



PROGRESS REPORT

UNITED NATIONS INTELLECTUAL HISTORY PROJECT / UNIHP

no. 1 February 2000

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTORS

It is a genuine delight to initiate this first of a regular set of communications with those of you interested in keeping up with the progress in the UN Intellectual History Project. We have been planning and thinking about this exciting effort for several years. It thus is satisfying to have actually begun the journey. Although multilateralism is not always treated very favorably in the press, the UN's undocumented and largely ignored contributions to the world of economic and social ideas is an exciting and important story to be told.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan launched the United Nations Intellectual History Project (UNIHP) before a group of ambassadors on 3 May 1999 at the United Nations. It was a pleasure for us and him to announce the generous and enthusiastic support from three governments (Netherlands, United Kingdom, Sweden) and three foundations (Carnegie Corporation of NY and the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations). We are still actively searching the second half of the support needed, but we have sufficient resources to begin our work with gusto.

The text of this newsletter describes briefly what has happened in the last few months: the International Advisory Council was formed and had its first session in July 1999; the secretariat moved into new headquarters at The Graduate Center in August; a number of books have been commissioned; and oral history interviews begun. In the next few months, we will accelerate the pace, including the recruitment of additional personnel and the establishment of a web site to facilitate communications.

Our intention is to distribute this newsletter three times a year. We hope that all of you will feel free to contact us with comments and suggestions at any time.

Louis Emmerij
Richard Jolly
Thomas G. Weiss

PROJECT BACKGROUND

There is no adequate historical study of the origins and evolution of the history of ideas cultivated within the United Nations and of their impact on wider thinking and international action. Although certain aspects of the UN's economic and social activities have been the subject of books and articles, there is no comprehensive intellectual history of the world organization's contributions to setting the past, present, or future international agenda, nor a comprehensive intellectual history for the economic and social fields.

Ideas and concepts are a main driving force in human progress, and they are arguably the most important contribution of the United Nations. This Project is analyzing the evolution of key ideas and concepts about international economic and social development born or nurtured under UN auspices. Their origins are being traced; and the motivations behind them as well as their

relevance, influence, and impact are being assessed against the backdrop of the socio-economic situations of individual countries, the global economy, and major international developments.

BOOKS

"The Project will do much to help tell the story of the UN, and to rectify an imbalance in the world's understanding of it...It will identify lessons for the future, especially as we move into the millennium and the post-reform phase of the UN's life. And it will set out the UN's contribution in relation to that of the World Bank."

—Secretary-General Kofi Annan at the launch of the Project in New York on 3 May 1999

The Project has two components. The first is a series of commissioned studies and three overarching books about the major economic and social ideas or concepts central to UN activity. The analytical studies will be prepared by experts based in research institutions worldwide and the overarching books will be written by the Project's directors at the beginning and at the conclusion of the Project:

1. AHEAD OF THE CURVE: INTELLECTUAL RESPONSES TO GLOBAL CHALLENGES
(to be written by Project directors)

2. INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND FINANCE
3. INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES: NEW APPROACHES IN THE 1960S AND NEW ORTHODOXIES IN THE 1980S AND 1990S
4. GLOBAL GOVERNANCE: FROM NIEO TO RIO
5. THE GLOBAL COMMONS
6. QUANTIFYING THE WORLD: THE UN'S WORK IN NATIONAL ACCOUNTING AND STATISTICS
7. TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR
8. HUMAN RIGHTS
9. INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE
10. THE GENDER REVOLUTION: WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT
11. HUMAN SECURITY AND MILITARY SECURITY
12. PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPMENT: VIEWS FROM THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS
13. INTELLECTUAL GIANTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS (to be written by Project directors)
14. THE UN AND THE IDEAS OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (to be written by Project directors)

To date, the following books have been commissioned:

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND FINANCE is being written by JOHN TOYE, presently director of the Globalisation and Development Strategies Division of UNCTAD, and until recently director of the Institute of Development Studies of the University of Sussex. Toye has written widely on development issues, and his numerous books, articles, and reports have been published in twelve different countries. He is being assisted by RICHARD TOYE of Cambridge University.

QUANTIFYING THE WORLD: THE UN'S WORK IN NATIONAL ACCOUNTING AND STATISTICS has been undertaken by MICHAEL WARD, presently principal economist and head of the Statistical Advisory Services section of the World Bank, and formerly senior research officer in the Department of Applied Economics at Cambridge University. Ward has published extensively on data collection collection methods and poverty. He is being assisted by M. ITO of Oxford University.

AHEAD OF THE CURVE: INTELLECTUAL RESPONSES TO GLOBAL CHALLENGES is being written by LOUIS EMMERIJ, RICHARD JOLLY AND THOMAS G. WEISS, the

Project's directors, with Louis Emmerij taking the lead on this volume.

Negotiations are underway with likely authors from diverse countries for five other books, and these additional commissioned volumes will be listed in subsequent *Progress Reports*.

The Project is happy to announce that it has entered into an agreement with **Indiana University Press (IUP)** for publication and distribution of the UNIHP book series.

Now in its fiftieth year, IUP is recognized internationally as a leading academic publisher specializing in the humanities and social sciences. It is currently the second-largest public university press in the United States. IUP books have won many awards for scholarly merit and design, including two National Book Awards and three Herskovits Awards in African studies; numerous IUP titles are selected every year by Choice as outstanding academic books.

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

The second component of the Project consists of conducting 50-75 in-depth oral history interviews of leading contributors to crucial ideas and concepts within the UN system. The oral history interviews have a direct bearing on the substance of the books, which in turn help to inform the archival research undertaken in preparation for the interviews.

The Project is encouraging the establishment of international networks among archivists and researchers who use UN documents, including staff career records. It is also encouraging national governments to consider documenting and archiving the contributions of their own governments and nationals to the United Nations.

The usual procedure is to conduct substantial research in preparation for each interview and develop questions organized in such a way that in the end the Project will be in a position to generalize and compare across many of the interviews. Most interviews will be digitally tape recorded and a transcript produced that will be returned to the persons interviewed for their review. These persons will then have the opportunity to edit the transcript before the Project produces a final indexed copy, the copyright of which will be vested with the Project. Copies of the interviews will be disseminated widely to serve as key historical resources for scholars and practitioners worldwide.

The Project staff has benefited from two seminars on oral history methods from the Oral History Research Office at Columbia University and has been trained on the Digital Audio Tape recorder equipment (DAT), which is being used for the interviews.

Several interviews have been completed:

FRANCIS BLANCHARD, formerly Director General of the ILO was interviewed in France in October 1999.

JOHAN KAUFMANN was interviewed in his home in The Hague in November 1999; we regret to say he passed away in early December 1999. Active until his death, his interview with the Project was one of his last contributions.

Funders to date:

Carnegie Corporation of NY
Ford Foundation
Rockefeller Foundation
Government of the Netherlands
Government of Sweden
Government of the UK

Briefer interviews were conducted in November 1999, including SURENDRA PATEL, distinguished economist and former Director of Technology of UNCTAD who was interviewed in Ahmadabad; former US Ambassador S. M. FINGER, interviewed in New York; and LETICIA SHAHANI, former UN Assistant Secretary-General, also interviewed in New York.

In January 2000, HANS SINGER was interviewed for a follow-up interview to one conducted by Richard Jolly several years before the Project was established; CELSO FURTADO, distinguished economist and former Director of the development section of ECLA, was interviewed in Paris; SIR BRIAN URQUHART, former UN Under Secretary-General, in New York; and DAME MARY SMETON, first director of personnel for the UN, in Sussex.

In February 2000, the Project interviewed two leading advocates for development: GAMANI COREA, former Secretary-General of UNCTAD was interviewed in Geneva, and JAN PRONK, currently Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, in The Hague.

Project researchers are already working on the interviews scheduled for early 2000. Scheduled interviews include BERNARD CHIDZERO in Harare, DON MILLS in Jamaica, J.J. POLAK in Washington DC, DAME MARGARET ANSTEE and AMBASSADOR GERT ROSENTHAL in New York, STEPHANE HESSEL in Paris and STEIN ROSSEN in Geneva.

FIRST MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL: NEW YORK, 28 JULY 1999

The first meeting of the International Advisory Council was held in New York on 28 July 1999. The members of the Advisory Council currently are:

GALAL AMIN, Professor of Economics, American University in Cairo

MARGARET JOAN ANSTEE, former UN Under Secretary-General and Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General

LOURDES ARIZPE, Director, Centro Regional de Investigaciones Multidisciplinarias, Mexico

EVELINE HERFKENS, Minister of Development Cooperation, The Netherlands

ENRIQUE IGLESIAS, President, Inter-American Development Bank

ANDRÁS INOTAI, Professor of Economics and General Director, Institute for World Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest

THANDIKA MKANDAWIRE, Director, UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), Geneva

GERT ROSENTHAL, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the UN and Economist

JOHN RUGGIE, Assistant UN Secretary-General and Professor of Political Science, Columbia University

MAKOTO TANIGUCHI, Professor, Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University, Tokyo and former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Japan to the UN

RAMESH THAKUR, Vice Rector, The United Nations University, Tokyo

Richard Jolly opened the meeting with a brief introduction on the origin and purpose of the Project. During the meeting, UNDP's recently-appointed Administrator, Mark Mallock Brown, welcomed the members and offered expressions of support and encouragement for the Project.

Louis Emmerij introduced the discussion on the abovementioned books, one of the two principal components of the Project's program. Emmerij asked the IAC for feedback on the chosen topics for the books, specifically for any important topic or idea that should be included and has been left out, and invited suggestions for authors.

Following a lengthy discussion about the topics themselves and possible authors for each, several suggestions were made:

First, it was suggested that the Project publish an introductory monograph or paper spelling out the relationship between ideas, international organizations, and international public policy so as to contextualize the Project and to provide all monograph authors with a uniform methodology.

Some members observed that within the UN, as within other large institutions, rarely are individual authors identified in the conceptualization of ideas; rather, staff

work mostly in teams and in consultation with governments. As most UN ideas grow out of ideas developed in academic and other institutions and then are internalized and, more importantly, disseminated by the UN, it was suggested that the world organization might be better viewed as a halfway house between academia and public policy, and as much a disseminator as creator of ideas. As there are numerous overviews of development thinking in the last 50 years, some suggested that the focal point for this Project should be not solely on ideas as abstractions, but rather on the relationship between these ideas, the UN and policy action.

Another suggestion was that the Project analyze not just what important ideas the UN has spawned in its lifetime, but the subsequent implementation and impact of those ideas, noting that the historical context determines why certain ideas become priorities and why others are rejected.

Several members suggested that the first book be the focus of a seminar or brainstorming session which would bring together as many authors of the series as possible, the purpose of which would be to have a substantive discussion on the book outlines.

Tom Weiss introduced the oral history component of the Project and outlined UNIHP's oral history procedures. He explained that the Project will be conducting these interviews over the next 24 to 36 months and that they are an essential component of this five-year effort, as they will help inform the book series.

Weiss explained further that as Project staff prepare to conduct interviews, they will be developing questions for each interview organized in such a way that in the end the Project will be in a position to generalize and compare across many of the interviews. Interviewees are thus being questioned along the following clusters of questions which would be then followed-up by questions specific to each interviewee's own experience:

Personal background. For example, the influence of family and childhood experiences on UN career and intellectual orientations, including first experiences with and impressions of the UN.

Important global events: How these related to their thinking and to the thinking of their institutions at the time, including how these institutions adapted to these events.

The evolution of ideas within the UN: For example, the effect of institutional rivalries within the UN system, North-South relations within the UN during and after the Cold War, the international civil service, leadership, etc.

The impact of these ideas on policy: For example, did the idea transform the discourse of a discipline or

international politics? Make possible new combinations or coalitions of political forces? Provide causal road maps to guide action? Become embedded in institutions and took on a life of its own?

Finally, there was general agreement that the Advisory Council could meet twice a year initially and that venues other than New York should be considered, although questions of cost would need to be kept in mind. It was also agreed that future IAC meetings be combined with Project seminars so that both meetings may benefit from the expertise of the IAC members.

This was a very productive and insightful first meeting, and the numerous suggestions made have since been incorporated into a revised Project outline.

The Advisory Council outside the UN, July 1999



L to R: R. Thakur, T. Weiss, R. Jolly, M.J. Anstee, L. Emmerij, A. Inotai, G. Rosenthal, M. Taniguchi

MARCH 2000 MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL AND COMMISSIONED AUTHORS

Taking into account the suggestions made at the first Advisory Council meeting, the next meeting of the International Advisory Council will be held in New York on March 27-28, 2000. To benefit fully from the Advisory Council members' presence in New York, and to keep Project costs to a minimum, the Project has also invited authors of the UNIHP book series to present, for discussion, preliminary book outlines.