UNITED NATIONS INTELLECTUAL HISTORY PROJECT
The Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York
365 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10016

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW OF

STÉPHANE HESSEL

BY

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Paris, 22-23 June 2000

Transcribed by Ron Nerio

THOMAS G. WEISS: This is Thursday 22 June 2000. This is Tom Weiss interviewing Ambassador Stéphane Hessel in Paris. Good morning. I have enjoyed immensely, as has Sophie Theven de Gueleran[*], reading your *Danse avec le siécle.* We were wondering whether you could tell us a bit more about your upbringing, with a specific reference to how this might have influenced your interest in multilateral affairs, international cooperation, and the origins of your own cosmopolitanism.

STÉPHANE HESSEL: Yes. Obviously the fact of being born German and then becoming a young Frenchman, and then being sent to London when I was fifteen and learning English, and becoming acquainted with Great Britain—all of this was a great preparation for someone who already did not believe in nationalism in any narrow sense. Also perhaps, part of it was the half-Jewish origin. People who come from my father's family came to Germany at a time when the Jews were very much welcomed in Germany and then when they began to be pushed out, all of this was preparation for multiculturalism. But the idea of becoming a diplomat arose very early in my life. And then I gave it up as something for which one had to be better prepared than I was and engaged, rather, in the study of philosophy. But after all, philosophy is not so very far away from culture and diplomacy. So it was not an altogether surprise to my friends and my family when just after the war I turned towards multilateral cooperation.

TGW: When you mention cosmopolitanism or anti-nationalism, nonetheless there are some peculiar or special French values that enter into your diplomacy and enter into international affairs. I suppose that on the positive side, the tradition of human rights; on the negative side, there might be certain kinds of narrowness or "anti-foreignerness," xenophobia. Could you say a little bit more about that?

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[*] Sophie Thevan de Gueleran was present throughout the interview.

SH: You mean my relation as a foreigner to the French?

TGW: Yes, and then afterwards, your own sentiment toward international affairs carrying around the baggage of being a Frenchman.

SH: Yes. Of course, war experience is an experience of patriotism and of fighting. And when I was young—I was twenty-two—when the war started, obviously I felt that I had to fight for the country that I had chosen. In a way to choose a country as we did—my family was purely German and yet they chose, in 1924, to come and settle in Paris and forget about Germany. And then came Nazism and fascism. And then came the idea that one had to fight. That was an important part of my reaction as a youngster towards all that was a negation of values, like human rights and of the French tradition. I became probably more French than I would have been if there had not been the war. My parents were indeed very cosmopolitan. They were firm in their German culture until Hitler came to power. They were definitely anchored in German culture. They were interested in Greek culture. My father was a translator of Homer. It would have been more cosmopolitan if it had not been for the rise of fascism and of the war.

Very early, even in 1934-1935, when we had in France the *Front populaire*, that was the beginning of the feeling that there were parties for which one felt solidarity and others for which one felt anger. For instance, the Spanish War—I was seventeen or eighteen when the Spanish War started—I was among those who felt that the West should have been much more active in supporting the Republicans, and we felt that Franco was something horrible. So, you see, there was already a partisanship towards the Left. I have always considered myself, within the French culture, as *la gauche française*, and, therefore, also, I felt close to the efforts made by the German Social-Democrats to try to prevent the coming to power of Hitler.

TGW: Actually, one of the main things that we are trying to examine in this project is the impact of big events. You mention the Spanish Civil War, and obviously the Second World War. In spite of the fact that you were a soldier, did this give you any particular compunction or fervor for anti-militarism or at least alternative methods to avoid war and maintain the peace?

SH: Yes. In fact, I would say that during the years 1933 to 1938 or 1939, I was convinced that war was something horrible. It was what we had learned as children during the First World War. And that it would be better to try to come to an agreement with the Nazis than to fight—to an agreement, not to the extent that you would accept their conditions but at least that we should try to avoid war. And, for instance, when Munich came, which was an important moment for my generation, I was among those who were rather satisfied that we had not entered into a war. It was really only in these few months, between Munich and September 1939, that we became more radical.

But, to a certain extent, it is of course complex. We were radicals during the Spanish War. We said one cannot accept this. And if there is a war already started, then one must fight on the right side. But, on the other hand, the idea that war was possible and perhaps the only solution came relatively late. I would say that I have always felt—and more so now than ever—that war is the thing to be avoided because it is not a solution. The only war, really, that I still feel was necessary was the Second World War. And I am still convinced that there was no alternative to fighting. In other circumstances, I always think there are better alternatives. So, you can indeed put me into the category of "anti-militarist," but with this exception. The adversary, the enemy, was so obviously somebody one could not convince. One had to fight.

TGW: Actually, when I was faced with the Vietnam War, I was an objector of conscience. But I was then asked what I would have done in the Second World War as a trick

question. It seems to me that it is very difficult to mix, indiscriminately, every kind of war together. There, alas, are differences in historical circumstances.

I guess one of the other main factors pushing people toward international cooperation was the Great Depression, as well as war. I was reading your book and did not get the sense that you had made many comments on the different kinds of suffering that would have been entailed by the Great Depression in the 1930s. Do you recall reacting to the Great Depression?

SH: Really this question brings me to something I consider very important, and perhaps I also write about, I don't quite remember. That is Franklin Roosevelt. I remember that the Great Depression, and what we heard from Wall Street et cetera, was a great shock. Of course, unemployment in France, in Europe, was a terrible challenge. I began immediately to have great admiration for Roosevelt. And what we heard about the New Deal, for instance, was felt as really a much better answer to our problems than any other statesman had ever done. I am now, and have always been, convinced that we never would have had a United Nations organization if it had not been for the commitment and conviction of Franklin Roosevelt. Therefore, you can carry that over, perhaps, from the Great Depression to the starting of the UN. Of course, I am very firm on the point that had it not been for Roosevelt, had it been [Winston] Churchill and [Joseph] Stalin, we would not have had a world organization. Yet, after all, we, who had been in the Second World War, felt very strongly that we needed a world organization. So this is a connection, if you want, to the remembrance of the Great Depression and the role of the United States.

TGW: Even though you were a student of philosophy, you always had an interest in economics and history and you went to the London School of Economics at one point. Do you recall, in any of these studies, looking at the League of Nations? Is this a topic that occupied

young people, or was it distant and vague as an experiment, an interesting experiment that perhaps had failed or an interesting experiment that was working in different ways?

SH: Let me say in this respect that my father-in-law was Russian-born and became a French jurist and a constitutionalist. For him, the League of Nations was the outcome of a long history of international cooperation. He was also a great specialist of the French Revolution and, therefore, of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man. Speaking with him, and having quite close relations with him in the years 1937, 1938, and so on, I did realize that the League of Nations was important. I remember people like [Gustav] Stresemann and [Aristide] Briand as being statesmen who were admired. But, it was not a first-ranking occupation. I was more interested in philosophy than in law or in international relations at that time. So, it was more a background. Nevertheless, the failure of it, and the way that the Ethiopian war broke out, these are things one spoke about. One knew that it existed. One was very much in favor of conciliation, the idea of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, to avoid any future war. These are themes that we considered very valid and, at the same time, we felt that they were too weak and that they did not really achieve any definite result.

TGW: I was interested by your being attracted by academic work, or scholarship, or studying philosophy, and your own life which was really one of an activist. It did not surprise me when I read on one of the first couple of pages in your book: "*J'ai toujours préféré l'action B l'écriture*" (I always preferred action to writing). You came from a very literary family. Were there any pressures on you to become a writer? Some of us feel very ill-at-ease in not following our parents' wishes, and sometimes we do the opposite. I just wondered whether any of this was mixed in with your desire to become first a soldier and then a diplomat, as opposed to a writer.

SH: Definitely, there is a relationship there. I think, when I saw my father work as a writer, I was rather horrified by what it entailed as a relation to words, as a relation to language. Much later in life I became interested in language and writing, but at the time I felt definitely that this was not my turf, that this was not my baby. I think very early I felt that the family had produced a sufficient number of writers and it was time for something else to come into the family. That is perhaps a little abstract, but no. The temptation of becoming a teacher—yes, I had that. After all, when I prepared for the *école normale*, it was supposed to lead to research and teaching. I would have loved to be an academic, but not a writer—if there is any difference between those two.

TGW: Was it difficult sitting down to write this book, or was it fun?

SH: It was both. It was fun. But I had to be pushed into it. I was not interested in writing. It was only because people told me, "Look, you have had an interesting life." Then, when I began to write, it became very interesting, so I did enjoy it.

TGW: These two big interests of yours, human rights and economic development. It is easy for me to see the Second World War, concentration camps, the massive abuse of human rights, linked to the French tradition. But where did this interest in economic development come from?

SH: It really came from the United Nations. I have thought about that, because before meeting you I thought about what was really the influence of the work within the United Nations on my perception of world affairs. It was really the fact that, sitting there in Lake Success, and watching the growth of interest within the United Nations for technical assistance and economic development, the financing of development and so on, I became more aware of the importance of that aspect of things than I had been before. On the other hand, perhaps one could add that when

we worked on the declaration, there was this balance between the civil and political, and the economic, social and cultural rights. I was impressed by the fact that some of the members of the commission were strongly interested in economic rights. The others were not so much. Therefore, there was a balance to be kept.

Of course, economic rights have no meaning without cooperation for development. So, when these problems came up after 1948, after Point IV of President Truman, and we began to see the United Nations do something which was not really in the Charter—well it is in the Charter, but only in vague terms—it became more and more the idea that there is the North and the South, that there are underdeveloped countries (there was a time when one could still use this word; now it is taboo). We did have the feeling—it came on also with the decolonization process—between 1948 and 1960, that the world was a world where certain industrialized nations had responsibilities. They had responsibilities for their former colonies; they had responsibilities for certain countries which had not had the same luck as they.

So, this idea of a two-fold world with responsibilities is something that I learned in the United Nations, more than I brought it to the United Nations. I had, indeed, very little economic culture. In France, the secondary school is completely—although it is less-so now—far away from economics. What we learned was literature and history and geography, but certainly not economics. So, I was rather *analphabet* on these questions. When I went to the London School of Economics, I was more interested in the diplomatic history than in economics.

TGW: In your book, also at the beginning—I don't know if this is a sentiment of guilt that you were expressing—you say: "*Pour justifier ma survie, c'est cette organisation que je servirai*" –that is the UN. Are you reading anything into this after the fact, or did you really feel that way at the time? Because I was struck also by something that I have thought about in my

career or in the interview with Brian Urquhart. It was really serendipity. You are passing through New York, on your way to China to assume a post, and you end up working in the UN. So, there is the question about serendipity. But I was also wondering as to the extent to which, in preparing for the competition for the *Quay d'Orsay*, whether, in fact, you were aware of the United Nations as an eventual option or whether this is in retrospect?

SH: You are quite right. It is after the fact that one thinks this was the right choice. One has to be as honest as possible. It is not always easy to be completely honest. I so much have, after the fact, concluded that it was exactly the right choice for somebody who had come out of the concentration camps. But, now I have to make an effort to say, "But, look, you really did not want to go there. It came as a surprise." And it did come as a surprise. It came as a result of a private situation because I wanted my wife to be able to see her parents and so we decided to go to New York. There was my father-in-law who was a great friend of Henri Laugier, and Laugier said, "Why don't you stay?" And I did.

So it was not something like a strategic plan—"I am now free and I want to go to the UN." One knew relatively little about the UN. Of course, we were all convinced that the war being finished, one had to work on something new. Again, I think, to a large extent this business of Roosevelt was important because, since Roosevelt had been an opponent to my dear General [Charles] de Gaulle, I had a feeling that de Gaulle had perhaps exaggerated his hostility to Roosevelt and that what I knew of Roosevelt rather inclined me to think that he was really the great man of that moment of history and that the United Nations being very much his vision, it was what I felt was important. I think I would have answered the question, if it had been put to me in, let's say, October of 1945, "What is the most important thing that is happening now?" I would have said, "It is the United Nations." And maybe I would even have said, because of my

father-in-law, “and it is human rights in the Charter that is really the new element.” But from that to say it is now my task to be involved in this, that really came after the event.

TGW: You mentioned the word earlier, “decolonization.” I was struck in my interview with Brian that his recollection of 1945 is that the major colonial powers would take 75 or 100 years to devolve responsibility to the former colonies. Other people have told me that by 1947 it became quite clear with the independence of India, Pakistan, Burma, et cetera, that this was going to proceed very quickly. What is both your own recollection of this, and your own view about how fast decolonization could have and should have moved in 1945?

SH: I am still convinced, and I was convinced at the time, that decolonization would have been very, very slow if it had not been for the United Nations. On the other hand, as soon as the Indian problem was put on the table, then I think we all felt that now it had to proceed. But even then, I would have thought it would proceed at a much slower pace than it did. In fact, it is of one those things that strike me in my thinking about history that decolonization was extraordinarily rapid. And perhaps I would not say too rapid—nothing good is too rapid—but it did involve unsolved problems. And to a certain extent one of the reasons why the United Nations should have been much stronger than it was is that it should have made the passage from colonization to independence easier, it should have been supported much more than it has been by the international community. There is, of course, the sense that the international community pushed more and more. The more there were former colonies within the system, the more it was obvious that the others should go there, too. But they should go there with greater assistance in building up their capacities as nations. This is one of the problems perhaps we will come to at some later stage. I imagine that the United Nations might have been an organization of democratic states, as opposed to any state at all. And the fact that is was not, that it took in

anybody, was probably the right approach. It would have been, perhaps, dangerous to try to be let's say more ethical, or more democratic about it and say, "As long as you don't…et cetera, you cannot become a member." Or even to say, "If you no longer are, then you're going to be expelled from." The idea of universality—let's take them all, regardless, and gradually something will come—was probably the right approach. Nevertheless, it did entail great imbalances within the General Assembly and within the institutions. That is obviously one of the problems that we still have not quite solved.

TGW: Before we get to some of the United Nations, since we are now in 1947, you were in the United States. You were in the United Nations when Churchill gave his speech at Fulton. How do you recall that entering into your somewhat, perhaps in retrospect, overly enthusiastic spirit about the United Nations? Did this seem at the time that this was going to put sort of a death knell to the organization, or did this seem just a temporary bump in the road?

SH: Yes, I would say the nail is really the Korean War for me. Then, I certainly felt that what we had expected is not there. The Fulton speech I put to what I knew and admired about Churchill, who was, after all, one of my great men during the war. I felt, here he is again, he never wanted Yalta really, even if he agreed with the United Nations having the Soviet Union in there. I felt that we had to take that into account. But we still should try to have a United Nations where both parts of the world, even in their opposition, were working together. It took me a long time—let's say two more years—to realize that this breech between East and West was going to have very heavy results on the work of the United Nations itself.

So, you are quite right, there comes a big bump. But, thinking of Brian, for instance, with whom I was in close relationship at the time, we still did think that even in a world as divided as it became then, it was essential to have a world organization and to have it as a

possible mediator and to avoid war and to find other solutions than confrontation. So, it did not make me feel that now the UN is useless, which I never felt.

But it had, perhaps, a different mandate than it had had before. And one should continue to work as if, at one time or another, the nations would converge. In that sense, I think for my generation—I don't know how Brian would react on that—for my generation, 1989 was something like an enormous revival. We suddenly felt that what we had considered to be essential—that all countries of the world should again try to work together on common values—had again become possible. Not yet achieved, not yet realized, but possible. Whereas during those 40 years in between the Korean War and the fall of the Berlin Wall, there had been a parenthesis rather than a complete change.

TGW: That is interesting. Actually I had not thought of your earlier comment about democratic states, or peace-loving states. Anyway, this famous misnomer, actually, of an international community, if one defines that as states that have some of the same values and convictions and have shared some of the same struggles, I suppose 1945 was a high moment and 1989 was also, and afterwards there was a bit of a slope downwards. You mentioned Brian and your generation, could you describe the atmosphere at Lake Success, or the atmosphere in the corridors, in comparison with later years? I, in my own conversations with people, see quite an extraordinary idealism in relationship to people of my generation who worked in the secretariat. And many of the people maintain, to this day, a more enthusiastic approach to the subject of international cooperation than younger folks. Could you describe what it was like in the cafeteria or elsewhere?

SH: Definitely. I think we all, of my generation, people who started in the UN in 1945, like Brian and others, recollect, perhaps one tends to idealize in one's memory moments of that

kind, but there is no doubt that the relationship we had with people from all sorts of nations, all sorts of cultures, working together strenuously to bring into existence all these bodies. I think it was an enormous proliferation of institutions. That is something I recall as very singular. It wasn't only the Security Council, the Trusteeship Council, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), it was UNICEF (UN Children's Fund) starting, it was WHO (World Health Organization) starting, it was UNESCO (UN Educational, Social and Cultural Organization) starting. All this we felt was giving birth to a sort of flock of new organizations which we considered our babies. I remember when I was sent to work on the WMO, the Meteorological Organization, to bring it into existence. God knows that meteorology was not one of my favorite passions. But, I felt that here again is something—the international is coming into being. We were, indeed, firm ideological internationalists. We were all secretariat, and we were terribly critical of governments. We were the ones who were supposed to see to it that the Charter was going to be put into effect and we knew that the governments were resistant.

So, the relationship between secretariat and governments was the kind that we would have wished our Secretaries-General to hold strongly to. That is, I think, the reason for the admiration for Dag Hammarskjöld. Trygve Lie we always considered being too much of a diplomat and probably it was necessary, but we in the secretariat felt that he was not vocal enough, that he was not telling the nations how they should behave. And when we had Dag—which I did not have, I was no longer in the UN when he came—even from afar one was convinced that this was important. So, to come back to your basic question, the mood, the atmosphere in Lake Success, although the fact that we worked in this factory, that we were under the ground, it was really like a conspiracy. It was a plot to make the United Nations successful, and that it was an atmosphere of great enthusiasm.

TGW: You mentioned Trygve Lie. Were you disappointed with him and his appointment as a Secretary-General?

SH: When he was appointed I was not there yet, so when I arrived he was there. But, of course, my boss was a staunch internationalist. I think no assistant-secretary-general of the UN ever was as involved in human rights, democracy, and internationalism as much as Henri Laugier. And this also means that he was pretty critical of Trygvie Lie. He considered him lacking in culture and lacking in combativity. So, I shared that with him. It is probably true that in Laugier's department—Social Affairs and Human Rights—there was probably more of an activist atmosphere than even with David Owen in Economic Affairs, where one already had the feeling that the real importance was the Bretton Woods institutions. And the Economic and Social Council, with which I worked for many years, was very interesting from the point of view, for instance, of full employment and problems of development financing. But the atmosphere was probably a little more pragmatic. Whereas we, who were working on the Universal Declaration and on basic research, and the Children's Fund, and health and so on, we were the enthusiasts. A man like John Humphrey was also typical of an idealistic attitude—perhaps a little unwise, or a little exaggerated, but certainly very stimulating for a young man. I was no longer so very young; after all, in 1947 I was thirty and one is no longer a youngster at thirty. But the atmosphere at Lake Success was one of great fervor.

TGW: You have mentioned that perhaps human rights had something to do with this. At the time, or now, did this idea seem like perhaps the most revolutionary, if I can use that word, or at least the most striking development of the second half of the twentieth century?

SH: Definitely. Well, one of course has to be careful in wording but I would say at least this: what makes the United Nations an exceptional moment in history is human rights. In other

words, other organizations can be extremely useful to deal with world problems, but before 1945 there never was an organization, be it the League of Nations, or be it the Treaty of Westphalia, or be it even Mr. Gortius and his ideas, that so strongly put the accent on the individual as a beneficiary of international rights. And to my mind, this is still what makes the second half of the twentieth century such an important moment of our world history. Had it not been for the Charter and its insistence on human rights, perhaps the organization would have been effective too, but it would not have carried the degree of enthusiasm for people of my generation that it has.

TGW: You were not a lawyer, but you must have been aware after having passed the exam for the *Quai d'Orsay*, that there was this beast called "national sovereignty." Did the Charter seem a gimmick to get around national sovereignty? Did it seem that it was a direct clash with national sovereignty? Or was this just something one would have to deal with forever?

SH: No, I think we were convinced that national sovereignty was a word of the past. And when decolonization started, it confirmed us in the idea that even the big powers had to release part of their sovereignty. And when we looked at the Charter articles 2(7) and 55, we felt that our job as the secretariat was to see to it that countries who pretended to defend their national sovereignty should not be allowed to carry it to the extent to make international cooperation more difficult. So, obviously Charter article 2(7) was the adversary—that is not to say the enemy—but anyhow, I think we felt very strongly. And nationalism, we had a tendency of equating nationalism with hegemony and with, not perhaps with fascism but at least with a view on *raison d'état* that we felt unjustified in the new world. We looked toward a new world, where a new organization could have the last word, the last say, in human affairs. We knew that

this was a vision of the future. We knew that it was not there yet. But we definitely did consider it as the objective.

TGW: Did it seem ironic, subsequently, that some of the most staunch defenders of sovereignty actually happened to then be the former colonies which had been one of the original reasons that you felt more relaxed about national sovereignty waning?

SH: Yes. But also, I think, we became aware rather quickly of the rhythm. I think, perhaps, one could see in the two or three first years we would think of the century as being already the century when all these Charter elements would come into existence. Then, very quickly, we felt it would take a much longer time. And when we felt the resurgence of nationalism in the new members, and in the old ones too, we were not overly surprised. We felt then that it was normal, for instance, for a country like India or Pakistan to want to affirm their sovereignty, because until now it had not existed for them. We were, I think, sufficiently conscious of the flow of time, not to think that this would go very quickly.

TGW: When you get around to discussing the Universal Declaration, you put an emphasis on universal and you mention that this was an insight of René Cassin. Could you just unpack that a little bit?

SH: You see, when we worked on this strange text with all these strange articles, we were quite conscious of the fact that if this had to have any new meaning it would have to be de-connected from a purely inter-governmental treaty. And the members of the commission who defended that point of view, and Cassin was one of them—he happened to be a friend of my father-in-law; again I come back to family relations and I used to work with him personally—so his influence certainly was there. He was so convinced that this declaration must be a declaration going beyond a purely intergovernmental agreement that he convinced me of that.

That therefore the word "universal" meant something else than intergovernmental or international. Yes, I think that at the time I was aware that the Declaration could be only a first step in a long effort to make human rights really guaranteed. Therefore, the balance between making a declaration that would be very ambitious but have no legal constraining power, or to make it less ambitious and give it more power—I was convinced that the first was the better attitude but that it had to be then continued with the pact and measures of implementation. So, it was only a first step but the step had to be as vocal as possible. I think for Frenchmen who are aware of French history, the fact that our Declaration of 1789 was also something that had no binding value at all, and that it took then a century to make France into a country with solid human rights—still not completely achieved but at least on the way—made us feel that yes, a declaration was necessary but one should not over-estimate it otherwise than as a guide to the future.

TGW: What was the atmosphere surrounding the drafting of the Declaration, or the negotiation? Had the Cold War already begun to influence this? After all, this discussion presumably would have been very different in 1945—when it was postponed to 1948, so to speak, to keep it out of the Charter, but do it subsequently. Things have changed. What was it like? Was it different?

SH: Again the years 1945 to 1948 were, I think, the three years when we all still thought that this must be a common enterprise and we have to keep the Poles in, the Soviets in. We have to make concessions so that they will not vote against it. But in the long run their people will have the same needs as our people and, therefore, we must keep it all together and make the necessary concessions. And the whole business of the economic and social rights was really part of that building up. Again, I would say that if we had worked on this two years later we would

not have achieved any results. It was the luck, the historic luck, of human rights that this was drafted before the Cold War became too cold. And that it was still an attempt to speak in the name of all. Therefore, the word "universal" was important.

TGW: Was it clear at the time that what later became known as "economic and social rights" were a necessary complement? That this might hold within it the seeds of making things universal at the same time that it might have within it the seeds of an additional East-West battle, which is what economic and social versus individual, became in the 1950s? How was the basket perceived in 1945?

SH: Exactly as a basket. It was conceived and ended in the negotiations within the drafting and in the Human Rights Commission. This was definitely felt. It was felt as a give and take. One had to put in things like social security and the right to work and the right to housing, which we knew were ideas that came, to a large extent, from the European countries, I would say, but also from the New Deal. It was not so much a battle between East and West, yet, as a battle between the lawyers and the socialists, let's say. Defending such things as freedom of expression, freedom of faith, those very important values, but a little bit the values of the past, and the new values were really the social values. Again, this sounds now as if one disregarded the horrors of Soviet power, but at the time it was not so clear. You must remember that for Europeans, particularly for Frenchmen, the Red Army had really been the victorious part of the war. We had the feeling that had it not been for the Red Army, we would not have been liberated. So there was a great amount of gratitude towards the Soviets which is not so much felt now, anymore, or in other parts of the world.

All this is to say, again to come back to the atmosphere within the commission, the atmosphere was, we had the Soviet representative there, and the Poles and the Czechs, and we

had the Indians, so there has to be a balance. The old democracies want their human rights to be political. They should have them. And the new democracies or states needed the economic rights. And we felt that they were both justified.

TGW: You have mentioned, on several occasions, the example and the vision of Franklin Roosevelt. There is another Roosevelt involved in your life, namely Eleanor. What was she like to sit next to or nearby? What was her personality? How did she dominate a meeting? How did she become so associated with human rights?

SH: She was a marvel. We all loved her dearly, and sometimes we found her very authoritarian. She wanted things to be done her way, and sometimes it was not easy for Cassin to work it out with her. But, in the last instance, they very much agreed on what had to be done. Even if there were quarrels on words, there was a great amount of common endeavor. She was a charming person to work with. She would always be extraordinarily courteous, like all great people. They're always modest and courteous. And she was certainly a great person. And she became, to a certain extent, the symbol of what we also felt about Franklin. In a way, she was there as the continuer of her husband's vision. Therefore, also the idea that this declaration must involve all sides was part of the Roosevelt UN vision and she carried that forward. She had good advisors who tried to keep her from being too outspoken sometimes. One felt that the State Department was there, and certain language would be considered to weigh too heavily on national sovereignty. But she fought her way against that and quite effectively.

TGW: Two questions came to my mind. I better ask them one at a time, although they are related. At some point in your book, you describe the United Nations as "*ma vraie famille.*" I guess I would look at this family as a somewhat dysfunctional one these days. And I'm wondering whether, at the time, the extreme turf consciousness, the extreme sentiments of the

heads of these agencies, that these were their feudal kingdoms. Was this obvious at the outset, or did this develop over time? I guess I would like to get a sense whether, at that point, some of the things that you write in your book you would have already written had you been writing your book or not?

SH: I think I was never completely unaware of the limits of all of this. I would have probably agreed to lots of criticism of the way the United Nations worked. I would have been unhappy about some of its aspects. For instance, the lack of solid organization. Then later Sir Robert Jackson came and said things which I found, on the whole, very valid about the way in which this family had developed and become incoherent to a certain extent. So, yes, critical and feeling that some things could have been done differently. But, what I think I have never missed was the feeling that this organization was the promoter of all of the things that I found important. In other words, when I think of what should be done in the world, I would always say, things should be done that have been said in the United Nations, that have been described in resolutions of the United Nations. And if they have not been put into effect, it is because of governments, not because of the organization. To say that I have been disappointed—I have been more disappointed by member governments, who after all carry the responsibility of what has to be done, than by the language of the UN. Some of my friends are different in that respect, and say, "the UN language, the UN resolutions, it's all words and words and words, and not formulated the way they should to become strong enough." I am not too critical about that. I would say that I have always felt pretty close to what has been drafted and said within the UN. And for instance my great difference with Maurice Bertrand, who is my friend, is that he says the UN has failed and we must build something different. I would say, no we cannot build something different. The UN has not failed. It is the governments that have not done what they should. And it is for

the governments to do now what the UN wants them to do. So I don't know whether I expressed this in too many words, but in trying to bring out the difference there between being disappointed by what happens, and which is obvious, and being disappointed by the UN.

TGW: One of the other main themes in the second part of the question, which is related, is the tension between New York and Washington, or between the UN system and the Bretton Woods institutions. You mentioned earlier that already it seemed apparent that the action was going to be in Washington and not in New York. Is this, on balance, at least for the production of ideas, not a bad thing? There are a couple of different kinds of views emanating from the two places, on issues. Is this a good division of labor to have alternative views from a couple of different sources?

SH: Let me put it this way. I think that the objective of having a better-regulated world economy cannot be carried by institutions which are mainly the children of finance ministries. Because finance ministries have their clear objectives and they are completely justified in pursuing those objectives. And I would say that the objectives of finance ministries have been, on the whole, well set out and well-realized, well-achieved, by the Bretton Woods institutions. But the objectives of a better regulated economy, which can be carried by heads of state, or by prime ministers, are different. It is not sufficient that finance should be disconnected. Other things have to be done. Therefore, again to come back to the whole organization, the Economic and Social Council, which in the Charter is supposed to be responsible, and the Bretton Woods institutions are supposed to report to the Economic and Social Council, which is supposed then to say, "well, yes, but I want something different." This is, I think, one of the failures of the years, let us say, perhaps after 1955 or so. Until then, there was still a certain amount of interconnection. The Economic and Social Council, I remember the 1951 and 1952 sessions of

the council, where we had Pierre Mendes-France on the French side, and where we had people like Kotschnig from the U.S. There was still a hope then. But already we had failed in the Havana Conference. Already there was GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and not a trade organization. So, gradually it became clear that the Economic and Social Council was not a place where governments wished to be represented at a sufficiently high level to make of it an organ of balance and regulation of the world economy.

TGW: Was there a great amount of surprise that the International Trade Organization (ITO) did not get off the ground? Or was it by that time clear that the United States was distancing itself from international economic regulation of any sort?

SH: I would say that the first thing that made the Havana Conference impossible was the Soviet Union. We did feel then, that in trade at least, our efforts to bring all parts of the world together were frustrated. Was it the fault of the Soviet Union? Yes. That is the way we interpreted it, because we were liberals in the field of trade. Free trade seemed at that time the obvious thing to fight for. It is only much later, I would say after 1971, after the Nixon fall of the dollar, that we felt that now there was a divide between the financial world and the economic and trade world.

For a long time we felt that what the Economic and Social Council had not achieved, the UNCTAD (UN Conference on Trade and Development) would be able to achieve. I was an UNCTAD fan for many years. In fact, some of my most important moments of negotiation were within UNCTAD in the 1977 through 1981 period. But, to come back to the ITO and how it all fell into place with GATT on the one side and the lower level of the Economic and Social Council, in those years, yes, that was a disappointing time. Not until 1964, with the first UNCTAD conference, did we again feel that the United Nations were doing something to get a

better balance. Then, gradually we felt that UNCTAD was not up to the challenge with the World Bank and the IMF (International Monetary Fund).

TGW: Actually, I am going to push the fast-forward button here for a moment on this subject. The proposal in the Ford Foundation-Yale report in 1995, with which you were associated, basically to establish an economic *and* a social council at a high level, went back to really your original conception of the way ECOSOC was supposed to have operated?

SH: Yes, and why did it not? We can take a long page of criticism of ECOSOC. It would be interesting, but it would take us perhaps too far. What happened really with ECOSOC first was that governments—it's always the fault of member states. It's never the fault of the organization. ECOSOC is there, and if you look at the Charter, ECOSOC has articles of great strength. It is supposed to do a lot of work for the whole UN system. It didn't. Why? First, because representatives on ECOSOC, nominated by governments, were at lower and lower levels. They were no longer ministers of economy and finance, or planning ministers, they were relatively junior diplomats. They were the numbers two of the permanent missions, and since these were people who had not as much power as the ambassadors, they did not really do any solid work there.

Secondly, the number of countries in the UN, of member states, and the pressure to have more and more of them on ECOSOC, turned ECOSOC into something completely unmanageable. Fifty-four persons sitting in a room—you cannot do anything with that. And you have committees, but the committees were too large. There were committees of the whole. So it never really worked. Also, we never had, as assistant-secretaries-general, people—well, we had very good people like Philippe de Seynes, who was one of our best intellectuals, if I may say. But we never had what Brian had proposed, the Secretary-General having an alter-ego who

would have been a well-known, world-known economist. So, from the point of view of the organization, ECOSOC was minimized and could no longer do the work it was supposed to do in the Charter. And that is why we now feel that there are two versions of it—the Gorbachev version of an Economic Security Council, and there is our version of two councils where the Social Council is a little bit a child of the Trusteeship Council, taking care of societies and so on. Anyway, their idea of having it at a very high level—we thought it would be prime minister level really, an organ that would be able to deal with regulations in a way which would be imposed on the finance ministers—that is something we felt very early to be necessary, and we were very sad to see the Economic and Social Council going down the drain.

TGW: You mention having an alter ego, an economist. Would that actually make a difference? I ask this because you are quite complimentary about Hammarksjöld, and Hammarskjöld was indeed the only economist who has ever been Secretary-General. But it does not seem to me that the Secretary-General ever spends much time on economic and social issues, by the nature of his job whether he would like to or not. Would, or could, a Secretary-General emphasize economic and social development—to make an ECOSOC or an Economic and Security Council, or an Economic and a Social Security Council—could he make these things work?

SH: Let me on this say that things are changing. That is something that seemed very unrealistic ten years ago, but is much less so today. To put it this way: if today we had as Secretary-General, or even better as number two in the secretariat, an alter ego, as we say, somebody who had a reputation of knowing about world economics, and if he were to have at his disposal a consul at a sufficiently high level, and with a sufficiently permanent standing, like the Security Council had, if he could, therefore, call on the twenty-five most important nations at the

level of real thought about the necessary regulations, he could have a great deal of influence on people who do feel that something has to be done. Mr. [James] Wolfenshohn and Mr. [Horst] Koehler—these people do understand. [Michel] Camdessus is very eloquent on that. If you read his article in *Le Monde* of two days ago, they all know that one needs guidance from the center. And the center is obviously the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

But this had to be realized after. We had a long interval, let me say between 1971 and 1999, between Fort Knox and Seattle. Thirty years, not quite, during which the economy went down the drain gradually. Not that there were not advances, too. But the regulation of it, the desire to have it as something that had a sense, a future and a vision, this went down the drain and now we have to recapture it.

TGW: That sounds like a title for a good book, *From Fort Knox to Seattle*. Let's go back now to the early 1950s. Even though you have moved out of the secretariat and back into the government, you are still closely involved with UN affairs. How did McCarthyism appear through the lens of someone committed to international cooperation? Was this seen as a threat to an independent secretariat, or was it a momentary lapse in intelligence?

SH: It was for us a tragedy. We lost people like Abe Feller, for instance, who was one of our best friends in the UN and who committed suicide. So, we could not take it lightly. We took it very heavily and we had hoped, at the time, [Adlai] Stevenson was somebody whom we thought would fight all that and come back. We were very hopeful that he might become president of the United States. So, it is true that the whole domination between the American society and the United Nations is something which is of tremendous importance. I never gave up the hope that the young generation in the United States will come back to a more Rooseveltian approach to international affairs.

So, when McCarthyism started, obviously I think none of us thought that it was the last word in U.S. politics or in U.S. society. We were all convinced that sooner or later it would be finished. But, it was a very bad sign. A sign that there was again isolationism, anti-internationalism, xenophobia, and we had known the ill-effects of this, even, one might say, after World War I. [Woodrow] Wilson had not been able to convince Congress to ratify the League of Nations pact, and gradually we had the idea of the Congress of the United States as something different from American society as a whole. Of course, many of our American friends would subscribe to that and say, “What can we do?” I remember U.S. representatives telling us, “Ah, yes, we should do that but we cannot because of Congress.” Then one would say, “But it is you who elect these people.” They say, “Ah, yes, but the way they are elected.” So, you see, this is part of the ambiguity of my relationship with the United States. I am a great admirer of Americans and was very happy to live there. And I am full of friendship for my American friends. At the same time, I consider it at present to be one of the heavy loads on the work of the United Nations.

TGW: There are American citizens who feel the same way.

SH: I think so, yes.

TGW: I was interested in how you must have felt, given your views about decolonization, about independence, moving to Saigon shortly after Dien Bien Phu. Did this seem fairly contradictory? Was it difficult to be there as a representative of the French government at that moment in time? And how did this fit into the pattern that you saw as an inevitable march of decolonization?

SH: Well, I was lucky to go over there at a time when our mission was to go as far as was necessary in the field of decolonization. I went there not as a colonizer, but as a

decolonizer, really. And, also, I went there on the basis of what Pierre Mendes-France had agreed in Geneva, in 1954. You see the agreement with the Vietnamese at the time was that there should be general elections in the whole country and unification of Vietnam, that the agreement to stop at the parallel was a temporary thing and that we should achieve full independence for Vietnam. Mendes-France had negotiated this with the Chinese and with the Russians as a compromise, but [John] Foster Dulles, although he had accepted the agreement, he had never agreed to Vietnam not remaining separated, the communist part from the southern part.

Therefore, my whole work in South Vietnam was a work opposed to the American influence there. Our influence was supposed, but it was unsuccessful, to reconcile the South Vietnamese and the North Vietnamese. And we had friends in Hanoi who tried to do the same work. And all this in a spirit of achieving for Vietnam a situation where it would be neither completely communist, nor completely liberal, but unified in their own spirit. This was, of course, a view that could have become true only if there had been more moves from the Soviet side and from the Chinese side. It was not entirely impossible at the time to achieve something. It was still before—one must put it back into history, which is a little complicated, but when the American war broke out, this was really our failure. We had hoped to avoid a new conflict between North and South, and rather to work towards a better cooperation between the two. But we were helped neither by Ngo Dinh Diem, who did not want it, nor by my dear friend Freddie Reinhardt, the American ambassador whose mandate was to prevent it. So, therefore, these two years in Vietnam were not entirely happy. They were certainly unsuccessful from the point of view of the diplomatic work. But there was no opposition between my idea of a fairer world where the Vietnamese should have their own country and war should be avoided. After all, we

had lost our Vietnamese war and we certainly did not want to see another Vietnamese war follow.

TGW: Did it seem likely to you from your perch in Saigon, and the position of the government which, as you said at the time was moving towards a sensible decolonization—did you have any sense that Algeria would look the way Algeria eventually looked?

SH: No. Although, from the very beginning, from 1945 on, after the Shetif events in Algeria, my generation was a generation of real decolonization. We all felt in the 1950s that Morocco and Tunisia, that the French colonists and the French interests in Tunisia, that there, at least, in those two countries, that this was not France and could not be France and they should become independent. Algeria was different. We were so brought up in the idea that Algeria was a part of France. It took a little more time. But, being from the beginning rather close to the Socialist Party in France, after all the socialists made attempts to want some form of decolonization in Algeria with the Blum-Violette agreement. So, I was not at all surprised to see that the problem of decolonization in Maghreb was to become one of the important aspects of French politics.

TGW: Before we leave Southeast Asia, I would like to know whether the Bandung Conference in 1955 seemed important as part of this overall view, or whether it was a modest event at the time. We tend to read things back into history and I have heard two views, one that we were totally unaware of it. Others, for instance Richard Wright in his novel saying that this was a most important event of races coming together, what would become the South rising up. What do you recall of Bandung [Asian-African Conference]?

SH: Well, Bandung happened just at the time when I was down there. It was in 1955. I was then in Vietnam so, of course, it was close to our thinking. We were very much aware of it,

and I think it became part, perhaps not as an outstanding revolutionary event, but I would say rather as a link in the direction of what already at that time I felt to be the next big challenge of the world community. I had felt already that the coming into the United Nations of more and more countries from decolonization, or from the South, and even the Latin Americans who were interested in a change in the general balance, so certainly Bandung was important. Also, Chou En-Lai had been the partner of Mendes-France in the Vietnamese negotiations. And he was a figure for whom we had great respect. We felt that whatever Mao was doing, which was not necessarily acceptable or interesting, except to some young students in Paris, but Chou En-Lai was a real personality and we felt that he was very much behind Bandung. Therefore, Bandung was not only a way to a contestation of the West, but perhaps an approach to a new possible negotiation with the West which was different from the East-West approach.

I have always been, and I think I was at the time, convinced that mediation between the poles of power is the necessary step in the right direction. Mediation means that there is some third element that is neither this nor that. For that reason, for instance a few years later, in 1958 or so, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) started with [Jawaharlal] Nehru and with [Josip Brosz] Tito and with [Gamal Abdel] Nasser. I felt that this was an outcome of Bandung, really, a continuation going again in that same direction which I found enshrined in the first UNCTAD in 1964. So to answer your question about Bandung: no, I did not live it as something that would change the world. But I did consider that it was a step, and an important step, in the direction of better balancing the world between North and South and between East and West.

TGW: A substantial number of countries were becoming independent in the late 1950s, and the Security Council eventually gets round to deciding that they have permission to enter the world organization. Before we get to 1964 and UNCTAD, did it seem likely that the infusion of

the South would change the intellectual and negotiating agenda of the United Nations? Did it seem that this would necessarily alter the processes that were under way in trying to come to international agreements? Or did this happen only later?

SH: No, I think it happened from the beginning. My recollection of thinking of the balance between North and South as a major challenge for the UN stems really, strangely enough, from the Extended Programme of Technical Assistance (EPTA), and Manuel Perez-Guerrero. As a recollection of people in the UN working in that direction, these are the colleagues that I recollect as being those with whom I had greatest pleasure in working. There was, for instance, an Algerian who later became the head of FIDA (The International Fund for Agricultural Development), El Djezairi. Manuel Perez-Guerrero. Raúl Prebisch. I.G. Patel from India. I had very early the feeling that now that we had had a stalemate in peace negotiations and disarmament, and therefore now the field where the UN could be effective was development. Linking it perhaps with human rights, but also taking it as a completely new field. That was even long before UNCTAD arose.

TGW: So these relationships with Perez-Guerrero and Patel and Prebisch were from the 1950s, not later.

SH: Yes.

TGW: Very interesting, indeed. Actually this is probably a good moment to stop. This is the end of the first tape, Tom Weiss with Stéphane Hessel.

TGW: This is the beginning of tape number two, Tom Weiss interviewing Stéphane Hessel in Paris, this time at his flat on the Rue Antoine Chantin. We left things in the 1960s, and we had talked about Algiers and Algeria. I was curious about whether you were aware of UNCTAD in Algeria. You spent much of your career once you arrived in Geneva at UNCTAD,

and this was an important source of ideas, according to what you have written in your book. What happened when these meetings were occurring in 1964 in Algeria? Was this the subject of press coverage or communications from the *Quai d'Orsay*?

SH: No, not much. I must say people who weren't particularly keen on the work of the United Nations knew very little about UNCTAD I—that is 1964 in Geneva. Our head representative, the Frenchman there was André Philipp. It so happens that I knew André Philipp from the London days, since he was at one time the C*ommissaire à l'Interieur* of General de Gaulle. I had met him then and I had respect for him. Of course, I personally followed what was happening in Geneva, but to be quite frank, the United Nations in Algeria was not the subject of much press coverage. Although, we had two very good people as resident representatives. That was a Dane Sven Anderson, and his assistant happened to become one of my closest friends. He was a Swiss by the name of Roger Genoud. So, that is to say that even in Algeria, although I was no longer in direct touch with the UN, I continued to be interested in the work of the organization and I tried to keep in touch at the French embassy with the resident representative of UNDP (UN Development Programme), which is something not so frequent. In later years, I very often asked, when I was in the position to do so, all our ambassadors in the developing countries to keep in touch with the United Nations, telling them that the United Nations is "us" not "them." They should therefore behave as if they are part and parcel of the United Nations. But, very frequently bilateral and multilateral had great difficulties working together.

But to come back to Algeria in the 1960s, I had arrived in 1964 and probably the UNCTAD meeting took place just before I left Paris. So, I think I knew more about what was going on in Geneva than I would have perhaps a year later when I was involved in too many Algerian problems to have a strong ear for the UN.

TGW: The entrance, or as we discussed earlier, the entrance of so many newly independent countries into the United Nations, what impact did this have on the agenda of the United Nations, and also the processes that were used for international discussions and negotiations?

SH: Well, I would say the most important, of course, was actually what happened after UNCTAD I, and this is the beginning of what was then called the Group of 77. Algeria, for one, was very active in trying to bring the underdeveloped, or developing, countries together. After Bandung, after the non-aligned, there were these gatherings of the G-77 in preparation for General Assemblies of the United Nations or other conferences of the same caliber. So, there was an extraordinary obvious difference. The United Nations, from the moment the North-South problems were the most important on the calendar, devoted most of their work and of their time to this business of development. That was, of course, something new and something that also changed the East-West relations because more and more, the East-West rivalry was focussed on which of the 77 was going to tend to one side or to the other.

So, quite naturally, the whole image of the United Nations changed, with several fortunate or unfortunate effects. To my mind, the most unfortunate was that from that time on, when the United States no longer had a majority in the organization, the distance between the U.S. and the UN grew, and it grew precipitously. I must say that even in UNCTAD II, in New Delhi already, one could feel that the United States was not any longer really behind UNCTAD. Therefore, the work of other industrialized countries was made difficult. We were members of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). We were part of OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). In all these organizations the United States played a dominant role. So, how could we, and how should we take different attitudes within the United

Nations? Could we pretend to be mediators between the United States and the developing world? It's rather absurd. We were too much connected with the U.S., so it was words more than actions. And the game became a very verbal game, no longer a real negotiation. That, I think, covers a long part of my contacts with the United Nations.

But when I was in Algeria, there obviously what interested me was the influence that Algeria tried to take. We had the non-aligned conference of 1964. [Ahmed] Ben Bella was still the president. And that was a moment of great enthusiasm. It was the *tiermondisme* period where people like Frantz Fanon had influence over the delegates from the developing world. And there was the Group of Monrovia and the Group of Casablanca. There were different parts of Africa taking different attitudes. All this emerged somehow within the United Nations. One could feel that these various groups were more or less influenced, some by the Soviets, some by the United States, some by Europe. There was no real fundamental negotiation taking place.

What did we achieve in UNCTAD I? One thing was relatively concrete. That was the General System of Preferences (GSP). The other was very abstract. That was the commitment to give 0.7 percent of one's GNP to development aid. But the relationship between the newly independent and G-77 countries and the rest of the world within the United Nations did not come to any real get-together. It was a position of conflict, or lack of real understanding. And those of us who wished that the negotiations should go forward were pretty frustrated.

TGW: Some people have argued that the language was abrasive, and therefore people got turned off. You're arguing that language was really a disguise or a smokescreen for real interest, so that changing of the language would not have really helped negotiations. A more compromising, as opposed to confrontational, approach would not have helped?

SH: No, I don't think it would have fundamentally helped because the desiderata of the Group of 77 were of a nature that the industrialized countries just did not want to take up. And the influence of the East, the influence on many of these countries of the Soviet Union, was strong enough to keep the thing in a conflictual mood. Only gradually, I would say in the 1970s, one begins to have something that we called at the time the "like-minded," which was a group of countries of the industrialized, and some of the less-industrialized, who would try to be the promoters of better understanding between North and South. But, it did not come to any real strong effect. For years after that, the idea of global negotiations was the subject of rather verbal than fundamental conflict: those who said yes, we need global negotiations, not exactly saying what they would mean, but yet it was good; and those who were afraid of global negotiations, from both sides, from the North as well as from some Southern countries. That was really the thing one would discuss. One would take hours and hours of discussion: should we have global negotiations, or should we not have global negotiations? But we never had them, although in 1977 or 1976, there was a moment—

TGW: When CIEC (Conference on International Economic Cooperation) was off the ground?

SH: Yes, that's right.

TGW: I'm going to set that aside for a minute because I would like to come back to these negotiating dynamics. But, maybe we should move there more deliberately. In 1969 you move back to the ministry and are in charge of international organizations.

SH: Which really means the UN. There was a UN desk. I was not ambassador to the UN. In fact, there are three positions that are important in the French diplomatic service concerning the UN. The most important really, factually, is the ambassador in New York. The

second in line is the UN desk in Paris. And the third is the UN ambassador in Geneva. Then, there are, of course, other representatives all over the world. But those three are the most important.

Coming from five years in Algeria, I was appointed to the UN desk. It was a sign that the French ministers knew that I had been connected with UN affairs all over these years, even when I was not actually in a position to the UN. And it was for me a great satisfaction to be given this responsibility because that was really the point where one had direct contact with the minister of foreign affairs, and one could discuss with him the French position in the United Nations. I would at that time be in constant touch with our representative in New York, who was at that time Kosziusko-Morizet. We would be on the phone with each other practically day and night when there was something happening in the Security Council. So, it was also the first time in my career when I was more directly concerned with political affairs in the UN. Until then, it had been either human rights or social affairs or economic affairs, but not so much the political. But, it lasted only a little bit over one year.

TGW: Even in that short year, what was the balance within the ministry between political and economic concerns? We spoke earlier today about the Secretary-General having difficulty making room for economic and social, because political expanded to fill the time available. Within an important government, like the French one, how did you make room for economic and social ideas?

SH: Let's make a difference between economic and social. The economic field, in a country like France and in many others, is really held by a small department in the Ministry of Finance, which we call the *Trésor* (Treasury), and which had such eminent power over the rest of the government that even the minister of finance will not dare make a move unless the *Trésor*

agrees. So, concerning international work, we always had the feeling that we did not have a great deal of leeway in what we tried to achieve. The idea that the United Nations could play a more important role in economics was considered as dangerous by the *Trésor* and, therefore, the little leeway we had was when our colleague, the director of economic affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had some influence. Some of these directors had become, already then, good friends. Because I had had this period in between Vietnam and Algeria, when I was in the business of technical assistance in France (I was head of the Technical Assistance Service from 1957 to 1959). Then I continued in the Ministry of Education to be in charge of cooperation with developing countries. So, I never completely left this field and there some of the people who had influence on economics had become good partners.

But to come back to your question, how much did the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its UN desk deal with problems other than the Security Council? Relatively little. But usually by lending out the responsibility to people from the various ministries: the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, who would deal with these problems within the international specialized agencies and possibly come to the Economic and Social Council, and so on.

TGW: What, concretely, would happen if there was a new idea that sprang up in Geneva or in New York in some set of negotiations? And you can speak here not just from your perch in Paris in 1969, but later. That is, when there was a new demand about aid or trade or redistribution or access to water, what was the exact impact of these kinds of either normative or causal operational ideas, suggestions, in a discussion at the international level and then back in the capital? How does it work? What exactly happens when a new idea comes on the scene? How does it work its way through the government apparatus?

SH: Well, that is a very good question, and it is not so easy to see the channels. It can go both ways. Sometimes it is a government or a group of governments which will bring up something within the United Nations and then that will spread and the idea will become an important idea. Sometimes it is going to be either the Secretary-General himself or some of the agency heads or perhaps the president of the World Bank who will bring in a new concept and that will then gradually spread. My basic feeling is that no new idea on international cooperation has ever been spread without it having a basis somewhere in the United Nations. Obviously, questions on the environment, the effect of the 1972 Conference in Stockholm (UN Conference on the Human Environment) on all governments of the world, forcing them suddenly to set up ministries for the environment is a typical example. But, I would say that also such problems as the trade—all the trade rounds, the Kennedy rounds, the Nixon rounds, all the rounds really had a starting point in something that was not yet quite the United Nations. It was GATT, and then later it became the World Trade Organization (WTO)—but it was still an international set-up.

Whoever invented anything revolutionary in the UN? Perhaps we should give particular tribute to Raúl Prebisch. He was one who was considered at least the initiator of a new supply-side economy which was different from the previous types of economy, and that began to spread. But, aside from such rather unique examples, I would say that ideas would be brought up by experts more than perhaps by international officials. Governments would be very wary of new ideas. The Group of 77 would be interested in having new forms of expression of their demands and obviously every year there is a General Assembly, and every year these ideas are being floated. And they are being floated not only to governments who are already well-informed, but also to the number of governments who are informed really only through the General Assembly of things that happened that they would not be much aware of otherwise.

TGW: So, in your view special gatherings special sessions of the General Assembly, special conferences, Stockholm, Bucharest, and on and on, and perhaps the UNCTAD regular special conferences every three or four years, are important devices to push governments, to push NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), to push the secretariat? They are important gimmicks, almost, to get people to take a new idea or an old idea seriously?

SH: Absolutely. I think one could work a history of ideas which would show that practically all new ideas about the working of the world economy, or the working of the world society, have found a springboard within the United Nations. Where else? Very little. In the academic world, for instance, there has not been a great deal of innovation, unless it would come through the United Nations also.

I am sometimes even sad about the fact that great economists, such as Amartya Sen, or people who have really new ideas, they do not achieve much spreading influence unless they are being taken up. For instance, a body like the CDP (Committee for Development Planning), with people like Gamani Corea and others who worked their way through the CDP, they were really to a certain extent a cradle of new development ideas, sometimes fashionable and then no longer fashionable. Some of these ideas had a short life and others a longer life. But, that is really where they were put into words.

TGW: One of the ideas that had come up a bit earlier—and I'm going to go back to it so that we can move ahead to the establishment of the UNDP—was somehow providing developing countries with the expertise to take hold of their own destinies, technical assistance and, later, technical cooperation. The Expanded Programme for Technical Assistance (EPTA), and then the idea that was right next to it, the Special UN Fund for Economic Development (SUNFED),

which then did not get off the ground—what do you recall of these debates in the 1950s and then into the 1960s for the establishment of UNDP?

SH: Those were really the years of a large extent of hope. Illusionary hope, perhaps, but still hope. One would discuss what were really the needs of the developing countries and, I would say, transfer of technology. And there was a whole time when one would say, "If only they had technology, since they don't need much else. They have resources, they can work on their resources, it's really technology that is missing." And then one would say, "Ah, yes, but it also requires some financing. But what kind of financing?" For a long time there was a question between private financing and public financing, and one would say public aid, development aid, can be important, particularly for the most backward countries who, even if with good technology, cannot really go forward because they need infrastructure. And then one would say, that is IDA (International Development Association), that is the World Bank with its special window for development aid.

I think these ideas were full of hope. For instance, the difference between what was called SUNFED, and then the Special Fund, was that a Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development, which never came to be, would have been really a sort of Marshall Plan where money would be put to the benefit of these countries without any particular indebtedness. That was the time when I think began a diversity of views between some countries, like the Netherlands or Sweden or others, who would consider development aid, ODA (overseas development assistance), as absolutely essential, and technical assistance as only an adjunct to it and not the fundamental thing, and countries like the most industrialized, Western Europe, particularly Great Britain and the United States, France and Germany, who would consider that it was private investment which had to be promoted. Technical assistance and private investment,

and pre-investment aid—that was all that was needed. Therefore, the Special Fund and then the UNDP, which was supposed to be a pre-investment organization, financing really, more or less, transfers of know-how rather than transfers of money. Expensive know-how, but still mostly know-how.

This diversity of views, I remember it as being to my personal mind an illusion, the illusion that without really large transfers of capital one could achieve development. Therefore, I was very unhappy when the SUNFED idea was discarded. Although I later worked with UNDP, I always thought that what we needed was more direct aid money and that the World Bank and even IDA (International Development Association) was not sufficiently liberal to really help the developing countries.

TGW: What happened to the original idea of UNDP, that is a kind of centralized mechanism for the UN system which, I presume, you supported? By the time you got there in 1970—and we have already mentioned the report by Jacko (Sir Robert Jackson) on the extreme decentralization, if not to say incoherence, of the system—what had happened to what was a sensible idea?

SH: It was shot down by member governments in consort with the heads of all the specialized agencies. My own experience was rather amusing with that since, in 1963, I was asked by René Maheu, who was then director-general of UNESCO, to look at the relationship between the UNESCO asssistance work and UNDP. Although I was not yet involved in UNDP, I immediately sensed that UNESCO working on its own was achieving no real results because, to promote education, if we do not promote at the same time other forms of economic and social development, it is pretty useless. And when I reported on this to Maheu, he was very unhappy and he just shelved our report.

So, this fight, this old fight against incoherence, or in favor of incoherence, has really gone on throughout all these years. It has not finished yet. It is still very much there. The only thing that has changed is that the World Bank has taken so much importance, so much greater importance, that now the specialized agencies achieve very little unless they achieve it in consort with the World Bank. What they have not done with UNDP, they now are practically obliged to do with the World Bank, which may have its positive but also its negative sides. Because the World Bank, as Mr. [Robert] McNamara used to say, is a bank and a bank is a bank. So, it is not exactly like a Marshall Plan.

TGW: If I have read your autobiography correctly, I thought you were more surprised with your work with UNESCO than this account would indicate in the sense that the tone of it was that you were disappointed, and somewhat chagrined, by the lack of coherence. And it was the mixture, as I recall, of bilateral and multilateral donors and the incoherence of governmental mechanisms at the same time. If we come ahead now, thirty-five or forty years, do you remain an optimist or a pessimist about the ability to pull together these institutions so that the sum is larger than the parts?

SH: I am worried. I am not pessimistic by nature and, therefore, I think that sooner or later these things will be achieved and perhaps some steps have been taken already. One cannot say that it has remained exactly at standstill. But, the need for it is obvious. Even in our latest reports, like the 1994 von Weitzsäcker report, we still also always insist on the need for greater coherence of the system, of the UN system. But, who is to be convinced of it? It is obviously governments and governments should be convinced that this is important. And they are really not. So, what is lacking, for instance, and I am particularly ashamed of it because I should have done something for it, at least in France, is a good World Federation of United Nations

Associations (WFUNA). What we have in the WFUNA is pretty weak, and particularly the French association is terribly weak. They are not doing anything, really. So, my real disappointment, I would say, is to say, I believe in the United Nations; I tried to make other people believe in the United Nations; I have not succeeded very much. My belief has not been eroded. I still believe in it. But, my influence on others, to make them aware that a strong United Nations is necessary, I still feel that on that my power of conviction is small.

TGW: What was the reaction among your colleagues on the governmental side, and then friends who were international civil servants, to the Jackson report (*Study of the Capacity of the UN Development System)*? Reading about this, and thinking about it in graduate school, and I was just new to the business then, I was surprised at the virulence in the reactions. How do you explain this?

SH: I would say that any very courageous set of principles makes people frightened. Of course, Jacko was not very good at diplomacy and, therefore, the way he entered into the bellies of all these agencies was, perhaps, such that people would shudder back. Governments were not really interested in having a strong United Nations in the field of development because they were still, the big governments, were still very much in favor of bilateral aid, and multilateral aid they were afraid would prevent their influence over the way in which bilateral aid would work in their favor. Even when it was made quite clear that multilateral aid was extremely beneficial for the industrialized countries, I remember time after time in the French foreign office to say, "Look, even if we give five times as much money to UNDP as we do, what will come back to us will still be greater than what we put it." So, even from the pure point of view of commercial interest and financial interest, it is better to go through multilateral aid. But, that did not reach conviction. People preferred to do it their own way. And Jackson's report, whether we are

telling them, "Look, now it's time that you should give all this to professionals who can work it, and not distribute it to amateurs," that was a little bit his approach. So, the result from that point of view was defensive, of course very defensive—on the side of practically all agencies with the exception, strangely enough, of ILO. ILO was the one agency that supported the Jackson idea, but perhaps because there was a very good director-general at the time who was Francis Blanchard already, I believe.

TGW: No, it was David Morse.

SH: Yes, David Morse, but he had [Wilfred] Jenks and Blanchard with him. For instance, somebody who was very much against it, too, was my predecessor in UNDP, Paul-Marc Henry. He would say, if we go the Jackson way, we will lose the influence on projects that the experts have. One of Jackson's ideas was the idea of country programs and country figures, the indicative planning figures (IPFs), that from that time on it was the governments themselves who were to decide what to do with UNDP money, which, of course, they wished. And this Paul-Marc Henry considered to be dangerous because they would squander that money and not do the right thing.

So, it was a complex balance. The impact of the report was too strong to be easily accepted. The inside ideas of the report, some of them were very good. I liked the idea of indicative planning figures for countries because, I thought at that time, not having as much knowledge of the inside working of developing countries that I have acquired since, I was at that time convinced that if the governments of these countries did not take the responsibility of the development, and if they were still sort of colonized by outside experts, they would never achieve the kind of balance of independence that they required. So, I was convinced by Jackson's ideas, but it was true also that those who worked in the field could sense how difficult

it would be if the money was once in the hands of the governments to make sure that it was properly used.

TGW: You've mentioned lots of names of really stellar people—the Morse, Jenks, Blanchard, Henri, Corea, Jackson, Prebisch ilk. You left UNDP because of a person of, shall we say, considerably less-high quality: Rudolph Peterson. With a little hindsight, or maybe lots of hindsight, how do you evaluate the quality of the international civil service? At one point in your book you describe this as being an interesting experiment. How, in general, if that is a fair question, would you compare officials within UN institutions with figures in well-staffed governments, or well-staffed corporations, or well-staffed universities? Do they hold up? Do you have some real stars? Or, in general, has *ce noyau* become less professional than you would have hoped?

SH: It is a complex question. I would like to answer it in some detail. I would say that some of the very best people that I have known have been in international positions, whether in the very high positions, like somebody like René Maheu, in spite of what I just said about his not having the right attitude towards UNDP. But as a head of UNESCO, he was certainly a first class mind and someone who had vision. I would say the same thing of David Morse. So, some of the best people are there. But, of course, the average qualification is, I think, lower than in the best-staffed governments, which is indeed not saying much because there are so many not well-staffed governments.

So, if one should just make a general comparison between national staffs and international staffs, I would say that international staffs on the average are at least as good. But, of course, some of the countries like, lets say, France, the United Kingdom, the United States—with some reservations about the United States, the administration of it—or Germany or

Sweden, they are more qualified, more professional, and particularly the administration is different. Now, there is a criticism that one could go into that is perhaps a little different from your question. Why is the international administration of the United Nations system so open to criticism? Are they too many? Are they too few? Are they not professional enough? Are they being recruited on a geographic basis, and therefore not on the most qualified basis? And so on.

On that there have been so many reports and I would be among those who are pretty critical. I would even suggest that when we decided to put up the United Nations in New York, we did immediately accept the idea that the type of administration should be an American type of administration. And I would say the American type of administration is relatively heavy. You cannot have a director without an assistant director, and an assistant to the assistant, and a secretary to the assistant and a secretary to the secretary. So it is more wide-flung. To my knowledge, the most streamlined administrations exist. I would say the British, for instance, is marvelously streamlined. We have not been able, I think—we have always had as head of the administrations or most of the great institutions Americans, with their American habit of administrating. Now, one should think about that. It was said perhaps too rapidly. But in the UN, for instance, the position of under-secretary-general for administration and services is usually an American.

But that is not the answer to your original question, which is what is my feeling about good or outstanding people. Can one find them more in international than in national? Yes, I am convinced that, for instance, people who have come from the developing world and who become high-ranking officials have frequently been very prominent and very efficient. That is really going contrary to the idea that one frequently has, that because the United Nations has had to recruit Africans or Asians, because it was part of the geographical solution, therefore they had

bad people. I think that is very unfair. Some of the people coming from these countries that have taken positions have been, I think on the whole, on a higher, sometimes even on a higher level than people who come from our administrations, from the western administrations, who frequently have accepted positions in the United Nations, in the international secretariats, only because they did not find exactly what they wanted in their own administration. So, there is a lot to be said on all that. We are speaking very rapidly, but if one went into a real analysis of that, if one had a human resources analyst, we would probably find that the lowering of the international administrations—which is a fact that one admits, perhaps a little too rapidly, but still one admits usually that the level is no longer as high as the beginning—I think it stems more from the fact that the younger generation of Frenchmen, Americans, and Britons is no longer as interested in international work. Also, the idea that it was very well-paid was true in the very beginning, but is no longer.

TGW: I think that is correct. You are now back in Paris, at the *Ministère de la Coopération* for an important period: the first oil price hike in 1973, after the Six-Day War, followed by the Special Session in April in 1974. What was the importance of the ability of commodity producers to manipulate the market in their favor? What did this contribute to the agenda at that moment and also to the dynamics between North and South?

SH: These years, 1971, 1972, 1973, between what we call Fort Knox, and the Oil Crisis, and then the coming years, until President Giscard d'Estaing calls the North-South Conference in Paris in 1975, those were times when perhaps, for the first time, there was a new awareness in the North that one had to find a way with the South in order not to be taken in by commodity problems, particularly oil. Therefore, the feeling was that one should reach some kind of trade-off. It was the beginning of this long business of global negotiations. And that changed also, to

my mind, the importance of the United Nations. Here was again a field—how can one have commodities on one hand, development aid on the other, and trade relations on the third, linked together in a way that would achieve some sort of balance? Illusions. Many illusions. I think it was Manuel Perez-Guerrero who co-chaired the Paris Conference with, I think, a Canadian, and I remember discussing these possibilities with him and with others, and feeling that it was an important time. If we could make an agreement then, we might solve many of the world problems. We even had a feeling at one time that the United States was no longer in a very negative position on all that because oil was so important. And, it was a great sorrow for us when the conference failed.

This was 1974 or 1975. Things were happening constantly. If I want to put my whole recollection back, when I now answer your question year by year, I find that so many events have happened, six months after six months, that it is difficult to say which were the real turning points. But this period between 1971 and 1976, let us say, was again a period of high hopes. It was also, strangely enough if I recollect, it was the time of Helsinki (Conference on Cooperation and Security in Europe). So, also the coming together in a different way, the word "coexistence" was used between the East and West at the time. Again, the feeling was that negotiations were on their way and that they could help get a better, more peaceful regulation of world economics.

TGW: As a device for discussions, was CIEC (Conference on International Economic Cooperation) or the North-South Conference with twenty-five countries, was this, in your view, more effective than today's gatherings with 189, or UNCTAD in those days, 160? What does one gain and what does one lose in terms of trying to get new approaches or new ideas on the table from a selective versus a universal gathering?

SH: I am all in favor of that. I have always felt that fortunately the Security Council is a small body, even if I would like to see it enlarged, but not the extent of fifty-five, but twenty-four perhaps. I have always felt that the Economic and Social Council was too large to be any good. I felt indeed with the idea of selection that the CIEC was a good idea, and that if it had achieved something, and it really did at one time, it would also be because it was more selective. I believe that, for instance, one of the few instruments that promoted a new life in the World Bank was the Committee of 24. So in general the idea that with so many sovereign countries, if one puts too many of them round the table, it is extremely difficult to negotiate anything.

Now, how should one proceed? My long-term hope is still to see that regions, perhaps not only the very big regions like Africa or Latin America, but smaller regions like West Africa or the MERCOSUR (Mercado del Sur), could become partners in negotiating: 25 and not 189. The idea that that is difficult because the small countries will not accept not to be present I think is exaggerated. I think it can be worked. It is a question of negotiating it. But I don't think it's impossible. And on the other hand, I really believe that the future lies in an approach of more of the type of ten regions, and perhaps ten big countries, sitting together and trying to find ways.

TGW: Even though you had a front-row seat for the CIEC conference, you were enthusiastic to get to Geneva in 1977. Somewhere in your book, you mentioned that you were probably more at ease with this assignment than any other you had had. Why was that?

SH: Let me try to explain that. Throughout my career, I have believed that the important problems of our century have to be dealt with on a global level, on a multilateral level. Whenever I was in positions when I had to act bilaterally, I felt somewhat frustrated. Whereas, whenever I was in a position where I had as partners the whole world in some form or another, I felt that that was my job. And I still do. In other words, it was not that I was now convinced that

it would be easy, or that great things could be achieved in 1977 as representative in Geneva, but I did have the feeling that there, because of my former knowledge of the UN system, because of my ease in several languages, because of my natural openness to people from Africa or from Latin America, also because of my easy contact with Americans, Germans, it was really the right and proper place for me to sit there and try to do whatever I could. Not that I felt that it was going to be particularly easy, but I thought that was what I was best qualified for. It was really as simple as that. I did not feel particularly qualified in Vietnam. I felt a little more qualified in Algeria because I was interested in a country like that. I had times when I felt that I was trying to do things but had not the proper contacts, like in cooperation in those years, or in the Ministry of Education.

But here, now, the other thing, the very private thing, was that I had been waiting for over two years after I had been thrown out of the Ministry for Cooperation in 1975, after my Chad experience. I was really on the wait for something. It could have been anything less interesting. I could have been sent as ambassador to Bolivia, which would have been amusing, but not necessarily a nice thing. Whereas Geneva was obviously a place where I felt very much at ease.

TGW: What was the Chad experience?

SH: There is a chapter in the book about it which is relatively frank. When I was in the Ministry for Cooperation in the year 1974/1975, came up this business of the hostages.

TGW: Hostages, that's right.

SH: And I tried to get them delivered and instead of that I made the relationship between France and Chad impossible. It was not a success, and the president said, "I don't want to hear about Stéphane Hessel anymore." So, I had three years in which I did interesting things but I

was waiting for some real assignment. So when the Geneva assignment came, not only was I happy to have now a position, but also the choice of it was really what I could best hope for.

TGW: On a personal level, if you don't mind my asking, you had earlier said that in the hierarchy of UN assignments, there was New York, the post you had, and then Geneva. It did not make you uncomfortable to go to Geneva? You thought you could actually do more, use your skills better in Geneva than in New York?

SH: Yes. I think that's true. On the other hand, I was never offered New York. I think if I had been offered New York I would have taken it and I would have enjoyed it. But in a way, I would have enjoyed it less than Geneva because New York is so full of the Security Council. I can see my colleagues now. I have friends who are ambassadors in New York, and the life they lead is not only very heavy—that I would have accepted because I like to work—but it is frustrated because it is so difficult to get the Security Council to do anything useful. Yet, it is essential. So, I am very happy with our present representative there. I don't know whether you have met him.

TGW: I have, yes.

SH: Jean David Levitte. He is really very qualified for that position and I am happy he is doing it. But, Geneva is very different. It is more relaxed. Not in the way that one has not many, many thousands of things to do every week, but they are not as crucial. The High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is doing his or her work and whether the Executive Committee agrees or not does not make a great deal of difference. UNCTAD was, for me, the most—the key problem there, the Commission for Human Rights (UNCHR), I enjoyed sitting there and it was interesting, but it does not have the strain and stress as in New York.

TGW: But it is indeed the economic and social and humanitarian capital, so that many of the issues on which you have been working over the years came together here. You mention UNCTAD and Corea and other people. UNCTAD has a mixed reputation. That is where I spent ten years, so I have to be careful.

SH: Ten years! When were you in UNCTAD?

TGW: From 1975 to 1985.

SH: Ah, well, indeed we were together then.

TGW: It was a hothouse for ideas. I think that is correct. And there was a lot of turmoil. My question to you is whether, on balance, this was productive or counterproductive. And why? In putting ideas, the Common Fund, the Integrated Programme for Commodities (IPC), invisibles, many of these came from UNCTAD. What made it gel? The people? The time?

SH: Well, the first question is, "*Did* it gel?" I'm not sure that it did. Practically none of the, let's say the Integrated Programme, for instance, the Common Fund did not really succeed, although we worked hard on it, so the successes, the gelling, were rather small steps in the direction, not really achieving their full success. And, that was also the attractive part about it. It was always trying to bring people together and not having them be overridden by having one party winning and the other losing. It was more like a Homeric battle. On both sides there were accepted heroes. A man like Ali Alatas was an accepted hero by the West. And people from the West were accepted by the South. So, there was something, perhaps even a little rubric about it. It was a game, a game of words, a game of ideas. And it was also, I think, a sort of cradle where ideas would come forward. I thought quite recently when I read Camdessus's article in *Le Monde* that the first time I met this man, who had become a good friend, was when I was in Geneva and he came to negotiate the debt situation, which was a very minor debt problem as

compared to what we are now trying to do. But, he had his first inspiration of how one deals with the 77, and they are now more numerous than that. So, I think that was probably what attracted me most: the feeling that in UNCTAD the real problems were mentioned and not solved. I don't know how you feel about it.

TGW: My sense is that in terms of setting the agenda, ideas were successful. And actually accomplishing the establishment of the Common Fund, or the Integrated Programme, et cetera, the successes were few and far behind. But, in this exercise to try to see how ideas matter, there were few places that produced more ideas—some good and some bad. After all this time, I don't think I have a firm view. It was an interesting place to work, and I am trying to sort of get a handle on where the ideas, such as they were, came from. One party argues that, indeed, [Gamani] Corea, [Jan] Pronk, [Alister] McIntyre, all these people came with their ideas so that the secretariat was rather more important. Another group of people said that the Group of 77 was critical in this. Others have argued that actually it was a two-way street. And so it is very difficult to sort out. In your view, where did most of the inspiration for these ideas come from? From international secretariats or from countries?

SH: I would obviously say a mixture of both, but particularly I would say, what [Yves] Berthelot just said again yesterday when we spoke about the future. He said that there have been discussions in OECD about what the western countries should do, what they should promote, and there have been in UNCTAD the coming up of ideas of what the 77 should achieve. It was really, in a way, a secretariat for the Group of 77, and if we take that more generally, to say the developing world needs a place wherein to confront its ideas and to shape them into something that can be presented in a forum and be accepted eventually by the partners. Then there is no better place, no other place, really, than UNCTAD to do this. And, if we feel as I do, that the

future toward a more-or-less balanced or unbalanced world lies in a real negotiation between the needs of the underprivileged and the possibilities of the privileged, then obviously it is there. On the behalf of, or through whom, I would very much insist on the importance of the Secretary-General, the executive-secretary of UNCTAD. It was Perez Guerrero for some time. It was Corea, it was [Ken] Dadzie, people like McIntyre or our friend Berthelot, were all party to that. Whether they came from the North or the South was not, to my mind, the most important, but their mandate was really to help the rather incoherent group of people from Africa, Latin America and Asia to find a way to shape up their ideas, their agenda, and I think that has been done. You said some good, some bad; there were certainly some foolish ideas, but I think on the whole most of the ideas that were shaped, be it code of conduct, be it financial invisibles, they were rather well-founded. I would say a better economic view of things, a more realistic view of things. Partially what developed countries have always said: "UNCTAD is a group of countries who will say anything and they are not realistic." I would say the unrealistic people are the people in the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, because they believe in things that are just not the solution. So, that is perhaps a very biased view but that is what I would say in favor of UNCTAD. That, really, most of the outcome of it was rather more full of foresight and a certain amount of wisdom.

TGW: How do you act as a secretariat for a group of 135 countries? How do you meld together ideas that strike one or more parts as unacceptable? I ask this because you use the word "acrobatic" to describe the dynamics of the G-77 in trying to negotiate with them because there were so many views. Was it realistic to think that you could have a North versus South, which is really a West versus South, to mix up the geography? And now we have a world that is seen as, and is, considerably more complex and there is not such a clear distinction between haves and

have-nots. Did the Group of 77 dynamics make sense? Were they useful in producing new ideas and pushing ahead conceptions that went against the conventional wisdom?

SH: Yes. I would definitely say yes. And I would say that the balance between the wildest wishes of some of the poorest, and the more reasonable of the more developed came to a sort of balance. The fact that it was UNCTAD really, and very early in its life, that determined a group of least developed countries, which is now under pressure because the island countries want to be in. It's not easy either. There was a discrimination, there was a feeling, that even though the Group of 77 wanted to act as one partner, they realized that there were differences and they introduced it in their thinking. So, acrobatic in the sense that there were so many differences between these 130 or so countries that a confined common language was very difficult and, I would say that from UNCTAD I to UCTAD II, to III, to IV, to V, to VI, to VII, to VIII, that we have come further in the direction of a realistic approach. Bangkok and [Rubens] Ricupero are very, very solid.

Between Bandung and Bangkok, let's say, what is the spirit of the contestation of the world order? In Bandung it is really to tear it all down and build something new. In Bangkok, it is let us find agreements here and there. That, after all, is the result of the life of UNCTAD. It took many sessions.

TGW: Within the negotiations, G-77 and the West, what role was actually played by the OECD in helping to consolidate or coordinate Group B? And within the group, you mentioned earlier the like-minded countries. Was this an important role in trying to lean in the direction of a compromise solution?

SH: Yes. I think you are quite right. First of all, OECD—it is certain that for any UNCTAD session, there would be discussion within OECD, and we who represented the OECD

countries knew what the feeling of the OECD was. But within OECD, there were, of course, different tendencies. You could see that more and more the European Union (EU) became decisive. I would say if there was disagreement between the U.S. and the European Union, usually it was possible to have the European Union view prevail because the U.S. was isolated and, at the last moment, usually gave in more-or-less reluctantly. This did not mean that they would implement what had been agreed, but at least they did not block an agreement. So, the major thinking came from the European Union, transmitted through OECD.

On the other hand, within and outside of OECD, there were groupings of countries like the like-minded. They did not always play a big role, but in some instances they did. And they had their foot within OECD, on the one hand, and outside of OECD, on the other. Therefore, the whole game was a very interesting game. I could say that the reason I enjoyed all of this so much was because it was a complex game. It was not just to say, "Here, this is our position." There was always the possibility of reaching over to a good Latin American who understood it was not possible to go as far as Nigeria wanted to go, et cetera. So, already then, what you say about the situation now—there is no longer the West and the South, it is more complex—it was already relatively complex.

Of course, the Group B—China—was somewhat abstract, but it was a way also of enabling gradual compromises within these groups. I always felt that my most unfortunate partners were the spokesmen for the Group of 77, because they had the task of getting the Africans and the Latin Americans to agree with the Asians, and that was certainly even more difficult than for me to have the Germans, the United States, and the Irish to agree.

TGW: At the end of this period, the least developed countries conference occurs in Paris. France was the host for this at UNESCO (UN Educational, Social and Cultural Organization).

Some people viewed least developed countries as a way to drive a wedge, if you will, into this group, which obviously did not make sense between wealthy and poor, and everything else. But this was a concrete way of divide and conquer for some. Did you think about it in that way?

SH: Well, I felt it as something very positive. I was, even earlier than that, convinced that the Group of 77 was too incoherent, too wide a group, to be able to accept for all of them the same conditions for development. Having worked in Africa for some time before, and knowing a little bit the great differences between the various developing countries, I was happy that one had agreed in Santiago to have this group. And having worked quite a lot on the preparatory commissions for the UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries, I felt that we had set up there some quite interesting principles. Working with the UNCTAD secretariat—I don't know whether you were connected with that at this time, but I thought that what we had said about the least developed and how they should be treated was relatively rational. Of course, the sadness is that always even after one agrees on things at the conference in Paris in 1981, still the governments don't do what they're supposed to do. And when we came through with a percentage of GNP to be devoted to the least developed, nothing of the kind appeared. That was sad. That is, of course, the dark part of UN work. One had to retain an enormous amount of long-term confidence and to say, "Yes, well, we have agreed but it is not yet done and we have to continue to work on the same lines. Some day finally it will all come."

TGW: The conference took place at another moment that did not lend itself to optimism, shall we say, with Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, and Helmut Kohl all coming on the scene in short order. How did this appear in advance? Did this kind of seeming sea-change in western economic relations, did this seem like a threat for the Paris Conference or for North-South

relations in general? Had you intuited any of the kind of large-scale changes that occurred during the 1980s or already in 1981?

SH: Well, quite to the opposite, I would say that my happiness stemmed from the fact that France had moved from a right to a left government, and that [François] Mitterand was felt by us, rightly or wrongly, as somebody who was really interested in a new angle with the developing world. And so, we felt some sort of responsibility. We enjoyed the speeches that were made by Mitterand and by [Jacques] Delors. We were happy that Jean-Pierre Cot, who presided the conference, also was a promoter of more generous attitudes from the West towards the South.

We regretted, of course, to see that what had been a positive moment in U.S. attitudes just beforehand under [Jimmy] Carter did not continue. We had never counted too much on Britain. But, I don't remember what you just said as an important element to say that there was a change of the affairs in the North, that it goes more in the direction of stronger resistance. I had, rather, the feeling that we now have a French government that we can try to do something about it. And the European Union (EU)—it wasn't a union yet, but it was a community—and within the community the trend was already more towards development policies. So, no. Later, yes. Perhaps later in the times of Reagan and Bush and Margaret Thatcher, one got the feeling that things were crystallizing there. And also, it was a different time in the 1980s. In the 1980s, there was already the beginning of some melting in the East; not quite yet, it was still [Leonid] Brezhnev.

TGW: Once again, in retrospect, as one thinks about 1981 and the changes in these important western governments, and I remember the report for the World Bank from Eliot Berg which lay the blame, or the responsibility, back on developing countries for their own fate. It

seems to me that there was at least a critical moment. And then Cancún, which spelled kind of the end of global negotiations, and then the real impact of the second oil price increase bangs the indebted developing countries, so that shortly after the Paris conference, I don't remember whether it was 1982 or 1983, but it seemed to me that the planet, in spite of the fact that Francois Mitterand and Jean-Pierre Cot were in charge there, it seemed to me that the balance in the West was quite different.

SH: Yes, that's obviously true. It was a period of disillusionment. It was a rather sad period. From my own thinking I then dropped completely out of this brief job I had for development and cooperation. It took me many years then to come back into the UN system. Yes, it was certainly a time when one felt, perhaps, that the expectations of the UNCTAD age were frustrated. What was our outlook, then? It's difficult to recall exactly. Private life comes into the picture, too. So, when I really rediscovered the UN, in 1990, coming back to the Commission on Human Rights, I really had to learn my lesson all over again. Things had changed.

TGW: That was quite a period of time to have been away from the UN, although you undoubtedly weren't totally away from the UN. You actually retired from government service I think in 1985, right as Mikhail Gorbachev was coming to power. Do you have any jealousy for your colleagues? Do you somehow regret that—because, as you said earlier, 1945 and 1989 were certainly similar—I wonder if it would have been fun to have lived through another one of these roller-coaster rides in 1989?

SH: As a matter of fact, one thing brought me back to the UN: that was really Brian Urquhart. When he, after the first report on what the Secretary-General should be—

TGW: Of the Dag Hammarsköld Foundation?

SH: I believe that must have been 1988, or was it later? There were two occasions for me to deal again, directly or indirectly, with the United Nations, and they were both rather in opposition or in contestation of the U.S. position. The first was when Jeff Laurenti, whom you know I'm sure, called me into a meeting on why the U.S. left UNESCO and what could be done to bring them back. We had a meeting on that, a group of people in New York. That must have been in those years, 1987 or 1988. Then, a year later or so, Brian brought me in for this with Erskine Childers, and that was very interesting work, too. So, I did not completely lose touch. But it was more along the idea of what could one do to have the United States less negative towards the UN. Really, Brian's report, too, was pretty much in that direction.

What did I feel about the UN at the time? I really think that, in the back of my mind, in the back of my heart, I always retained the idea that we needed a strong United Nations and that, if things weren't settled the way they should be, it was because we had too many governments who did not really support the UN. It was a little childish, perhaps, but it was a constant feeling. problems cannot be solved on any other level. I became, perhaps, more and more convinced, not less and less, that any more limited forum—whether it be NATO, or whether it be the G-7 (Group of 7)—was just not up to what was needed in the field of legitimacy.

The word legitimacy came up very much in my thinking. We need a legitimate United Nations, and the present United Nations is not legitimate enough because it is too much under the influence of a limited number of powers. Therefore, it is not really speaking sufficiently for the good of the world in general.

TGW: So, you haven't lost your faith in this idea of the United Nations?

SH: No, no.

TGW: Have you lost your confidence that the United States will somehow return to its idealistic roots? Because, you mentioned earlier, the crazy period of the 1980s and 1990s in which the United States has been an important drag on international cooperation.

SH: I am absolutely convinced that the United States will, sooner or later, and I hope sooner, change its attitude towards the organization by finding out, which they are doing already, that situations in the world which are difficult for the United States are better solved internationally, multilaterally, than bilaterally by them. That even with all the strength of NATO, it is not the best way for the United States to be the champion of all causes by themselves. I do feel, but I may be quite wrong, that there is a younger generation in America which feels that way, and which is not very satisfied with the way the Congress is working. So, how long does it take for a change there? It has taken us long years before we had a government of the left, and we are still not too sure to retain it.

So, one has to be patient. Again, yes, I must say that my whole life has been one of feeling the importance of the United States. I never had the feeling that one could do without them. So, I think that the only hope is to be able to influence them. I have, at times, thought that if we had a real united Europe—which has more power, in a way, if it puts all of its power together, than the United States—it could become the pinhole of the United Nations. It could undertake what it has criticized the U.S. for not undertaking, be it in terms of budgetary support or, even more so, of giving the United Nations the assistance it needs in all fields. But, I still think the United States, for all sorts of historic reasons, has more of a potential of universality than Europe. Europe is an old civilization. It is a very old civilization, I enjoy it, but the openness of spirit that the U.S. has shown at some times of its history is very important to me.

TGW: In thinking about the plusses and minuses of bilateral action, in the aid industry and in development cooperation, versus multilateral, how would you summarize what are the advantages, the plusses and minuses of each? And to what extent was your experience with French bilateral aid, and with UN and with multilateral aid, important in your coming to this weighting of the two?

SH: I would say that the multilateralization of aid, taking it more or less away from the bilaterals and putting it into one big basket, where everything is being done by an institution—which is a little bit of what we have now, because, outside of the World Bank and the IMF, what is being done by others is not only limited, but conditioned. One does not go in the field when the World Bank is not going there, too. So, we have a great amount of, to my mind, exaggerated multilateralism. I believe that bilateral aid, as such, can be very important, and that it is more the coordination of bilaterals than the pulling it up together in one basket. For instance, I am rather disappointed with what the European Union has been doing in aid to developing countries. It was good to have a European convention, the Lomé Convention, because it was a way of bringing all of these countries together, discussing their development problems. That was the positive aspect. But, in the field, bilateral has much greater potentialities than multilateral.

I would also come back a moment to Jackson and say that the advantage of UNDP over the numerous agencies is also obvious to me, and the evolution of UNDP has been, to my mind, very positive. I am happy about the last UNDP administrator. It was men like Speth and like Brown, people who I believe have shown good ways. Their indicator on human development is an important contribution. And what is being done in various fields is interesting. So, bilateral versus multilateral, we need both. I don't think one should overshadow too much the other. But,

all of them are so terribly related to overall financial and trade regulations that I would say aid is no longer the primary answer to a better, balanced world. The real answer is, again as I said before, in a body of some kind that will put more regulation behind the great movements of migrants, of trade and of finance.

TGW: Actually, one of the main summaries of ideas throughout these years ends up being the Development Decades, a statement, a snapshot, if you will, of everything that is on the international agenda concerning economic and social development. How do you see them, in retrospect? We have now given up on them. There was a first and a second and a third and a fourth, and we no longer will have a fifth. Were these a good idea at the outset and then sort of petered out? What happened to the development decades in your view?

SH: Well, I would say they did not achieve, by far, the results that one had expected. They were really based, to start, and I think it was [John] Kennedy who started the First Development Decade, and at that time we thought of a United States philosophy, largely towards Latin America, but also towards the developing world, that would be one of greater generosity. We are rich, therefore we can do something for the others. The Development Decade was really to say, during these next ten years, we will do so much that development will arise. And one did not do very much. There was not any real increase in development aid. There was not any real negotiation on trade questions, debt questions. So, when the Second Development Decade came, it was really saying that what we haven't done during these last ten years, we are going to do it in the next. Again, in the background of the Second Development Decade, was the idea of global negotiations. Since neither the decade nor the negotiations came to anything, it became obviously more and more illusory to have another, and still another, Development Decade.

On the other hand, I think one can always come back to the difference between words and deeds. It is useful to have words, even if they are not followed by deeds. One should not take the opposite view. There is a tendency, particularly among people of younger generations, like yours, and even younger, to say that it is better not to have words if you don't have deeds. This raises a problem in politics and in international organizations. People who are not capable of having their words followed by deeds, should they therefore shut up? I would say the opposite. I would say that words carrying ideas have a long-lasting effect. If it had not been for people like Socrates or Hegel, we would not have the kind of view of the possible future of humanity that we do have. Therefore, it is good to have the Universal Declaration. It is good to have even a strategy for the Third Development Decade. They carry something which is wishful, wishful thinking. And one should, perhaps, not underestimate the fact that they do carry forward hopes and potential.

But the danger exists, I fully understand, that the danger exists of discouragement. In order to overcome discouragement, let's say discouragement about the United Nations, what would be reasons not to be discouraged by the United Nations? I would say, if we look back and if we think of what the world situation was, let's say thirty years ago or twenty years ago, or however many years you want, and what it is now, important things have been achieved, whether through the UN or by the side of the UN. Whether the UN is responsible for it, or partly responsible, is another question. But we have one world organization only and we have had advances. These advances, I think, are the important effect of having continued to have a world organization with values and conferences.

TGW: We should just pause for a minute because we are at the end of tape number two.

TGW: This is the beginning of the third and final tape with Stéphane Hessel and Tom Weiss in Paris. We skipped over rather quickly the change in the Soviet Union. Were you surprised by the extent and the rapidity of the disappearance of the Soviet Union?

SH: Very much so, yes, obviously. I had been an advocate of Helsinki and, at the time, my friend said, "Here we have given in to the Soviets. The Soviets will never change, and we have given in on borders and on economic support. What have we had in exchange? A human rights commitment, which doesn't carry any weight. They will never go in that direction."

I said, "No, I think we have achieved something because we have brought into the Soviet Union the little grain that is going to grow and you will see it." So, I was quite happy when I was proved relatively right in saying so, and when the dissidents came and so on. But I still never believed that it would be either so quick or, I would say, so painless. Because, for instance, the reunification of Germany is something that I consider extremely important and extremely difficult and I didn't think that it could be achieved so quickly. So, yes, absolutely the surprise of 1986 to 1989 was an enormous surprise for me, and, as I said before, I also interpreted it as really a new life for the United Nations. That from now on, as soon as we had had our first Russian delegates come to the Commission on Human Rights and, talking exactly the same language as our American colleagues, we felt that something really had happened.

And that this should make it easier now to go ahead with some of the problems of the world, which, in fact, have also changed considerably during the same time. I think we have come from a period of confrontation between groups of countries or areas, to problems and confrontations within countries, or within small areas. Not endangering really the world's peace, as we had thought they might before, but still creating unacceptable situations, but over which we thought now a common action between the East and the West and the South would be more

feasible. So, indeed I interpreted it as a very, very pleasant surprise. A surprise that was unlikely that would have gone so quickly, but a very pleasant surprise.

TGW: You were not the only person to be surprised, obviously. Actually, most of the analysis of the end of the Cold War about the United Nations has concentrated in the change in the Security Council, or the change that was made possible in the Security Council by the implosion of the Soviet Union becoming Russia and speaking the same language and seeing some of the same interests. You indicated that in the Vienna Conference, or in human rights in general, there was also an impact. What, exactly, has been the impact of the disappearance of a model, if that is the correct word, for developing countries or some developing countries, on the ability to formulate new ideas about economic and social development?

SH: It was not, I think, as rapid as that, or as decisive as that. I would say that the idea of a one-party state, and of a police state, is still the easiest way for governments in the developing world to find power. So, from the purely institutional and political point of view, I don't think that the disappearance of the Soviet Union, as such, or the lesser influence of it, has been as quick in having results. But, from the economic point of view, it is obvious that at one time the market economy had become the only possible economy, and the question was no longer whether these countries wanted also to enter the market economy, but, rather, what sort of guarantees they would receive that the market economy would not be purely to the benefit of the big industrial countries, but that they would have their own part in the benefits of the market economy.

TGW: I am thinking here that maybe the disappearance of this alternative, if not model, also meant the disappearance of certain options as possibilities for a large number of countries. As you mentioned, the market achieved a sort of universal status as a good, that the state was

now seen as a drag across the board, on development. The Washington consensus became so strong that virtually no one contested it for awhile. And I have to throw in that "no one" would include the United Nations which, I think, set aside for awhile its role as critic and began to be an enthusiastic supporter. So, I guess it was this set of problems that I was interested in hearing you react to.

SH: I cannot particularly think of any obvious change in the attitudes of the various partners within the United Nations. One can, perhaps, say that after having had, as a focus, the confrontation between East and West, they now had, as a focus, the confrontation between economic power and economic weakness. I don't know whether that answers your question. Where would they turn now, let us say in bodies where I've been, like the Human Rights Commission or the Vienna Conference? They would claim greater access to the benefits of the market economy. Not that they wanted an alternative to it, but that they wanted access to it. And that was, perhaps, the difference. And that is why, after all, they did agree to the building up of the World Trade Organization, which is something that they would have probably considered ten years before as a danger for them, because they would have been left out. Now they want to be included, rather than to find themselves in this position. Really, even Seattle was not so much a protest—well, Seattle is a complicated thing. There were many factors included. But the way in which they reacted is that they had been given certain promises in Marrakech and that these promises had not been followed. Therefore, they did not want to go further without being sure that the next promises would be followed. So, it is not so much working against as working for more participation.

TGW: The Vienna Conference was in 1993. How did the Universal Declaration look forty-five years later? Had we come a long way or not gone far enough?

SH: We had certainly not gone far enough, but we had incorporated these values in a great number of other conventions. The legal system on human rights had become much stronger than it was forty-five years ago, and the last effort was, of course, again to work towards an International Criminal Court (ICC). Apartheid had been put an end to. So, the feeling that human rights are more and more on the agenda was strong in Vienna. Even if, and perhaps because, so much of the violations of human rights that were still going on were pointed to, were known, and were condemned. There have been violations of human rights for centuries, for thousands of milleniums and they were not particularly pointed to. From 1960 onwards, and more so even in recent years, there is not a moment where some horrid violation is occurring which is not shown on television, the media, by the journalists, and therefore comes to the United Nations.

This is really what the Human Rights Commission is there for. And having sat on it for three years in succession—1990, 1991, 1992 and the world conference—I could sense how much the scandal of human rights violations was something that was living in the minds of people. If there was a terrible government in Burma, thirty years ago nobody would have cared, and now people were speaking about it, thinking of it, sending commissions there, et cetera. That was really, to my mind, the great change during this half century.

TGW: To go back to a point you made just a moment ago, I think you do see a relationship between words, or the articulation of ideas through words, and an eventual impact, even if we don't have a deed. We have different deeds in 1993 than we had in 1949, after the Declaration was signed. But, in speaking of words, your friend René Cassin's "universal" actually came under attack. What were the issues related to "universal" in Vienna?

SH: They were really very ambiguous. The countries like China, particularly, and others, who deemed that this declaration and the other texts, even the conventions, were not really universal because they took into consideration mainly the values of the western democracies, and they did not apply to the values of other countries. They were really only government spokesmen. Fortunately, now, at all the UN conferences, the NGOs are present. It was quite obvious that it was governments who were afraid of human rights being considered as universal and they should also be responsible for not violating them.

The most interesting speech in Vienna, to my mind, was Ali Alatas's speech on behalf of Indonesia when he clearly indicated that yes, of course, values were the same but the way that they had to be implemented was different according to various cultures. That is something that I think we should accept. We should certainly not try to impose the same kinds of controls on human rights in all different countries. Even not the same in England as in France, because there are old habits of different forms of guarantees for the individual. But the claim that the Universal Declaration was a fake, and that the values were not universal, that I think in Vienna was overcome. The final text indicated universality and interdependence of all human rights. Nobody dared to vote against it. Even the right to human development, which is one of the most difficult concepts, and which I have been asked to define in a little group of experts that worked in Geneva in 1994, even that was incorporated with the positive vote of the United States which had, until then, been very reluctant to do so.

In a way, Vienna was a sort of culmination of nearly fifty years after the Universal Declaration. We had a feeling that even if deeds were still lacking in many cases, at least the acceptance that human rights were the values for which there should be a common fight of all the world community was there. And even the countries which were violators did not claim that

they were right in violating. They merely claimed that they could not do otherwise, that it was indispensable for security, or whatever. So, it is a little bit like the market economy. One can say that, in these last years of the century, the values of human rights and the individual dignity of the human person, and of the freedom of exchanges on markets, or goods without unnecessary controls—these ideas have survived and, in a way, I think they have justified the efforts of the United Nations.

TGW: Could you have renegotiated the Universal Declaration in 1993? I have heard many persons say that one would never have gotten as strong and as complete a text as you did in 1948 if you had tried to do the same thing in 1993.

SH: I absolutely agree with that. I said before that after 1989 there was a revival. Therefore, one could say 1945 was a great moment and perhaps 1993 was a great moment. To a certain extent, yes, we would have probably drafted a different declaration. But we might have been nearly as ambitious in 1993 if we had sat together. I am watching, for instance, what we are doing right now in Europe. The charter that we are supposed to draft, to be approved at Nice at the end of this year, is a charter of fundamental rights for the Europeans. And the Europeans now include, potentially at least, many countries out of Eastern Europe, et cetera. So, it will be as good and as strong as it would have been fifty years ago. It would have been, perhaps, even more complete because certain ideas that were not included in the Universal Declaration will probably be included now.

So, I don't feel that there is a regression. I would have been much more worried if we had to renegotiate the Charter of the United Nations. That's different. I think the Charter was a unique moment in history and it could have been achieved only because there were a limited number of partners and an extraordinary amount of pressure to do something new and to say

something new. But, the Universal Declaration, after all, is now—I think the principles and values there are accepted as such, not implemented, but accepted as such, practically all over the world.

TGW: You mentioned a three-letter word, a few moments ago: NGO. What has been the role, in your view, of NGOs in pushing out the agenda of the United Nations—putting new ideas, making sure that certain ones did not disappear? I think some enthusiasts would argue that, in the human rights arena for example, if it weren't for NGOs there wouldn't be much in terms of any implementation or reporting in the United Nations. How do you see these three-letter words over the last fifty years, and where do you see them going in the future?

SH: Well, first of all, I would like to underline again the responsibility of the United Nations for the existence of NGOs. The word NGO has arisen from certain chapters of the Charter. It was right from the beginning the ideas of the drafters of the Charter that certain big associations—trade unions, churches, et cetera—should play a part. At the beginning, we thought that that was pretty much a side thing. We didn't really believe very much in it. We were even very critical of the fact that there was so little participation of trade unions or even of the cooperatives, et cetera. We rather, in the beginning of the UN, felt that they weren't coming in as much as they might have.

But, then, gradually they became ever more vocal. But they couldn't have become vocal if it had not been because the Charter and the institutions of the United Nations accepted them. And these little bodies, the commissions that were giving consultative status to NGOs have played a much more important role than one thinks. And the way they have been composed has been very interesting because usually the members of these little committees that say yes or no to NGOs were composed of people who believed in the need to have the support of NGOs. So, it

was really a complicity between the UN body and the major NGOs to bring as many of them as possible in. It has gone very far, now. We have, I think, over one thousand now.

TGW: With consultative status there are over 2,500.

SH: Already 2,500, you see. So, on the register, without consultative status, there are again hundreds. There comes a moment when one feels that this is getting out of hand. A few weeks ago, I was at the NGO forum in New York which has been called by Kofi Annan and has produced this declaration for the millenium, which is quite an interesting document by the way. So, to come back to your question, obviously without NGOs, without some of the important NGOs, the UN would not have been what it is. Much has been achieved. On landmines, by Handicap International. Amnesty has done enormous work. Human Rights Watch (HRW), the FIDH, et cetera.

The field in which NGOs, to my mind, have been less effective than I would have wished them to be is actually development-wise. There have been important NGOs, like Oxfam and others, who have done good work. But we have just recently reflected again in France on the way to associate more closely the world of NGOs to development assistance. I am now, as you know perhaps, member of the High Council for International Cooperation, which has just been set up by the French government and which is an effort at bringing in what we call *la société civile*, which really means the NGOs in the larger sense, into development work.

But in human rights work and other fields of UN action, the NGOs have been extremely important. They have been perhaps as unwieldy as the governments themselves, which shows that we live in an unwieldy and incoherent world system. But that is probably not only unavoidable, but perhaps not so bad. It would be perhaps much more dangerous if we had a very

streamlined world in which law and order was everywhere and nobody would have different views on what should be done.

TGW: Earlier, you in fact argued that in terms of setting international agendas and keeping ideas alive and active and relevant, international conferences, global ad hoc conferences, Stockholm and Rio and the like, are important. Some analysts would actually argue that the reason these conferences occurred or were as visible and accomplished as many things as they did was because of the NGOs in the parallel forums. Is that an overstatement?

SH: It should not be overstated, but it is an accurate statement. I think governments now do not dare disregard the views expressed jointly by many NGOs. So, when they sit in Vienna or in Copenhagen or in Peking and think about what they are going to put into their drafts, they do have to listen. Because the NGOs have managed to become real widespread networks and I think that is going to happen more and more. I happen to be part of one of these networks, which is called *Alliance pour un monde solidaire, responsable et pluriel*, which was launched by one of the foundations which is called the Foundation for the Progress of Man (*Foundation pour le progrès de l'homme*). We just sat together a few days ago at a beautiful castle in Normandy where we discussed world governance.

So many groups, organizations, associations here, in the United States, at Aspen and other places, work on this and they are all born of NGOs. But strangely enough, they all focus more and more on the United Nations. There are fewer and fewer who are just happy with saying what they think is useful. They nearly all say, "We think this is useful and it should be carried by the United Nations." That is a good sign for the United Nations.

TGW: So the existence of the United Nations makes it possible for NGOs to be more effective? Without the United Nations, there would be a more disparate and dispersed and less effective group?

SH: Certainly, certainly. I believe that.

TGW: Earlier, you had actually mentioned that academics rarely have an impact on getting ideas on the international agenda. But conferences are an important way for ideas to take shape. There is another vehicle that has been mentioned by many persons within the international arena, and that is the so-called blockbuster report or eminent persons report, beginning with Pearson (*Partners in Development*) in 1969, and Brandt (*North-South: A Programme for Survival)* and Brundtland (*Our Common Future*), and Delors on Global Governance. What is your sense as to the utility of these reports put together by twenty or twenty-five or thirty so-called eminent persons who have experience and sign the report and try to distribute it widely? Is this important? Have they been important? If so, why?

SH: I would say they have not been as effective as I would have wished. Obviously, throughout these years I have always been extremely interested in this kind of report, and I have always thought that a wise thing for a Secretary-General was to have wise people who are not government officials but who can speak freely, think about these things. In a way, the Commission for Development Planning, who we mentioned already, is a little bit composed in that way. The unfortunate thing is that their ideas, to my mind, have not been accepted as readily by governments because they do not have the kind of electoral power that the NGOs have. Therefore, strangely enough, even very unprofessional NGOs sometimes, when they shout louder, are better heard by governments than academics who speak wisely but in a lower voice.

When I had to do with this kind of work—like the von Weitzäker Report in 1994, or like the report we drafted with Brian, or the one that I drafted with Pronk at one time, when we sat together on a report to the Secretary-General about how to reorganize his secretariat—whenever I work on such groups, I have the feeling that what we say is listened to by a limited number of people and that it is then set aside by those who represent the important governments. I have never heard an ambassador of an important country to the United Nations really quote one of those reports. It is somehow as if this is the outside world and it should not come in too much. Perhaps I am exaggerating this, but it is one of my disappointments. Just as I am disappointed by what the United Nations has tried to do with the United Nations University (UNU). What has come out of the United Nations University? Certain of the economic groups—there is one, I think, in Helsinki, WIDER (World Institute for Development Economics Research)—they have written things but have they been read? Have they been taken into account? I doubt it. So, it is true that I have this feeling that between the world of wisdom, let's say, of academic wisdom and of political work, there is not sufficient interconnection.

TGW: The report that you mentioned that Brian Urquhart did in the 1980s, in any case before the election of [Boutros] Boutros-Ghali, revolves around the issue of leadership. Actually, that is a word that has not come up in our conversation today. How important are the heads of agencies? You have known several. After all is said and done, is it they—states do what they wish—who explain the difference between a better-performing and a worse-performing institution? How much of this is linked to the head of the institution and what kinds of things could we do to get better people?

SH: On that, I think that the Urquhart report has put forward arguments which I consider completely valid. For instance, it is obvious that the selection of these persons is done by

compromise between member governments and on a basis which is not necessarily bringing out the most competent. If it were made more on the basis of real selection, with a wide appeal to candidacies and long in advance, and people would discuss with them and these would have to say what they want to do and how they want to behave, that would probably lead to better leadership. There is no sure way of selecting the right people, but there are sure ways not to select the right people. If one recalls how Dag Hammarskjöld has been selected, because everybody thought he would be a darling little economist without much power, and then, fortunately, he showed to be a great Secretary-General. Therefore, it is not just a question of the technique, it is a question of luck, also. But that we need leaders in those fields is obvious, and when we have them—and we have had them in many cases, more perhaps than one thinks—they contribute a great deal. A World Bank president, an IMF director-general, a Secretary-General of the United Nations are very important people for the world, and their importance is due really, to a large extent, to their character, to their competence and to their authority.

The question here is the relationship between member-states and their organizations and up to now it is pretty obvious that the important member-states have not very much wanted to have strong leaders at the heads of these organizations, because they want to retain the most powerful influence. You can see that even in Europe, if you have to have at the head of the commission somebody who is a really great authority, the member states will begin to be nervous. So, the same applies. The way that Kofi Annan has been elected was interpreted at the time as the victory of the pressure put by the United States not to have too powerful a Secretary-General, as Boutros-Ghali had become. Fortunately, Kofi Annan has proved to be a very good Secretary-General, but it could have been otherwise because of the way he was selected as an alternative to something stronger.

So, yes, I would say if I had to express my greatest wishes, if you asked me, "what would you really want for the United Nations in the future," I would say, "first of all I want strong councils, legitimate strong councils, a new Security Council differently composed with greater legitimacy. I want a great Economic Council and I want a very strong Secretary-General who would behave, not as a *primus inter pares* with the other agencies but as, really, the leader of a world organization which can command the assistance of his fellow leaders of the other institutions, but not just as somebody who conjures them to do something which he thinks is good."

TGW: You just said that as you look to the future, you would like a more responsible and perhaps slightly larger Security Council, the existence of something that would do the same in the economic as the security arena, and a Secretary-General with credentials and vision and robustness. Those are important operational challenges. As you look ahead, what would be the most critical intellectual challenges for the United Nations?

SH: Well, I think the most critical intellectual challenges for the world are the same as the most critical intellectual challenges for the United Nations. I think no world challenge can be dealt with outside of a world organization. So, what are those challenges? Well, there are obvious ones. The danger to our planet; all that concerns the environment is an enormous challenge and what we have done after Rio and after Kyoto is still not sufficient. It is obviously something that the United Nations has to deal with and that is an important challenge. Another challenge, which I consider very important, is the fight against too-great inequalities in living conditions. That is what I would consider the implementation of the Universal Declaration, but to make it more specific, a fight against the disparities in economic status of groups of persons, women perhaps—that has been said a great deal, but it is important that countries with very low

income capacities and within those countries, the poorest, the most vulnerable groups. I think this feeling that you cannot have three persons earning billions of dollars, and one billion five hundred million living on a dollar a day.

That kind of disparity and scandal, I think this is, to my mind, even more important as a challenge, a worldwide challenge, and therefore a challenge for the United Nations, than the overcoming of individual situations of conflict and of vast massacres and rights violations. I think in countries like Ethiopia, Eritrea, or Sierra Leone, or whatever else—yes, it would be very good and very important that the United Nations and the Security Council should have a greater capacity to intervene, but I doubt that general peace, quietness, can be achieved otherwise than by the gradual rising of economic and social potential within all these countries. So, the United Nations as a *pompiers* (fire brigade), I think is perhaps not the most important. I would prefer this to be done on a regional basis, rather than to have to involve every time the whole of the world community.

TGW: You mentioned the word "regionalism" earlier. Some people think of regions as whole continents. That is not what you are thinking of. You are thinking of contiguous areas that make some kind of sense. What would you see as the balance between regionalism and globalism in the next ten years or quarter of a century?

SH: My answer would be my belief in federalism, or at least in the federalist approach to power. I think what we need is to have decision-making at the lowest possible level and then, if that level is not sufficient to meet with the problems, then to go at the higher level and then at the even higher level, and finally at the worldwide level. I think we should not load a world organization with problems that can be properly dealt with at a lower level. But, the decision of what can be and what cannot be is the most important political decision. In a federal system, I

am, if you want to call me something, I would say I am a World Federalist. I believe in the idea that it is possible to work power up from the bottom to the top, in such a way that the top is really dealing only with what needs overall commitment.

TGW: There was one other word that you just threw out that had not entered our conversation, "women." We had a Universal Declaration, and obviously women were included in that. But, for the most part, the kind of emphases we now have on gender as at the top of the agenda somewhere, when did it become first obvious to you that one would have to make a special effort? We had the UN World Conference on the International Women's Year in 1975, but when did this first come on your radar screen, either within the French context or the United Nations context, that this was a kind of ignored factor in development?

SH: My first contact with the idea was when we set up under the auspices of my Department of Social Affairs a Commission on the Condition of Women. Do you remember that? That was in the early 1950s, or even later 1940s. We had Marie-Helene Lefaucheux as chairwoman of the *Commission de la condition de la femme*. And there were some rather terrible women sitting on that commission and we were rather afraid of their enthusiasm and their emphasis.

I have never been a feminist in the way that I feel that one has absolutely to fight because women are so underprivileged. On the other hand, my experience with women at the helm has always been very positive. I have had, for instance, Alva Myrdal as top-ranking director at the Department of Social Affairs when I first entered the United Nations and for a few years after. And I found that women—we've had a woman as rector of the Paris University—I feel that women in positions of power are extremely capable and I feel, perhaps, they bring to their jobs a greater charisma than men, perhaps because they have to justify the fact that although they are

women they are on top. Women like Sadako Ogata, or like Mary Robinson, or like Gro Brundtland within the United Nations system are certainly of very very high importance. On the other hand, the fight for gender seems to me a little bit of an alibi. I am not contesting that there are situations for women in many areas of the world, and perhaps even in our own countries, which are not what they should be. But it is more important to me to look at *all* vulnerable groups—children as well as women, the underprivileged, the disabled—and not only always gender, gender, gender. So you see, on that I am not as staunch a defender of gender as I should be.

TGW: My research assistants have insisted that I put this in front of you. And I think it is interesting that this comes up at various points in careers. The Commission on Women in the later 1940s would have been a very different debate from the one we are having today, I presume.

SH: Yes, but it is also true to say, and this is also to merit of the United Nations, that within the United Nations there has always been pressure from women's organizations and there has always been pressure to have more women, and this effort after all has had results. Of course, women will say, "Look at this situation, how there is still only 6 percent of women here or 22 percent of women there." True, but the difference between. And for a country like France, where women only achieved the right to vote in 1945, very recently, women still have to fight for their status and it is a proper fight. It is good that this fight continues. If it is not too vocal and too offensive, I think it is proper.

TGW: There was one other notion that I wrote down, which was earlier when we were trying to think about results of ideas and, in particular, results of conferences. You mentioned that the establishment of environmental ministries as a result of Stockholm was one clear

indicator. It seems to me that one of the more important ways that ideas have an impact is that once they become taken seriously by institutions and, to use a political science term, become "embedded" in them, that is they kind of take on a life of their own, a ministry, the necessity to produce a report, the importance of preparing for a follow-up meeting. But then you can see the idea; it has taken on a form, maybe not the form you would have liked, maybe it is distorting the idea. But, it exists. Does that make sense to you?

SH: Oh yes. Again, here is where I see the importance of the continuation of bodies meeting within the United Nations. If you have a Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and you know it is going to meet, the governments will have to do something. My regret is that in the field of human rights, the existing bodies that do this evaluation work are still pretty weak, whether it is the Commission on Civil and Political Rights with Philip Alston, or the Commission on Economic and Social Rights. They are not frightening enough for governments. They will come and prepare a report which will be more-or-less uninteresting, or not going very deeply, and the committee will say a few words and then it will be over. So, in the field of human rights, we have the commission. Fortunately we have the sub-commission which is very important, but the action evaluation of the work done by governments is relatively limited. In other fields, like the ILO for instance, the reports on conventions, that's very strong and that's a constant pressure.

TGW: One other question related to ideas that is a rather large one. Are ideas that come up in the United Nations—you've mentioned a couple like sustainable development, gender, perhaps human rights in general—are these important to governments or at least to officials in governments who are trying to either redefine or refine definitions of national interest to include

these concepts? Are they important as part of a campaign to persuade either colleagues or enemies within a bureaucracy that an issue needs to be taken seriously?

SH: Yes. Obviously yes. But why not sufficiently, let us say? I would say that one of my regrets is the relatively low position of foreign offices in fields other than diplomacy. For instance, when I had this position as UN desk head in the Foreign Office, I was quite aware of the fact that the ideas that were brought forward in the United Nations General Assembly, or elsewhere—I had no real power to convince colleagues from other ministries that this was important for their work and not only for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In other words, that it was not sufficient to say that we were doing the things but that we actually had to try to do them. I would say that in many governments, as far as I can judge, the UN desk is still a little bit of a hypocritical place, where one pretends that one is a good boy in the United Nations but one cannot necessarily prove it. That is of course more true in developing countries than in big democracies.

Again, we come back to something that one should say—in a democratic country, such as ours, the pressure from the electorate can be very, very strongly influenced by ideas that have been worked out in the United Nations, because these ideas are supposed to be good for the people and I think, indeed, usually they are. Therefore, if they are being debated and if the ordinary citizen knows about it, he can put pressure on his government. In governments that have no legislature, not only no democratic institutions but no participation of their citizens in the shaping of governmental decisions, that is quite different and there the influence is, of course, not of the same kind.

TGW: Do you wish that I had asked you a question that I have not asked?

SH: No. Not at all. Perhaps the only thing, and that again would be quite a different approach, is the question of what should be done by us, by you and by me, so that the United Nations in the next half century will be more effective. But, on that I have already expressed my views together with Mr. von Weitzäker in our report and you know about that, so I would not have to add much to that. My basic optimism which makes me look to many people as being completely out of date, because one should not be optimistic anymore, is really related to my old age. I think people of my generation, particularly if they have worked within or with the United Nations, cannot escape the feeling that many, many, many problems have had solutions and that we are no longer living in the kind of world of our youth. And I think that is sufficient ground to be at least a little optimistic for the future.

TGW: How full is the glass?

SH: Always half full, but it is not half empty.

TGW: That is a very nice place for us to end. I want to thank you immensely. This is the end of the third tape.

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