 Pearson report, *see Partners in Development*
 Philip, Andre, 95
 Philippines, the, 62
 Pinstrop-Anderson, Peter, 102
 planning, 7, 42, 53
 poverty, 6, 51, 63, 77, 81, 85, 89
 Prebisch, Raúl, 55-60, 117
 impact on ideas, 56-58
 Prebisch-Singer hypothesis, 58-59
 Princeton University, 39
 Ramphal, Shridath, 88
 Reddaway, Brian, 26-27
 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 74; *see also* UN Conference on Environment and Development
 Rockefeller Foundation, 28, 38, 43, 49-50, 104
 Rokkan, Stein, 37
 Rossen, Stein, 16, 22
 Russia, 29, 126
 Sabourin, Louis, 95
 San Francisco, California, 14
Schutzstaffel (SS), 7
 Scotland, UK, 46
 Sen, Amartya, 113, 115-116
 Singer, Hans, 58, 127; *see also* Prebisch-Singer hypothesis
 Singh, Ajit, 76
 Sobhan, Rehman, 108
 Sri Lanka, 73; *see also* Ceylon
 Stockholm, Sweden, 73; *see also* UN Conference on the Human Environment
 Stone, Richard, 115
 Streeten, Paul, 19
Study of the Capacity of the UN Development System, A, (Jackson report), 61
 Sudan, 62-63, 99
 sustainable development, 74, 75, 121
 Sweden, 12-14
 Tanzania, 55
 technical assistance, 68
 technology, 65
 Thailand, 125
 Third World, 77-78, 96-97, 101, 107-108
 see also developing countries
 Tinbergen, Jan, 20-21, 23, 60, 88, , 113, 115-117
 Tito, Josip, 51
 Toye, John, 58
 trade, 20-21, 31-32, 39, 42-44, 58-60, 85, 126, 128
 debates over free trade, 59-60
 Tromsø, Norway, 1
 Truman, Harry, 28, 42
 Turkey, 28
 Twentieth Century Fund, 28
 UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), 72
 UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio), 74
 UN Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm), 73
 UN Conference on Science and Technology (Vienna), 65
 UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), 17, 53-57
 UN Development Programme (UNDP), 64, 72, 99, 103-104
 UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 80
 UN Environment Programme (UNEP), 74

UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), 116
UN Relief Operation in Bangladesh (UNROB), 68
UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), 111, 113-114
UN Science and Technology Advisory Committee, 65
UN Staff, 117
UN University (UNU), 111
UN World Conference on the International Women's Year (Mexico City), 74
UN World Conference on Women (Nairobi), 74
Uganda, 55
United Kingdom (UK), 4, 13, 16-17, 20-21, 53, 127
United States (U.S.), 17, 28-30, 32, 39, 46, 53, 58-59, 66, 70, 102
 and food aid to Bangladesh, 70
 and foreign aid, 29-30
United States Agency for International Development (USAID), 102
University of Bergen, 81
van Lennep, Emile, 95-97
Venezuela, 76
Venstre, party (Norway), 9
Vienna, Austria, 65; *see also* UN Conference on Science and Technology
Washington, D.C., 66-67, 69, 76, 100, 106, 110
Washington Consensus, 71, 76, 126
West Pakistan, 44
Williamson, John, 76
women, and development, 74
World Bank, 62, 64-68, 70-71, 90, 103-106, 108-109, 116-117, 121, 124
World Children's Summit, 73
World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD), 72
World Employment Conference, 64
World Employment Programme (WEP), 21, 62, 64-65, 110
World Food Conference, 73, 102
World Trade Organization (WTO), 32, 121
 demonstrations against, 121
World War I, 13
World War II, 2-3, 5, 13, 120