Dag Hammarskjöld and Global Governance

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Editor: Henning Melber

Language editor: Peter Colenbrander

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With contributions by
Ove Bring
Henning Melber
Peter Tejler

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UN Photo/Yutaka Nagata

Acknowledgements

This booklet is published in commemoration of the second Secretary-General of the United Nations half a century after his untimely death in a plane crash in Ndola, Northern Rhodesia on 18 September 1961. It sets out to highlight some of the values and approaches Dag Hammarskjöld adopted in his norm-setting period of office. The booklet comprises the two keynote addresses delivered in July 2011 to the seminar entitled 'The UN and Regional Challenges: Africa 50 Years After Hammarskjöld' and held at the University of Pretoria, and the opening remarks made at the seminar by Sweden's ambassador to South Africa. The full set of seminar papers will be published later in a separate volume.

The international seminar was organised jointly by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and the Department of Political Sciences at the University of Pretoria from 13 to 15 July 2011 and was attended by over 120 participants from countries in Africa and Europe. We are grateful to Maxi Schoeman and her team at the Department for Political Sciences for co-organising this event and for taking care of all the local arrangements.

We are especially grateful to the Department of Security Policy at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden for granting the funding necessary to turn this seminar project during 2011 recalling Dag Hammarskjöld's legacy into reality. The Swedish embassy in South Africa provided much appreciated additional support.

This booklet complements the earlier compilation of speeches entitled *The Ethics of Dag Hammarskjöld*, which was published in early 2010 and is also available in both hard copy and on the Foundation's web site. The reliable support of both Mattias Lasson and Peter Colenbrander in addressing the design and editorial elements during the few weeks between the seminar and the anniversary of Dag Hammarskjöld's death is much appreciated, as is the constant commitment of the other staff in the secretariat of the Foundation, without whom such initiatives and publications would not be possible.

Henning Melber
Uppsala
September 2011

Introduction

By Peter Tejler[1]

Both the life of Hammarskjöld, the man who came from a small then-neutral country to become the Secretary-General of the United Nations without even being aware of his candidacy beforehand, and his death in pursuit of the values he always tried to uphold, have given rise to many opinions. Innumerable books and papers have dealt with these issues. I will allow myself a more personal point of departure and give some Swedish perspectives on Hammarskjöld. In my view, these Swedish perspectives are clearly visible in Hammarskjöld's stewardship of the UN.

The first relates to his family. Let's start with his father. The Hammarskjöld family is well-known in Sweden. A number of military men and civil servants have through the centuries borne this name and still do. His father, Hjalmar, was a law professor, minister of justice, minister of education and provincial governor. During the First World War, he was Sweden's prime minister, even though he was not a member of any political party. He was criticised for his principled or perhaps inflexible view of international law. He also seems to have been what we would today would call a loner. The father obviously had an impact on Dag and I will revert to this later. On his mother's side, the family background was different and we meet scientists, clergymen and authors. This heritage also had an influence on Dag, who, in parallel with his impeccable career as a civil servant, also had a rich intellectual and spiritual life.

1 Ambassador of Sweden to South Africa. This is a slightly adapted version of his opening remarks to the seminar presented on 13 July 2011.

Dag had three siblings. Two became specialists in international law and one became a writer. He studied law at the university and graduated with a bachelor of laws and a master's degree in political economy. He went on to study economics at Stockholm University, writing a thesis entitled 'The Spread of the Business Cycle'. In 1936, at the age of 31, he was appointed deputy minister of finance. Twelve years later, he became the permanent undersecretary – the equivalent of deputy minister – at the ministry for foreign affairs, dealing mainly with international economic matters. At that time the world was dealing with the aftermath of the Second World War and saw the onset of the Cold War and a bipolar world.

A few years later, he was appointed minister without portfolio at the foreign ministry and became a member of the cabinet. At that time, the Social Democrats were in power in Sweden, but Hammarskjöld was not a member of any political party. He was a civil servant, nothing more and nothing less.

To clarify his non-political position he published an article in a magazine closely associated with the Social Democratic party. In it, he wrote that the basic and self-evident tenet in the political ethics of a civil servant is that he serves the society and not any group, party or any other special interests. Later in the same article, he made direct reference to Albert Schweitzer, the German-speaking doctor from Alsace, writer and philosopher, who for half a century worked in today's Gabon and was one of Hammarskjöld's most valued contemporary role models, although 30 years his senior. Hammarskjöld noted that Schweitzer's brand of ethics led to the obvious subordination of one's personal interest to the whole, with a morally mandatory loyalty first to society as it emerges in a nation, but second to the greater concept of society represented by internationalism.

With this early statement of convictions in mind, Hammarskjöld's later refusal in the UN to bow to the great powers, be they the US, UK, France or Soviet Union, cannot have been unexpected. In his historic confrontation with Nikita Khrushchev over UN involvement in the Congo crisis, he refused to comply with the Soviet leader's demand that he resign. He made it clear that 'it is not the Soviet Union or indeed any other Big Power who needs the United Nations for their protection, but the others', and continued that he saw his mandate as advocating the interests of weaker countries. He reiterated his determination to continue on this course by stating that, 'if it is the wish of those nations who see in the Organisation their best protection in the present world, I shall now do so again'. For me, this is only the logical corollary of his explanation of why he had once agreed to serve in government as a non-political member of the Swedish cabinet.

It has also been said that it was Hammarskjöld who minted the term 'international civil servant'. Whether this claim is right or wrong, his interpretation of his own mandate and obligations and the mandate and obligations of those who worked with him in the UN from 1953 to 1961 was clear. In the same vein, it is striking how often Hammarskjöld used the word 'integrity'. It is a term we hear so often today that, I would argue, it risks losing some of its real value. But things were different in Hammarskjöld's day and his usage of 'integrity' fits snugly into his understanding of the role of the civil servant.

Against this backdrop, Hammarskjöld's attitude to the media is also worth noting. Again, we must remember the times. News, views and information were disseminated mainly through radio and print media. It was early days for TV and the internet, mobile phones and blogs did not exist. But

Hammarskjöld was quick to understand the importance of reaching out to the media to get his message across.

He held regular press briefings, made himself available for interviews and made public appearances. Hammarskjöld mastered four languages – English, German, French and Swedish – and although his delivery seems to have been slightly wooden and stiff, he knew how to create punch lines, as the following examples amply illustrate:

'The UN was not created to take humanity to heaven but to save it from hell.'

'Never, for the sake of peace and quiet, deny your own experience or convictions.'

'Freedom from fear could be said to sum up the whole philosophy of human rights.'

All three sentences have less than 150 characters – What a Twitter!

In this respect, and in the way he looked at his own role as civil servant, for me Dag Hammarskjöld was a modern leader. He had a clear vision for the UN and knew where he wanted to take the organisation, which, when he took over, had more or less fallen into disrepute and had a dispirited Secretariat. It was he who developed two of UN's most used instruments: the peacekeeping operation – first used during the Suez crisis in 1956 – and the good offices of the Secretary-General – a precursor to modern preventive diplomacy. But it is also said by some of Hammarskjöld that he was a loner, that he didn't know how to delegate and that he was an authoritarian leader. There is also some truth in that. He didn't suffer fools gladly, but who does? He also wrote many of his speeches himself and often took his own minutes.

So how did he see himself? Let me give you but one example. As I have already noted, Hammarskjöld was also a classic intellectual: he translated poetry into Swedish, wrote his book *Markings* – in which one-sixth of the entries are haiku aphorisms – and kept up friendships with a number of well-known authors, Swedish and foreign. Upon the death of this father – and now we return to him – Dag succeeded him as a member of the Royal Swedish Academy, which awards the Nobel prize for literature. As tradition has it, the new academy member speaks of his predecessor. Of his father, this is what Dag said: 'a mature man is his own judge.' In the end, his only solid support is his faithfulness to his own convictions. Advice from others may be welcome and valuable, but does not absolve a person from responsibility. Thus he may become very lonely.

This seems like a proper description of the son himself. But as is clear from *Markings*, he was his own harshest critic. At the same time, his personal friends describe him as warm, stimulating, intellectually challenging and with a memory of unusual capacity. For me, the fundamental legacy of Dag Hammarskjöld is the mantra, 'Don't shun your responsibility and remain faithful to your convictions.' It's as valid today as it was then.

UN Photo/AF

The Hammarskjöld Approach to International Law

Ove Bring[1]

Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations, had a flexible approach to international law. On the one hand, he strongly relied on the principles of the UN Charter and general international law, while on the other he used a flexible and balanced *ad hoc* technique, taking into account values and policy factors whenever possible to resolve concrete problems. Hammarskjöld was inclined to express basic principles in terms of opposing tendencies, to apply a discourse of polarity or dualism, stressing, for example, that the observance of human rights was balanced by the concept of non-intervention, or the concept of intervention by national sovereignty, and recognising that principles and precepts could not provide automatic answers in concrete cases. Rather, such norms would serve 'as criteria which had to be weighed and balanced in order to achieve a rational solution of the particular problem'.[2] Very often it worked.

Dag Hammarskjöld has gone down in history as an inspiring international personality, injecting a dose of moral leadership and personal integrity into a world of power politics. He succeeded Trygve Lie as Secretary-General in April 1953, in the

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1 Professor emeritus of Stockholm University and the Swedish National Defence College.

2 Oscar Schachter, 'Dag Hammarskjold and the Relation of Law to Politics', *American Journal of International Law,* vol. 56, 1962, pp. 2–5. Quotation from p. 5. Hammarskjöld recognised that there was a tension between principles and concrete needs. By taking account of both, he sought to achieve (in his own words) 'that combination of steadfastness of purpose and flexibility of approach which alone can guarantee that the possibilities which we are exploring will have been tested to the full'. *Ibid.*

midst of the Cold War. In addition to East-West rivalry, he was confronted with Third World problems and the agonising birth of the new Republic of Congo, a tumultuous crisis, during which he lost his life in the Ndola air crash of September 1961.

Personal approach and philosophy

Dag Hammarskjöld was born in 1905 in a small town in middle Sweden where his father, Hjalmar Hammarskjöld, was at the time the president of the district court of appeal. His father was later, between 1914 and 1917, prime minister of Sweden. Dag´s elder brother Åke became a member of the League of Nations secretariat in 1920. From 1922 until 1936, his brother was registrar of the Permanent Court of International Justice in the Hague. The father and his sons were groomed in a typical Swedish civil service tradition in which the concepts of 'duty' and 'responsibility' reflected time-honoured values. It has been said of Dag Hammarskjöld that he had a manifest pride in his family´s legal background and that he 'regarded himself as a man of law'. Nevertheless, he was a professional economist. Although he studied law at Uppsala University, he later produced a doctoral thesis in economics.

Not long after his appointment as Secretary-General in 1953, it was already becoming clear that he had an innovative approach to the possibilities of the United Nations. He was not a formalist, but wanted to go forward and act in line with the purposes of the UN Charter. These purposes were fixed and binding, but the working methods of the Organisation had to be flexible and innovative. He did not want to be fettered by the concrete provisions of the Charter that did not explicitly provide for things he wanted to do, options he wanted to test in his capacity as Secretary-General. If he felt that the purposes of the UN made it possible, he would envision a mandate flowing from the Charter to act in accordance with his conscience as an international civil servant.

Hammarskjöld set out his views on the role of the UN Organisation and his approach to the UN Charter in the annual reports to the General Assembly. In this context, he developed a doctrine on the independence of the international civil servant, including an active role for the Secretary-General under an expansive interpretation of Articles 97-100 of the Charter. He introduced new mechanisms for a UN presence in conflict areas, for example the appointment of Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs).

He did not make a very sharp distinction between law and politics. Nor did he look upon international law as mainly 'written law', but emphasised the whole international pattern of rules and behaviour. Even before Wolfgang Friedman had published his famous book, *The Changing Structure of International Law* (1964), Hammarskjöld used the distinction between the traditional 'law of coexistence' and the more dynamic 'law of cooperation'. The world, in his view, was slowly moving into the latter more advanced area, which included supranational decision-making.

During his time as Secretary-General (1953-61), Hammarskjöld set forth a number of general themes regarding the role of the UN, but he did not articulate specific doctrines on human rights, intervention or security. Nevertheless, as we shall see, he developed new methods for the functioning of the system of collective security, and he was a forerunner in the field of what today is called human security.

Hammarskjöld was interested in the ethics of Albert Schweitzer. He was much attracted to Schweitzer´s emphasis on the sanctity of human life and to an individual and concrete approach to human needs. Hammarskjold was also interested in mediaeval religious thinking. He was inspired by Thomas Aquinas and others to focus on a man´s inner life in relation to God in preparation for individual choices and individual

action. Hammarskjöld was not afraid of uphill battles. He saw his appointment as Secretary-General as a challenge and a chance to be of real service to the international community. He felt he was placed in a position to put into action the ethics of Albert Schweitzer, the ideal of service to mankind.

One of Hammarskjöld´s first tasks as Secretary-General was to negotiate, in the aftermath of the Korean War, the release of American pilots taken prisoner by China. In this context, he felt the support of the wisdom of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber as expressed in the book *Ich und Du* (1923). Buber stressed the importance of human dialogue and Hammarskjöld´s visit to Beijing in January 1955 was marked by fruitful intellectual dialogue with Chinese Premier Chou En-lai. The chemistry between the two men made the conversation sparkle. Later the same year, the US airmen were released. The release coincided with Chou En-lai´s personal congratulations to the Secretary-General on his 50th birthday. Hammarskjöld is famous for having coined the concepts of preventive and quiet diplomacy, but in this case it was more a matter of personal diplomacy.

The introduction of peacekeeping

Hammarskjöld is best known for his innovative approach to the UN Charter. The first example here is the matter of peacekeeping, which was not, and still is not, mentioned in the Charter.

Hammarskjöld elaborated the new concept during the Suez crisis of 1956. As the Security Council was blocked by a joint British and French veto, the Secretary-General had to rely on the General Assembly. As a procedural matter, he used the Uniting for Peace resolution of 1950 to summon an extra emergency session of the Assembly. Together with Canadian External Affairs Minister Lester Pearson, he thereafter introduced the option of a UN-mandated military peace operation in the conflict area, with the consent of the parties to the conflict. On 7 November

1956, the General Assembly adopted a resolution that launched the first peacekeeping operation in UN history, the UN Emergency Force in the Middle East (UNEF).

Although UN observer missions had been fielded in 1948 and 1949, the deployment of *armed troops* to assist in the implementation of agreements reached between the UN and parties to a conflict added a new dimension to international relations. To govern these operations, Hammarskjöld laid down three principles: (1) consent from the territorial state and other parties involved; (2) impartiality on the UN side to secure credibility in the operation; and (3) non-use of force by the UN side, unless in individual self-defence or collective mission defence.

Over the years, it became clear that the Security Council should be the UN body to decide on all forms of UN peace operations, not only with regard to peace *enforcement* under Chapter VII of the Charter, but also with regard to cooperative peacekeeping.

When UNEF was established, Hammarskjöld considered it a new departure. 'It is', he said, 'certainly not contrary to the Charter, but is in a certain sense outside the explicit terms of the Charter.'

Thus peacekeeping operations, PKOs, were not foreseen under either Chapter VI or VII of the Charter, but fell somewhere in between, and not surprisingly the unwritten Chapter VI½ has been suggested as their legal basis. It is submitted that this 'VI½ perception' is appropriate and useful: appropriate because PKOs *are* a more ambitious involvement than anything provided for in Chapter VI; and politically useful because it shows that innovations, even without textual support, can be legitimised under the system of the Charter if they fulfil the purposes of the UN Organisation.

Hammarskjöld's dynamic approach to the law of the UN

Dag Hammarskjöld was appointed Secretary-General five years after Hans Morgenthau had published his influential realist opus *Politics among Nations.* In a speech in 1956, Hammarskjöld had reason to comment on the divide between idealism and realism. Assertions that the UN had failed were often misleading, he said:

> Do we refer to the purposes of the Charter? They are expressions of universally shared ideals which cannot fail us, though we, alas, often fail them. Or do we think of the institutions of the United Nations? They are our tools. We fashioned them. We use them. It is our responsibility to remedy any flaws there may be in them.

And he continued: 'This is a difficult lesson for both idealists and realists, though for different reasons. I suppose that, just as the first temptation of the realist is the illusion of cynicism, so the first temptation of the idealist is the illusion of Utopia.'[3]

Hammarskjöld was an idealist in the sense that he believed in the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and in the possibilities of the UN Organisation. At the same time, he was a realist in that he did not want to stretch the potential capacities of the Organisation too much if member states were not ready for it. For example, he opposed the idea of a standing UN military force, because he felt it was politically premature in view of the strong feelings related to national sovereignty, and also because he felt it was impractical to

3 'An International Administrative Service', from an address to the International Law Association at McGill University, Montreal, 30 May 1956. See Wilder Foote (ed.), *The Servant of Peace, A Selection of the Speeches and Statements of Dag Hammarskjöld* (hereafter referred to as *Speeches*), Bodley Head, London 1962, p. 116.

have a ready-made military unit standing by, when it was much better to tailor a unit to the specific demands of an impending situation.[4]

It goes without saying that he wanted the UN to respond to the demands of the international community, and in reflecting how that should be done he fell back on a distinction between existing legal norms and innovative procedures. On the one hand, he could refer to the UN normative framework in a natural law-oriented manner that included an implicit static element. Thus, in 1956 he stated that 'the principles of the Charter are, by far, greater than the Organization in which they are embodied, and the aims which they are to safeguard are holier than the policies of any single nation or people.'[5]

On the other hand, he often used a dynamic and evolutionary approach to the system of the UN Charter, arguing, for example, that although the objectives and rules of the Charter were binding, the working methods of the system could be supplemented by new procedures:

> As is well known, such an evolution has in fact taken place, and it has [...] been recognized that [...] new procedures may be developed when they prove productive in practice for [...] the objectives of the Charter. In this respect, the United Nations, as a living organism, has the necessary scope for a continuous adaptation of its [...] [system] to the needs [of the international community].[6]

This organic approach was in line with his views on the Uniting for Peace resolution and the establishment of UNEF. But

4 Brian Urquhart, *Hammarskjold,* Bodley Head, London/Sydney/Toronto 1973, p. 230.

5 'Statement during the Suez Crisis', 31 October 1956. *Official Records of the Security Council,* 751 meeting. Quoted in *ibid.,* p. 174.

6 From the 'Introduction to the Annual Report of the Secretary-General on the Activities of the Organization 1958-59', 22 August 1959, *Speeches,* p. 223.

Hammarskjöld developed it further into a dynamic conception of the UN Organisation. His successor, U Thant, once remarked that Hammarskjöld was prone to use his great gift for innovation and improvisation. He 'discovered new ways to help keep the peace' – an emergency force in one situation, an observer group in another and a UN presence in a third context.[7]

The dynamic approach of Hammarskjöld was also stressed by his collaborator in the UN Secretariat, Ralph Bunche. Bunche indicated in a speech in 1964 that Hammarskjöld consciously strove to make the UN a progressive force for human advancement. Wherever there was a conflict, actual or threatening, he believed the UN should actively seek to contain or avert it 'by quiet diplomacy when the circumstances permitted, in the form of good offices if the parties themselves demonstrated an inability to deal with the situation; and, if necessary by overt United Nations action'.

Bunch added that Hammarskjöld saw clearly that the UN 'must do more than hold meetings and talk and adopt resolutions'.[8] Hammarskjöld himself said at a press conference in early 1959 that the UN simply must respond to those demands which might be placed upon it. If those demands go beyond the 'present capacity', that must not in itself be a reason to exclude action. The capacity of the UN could prove to be greater than expected. He referred to the Organisation as a machine, thrusting its way through the terrain of international politics. He said: 'I do not know the exact capacity of this machine. It did take the very steep hill of Suez; it may take other and even steeper hills.'[9]

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7 U Thant, 'Looking ahead', Address given at Columbia University, 7 January 1964. See Andrew N. Cordier and Wilder Foote (eds), *The Quest for Peace, The Dag Hammarskjöld Memorial Lectures,* Columbia University Press, New York and London 1965, p. 40.

8 Ralph J. Bunche, 'The United Nations Operation in the Congo', in Andrew N. Cordier and Wilder Foote (eds), *The Quest for Peace, op. cit.,* pp. 121f.

9 Quotation by Lester B. Pearson in Andrew N. Cordier and Wilder Foote (eds), *The Quest for Peace, op. cit.,* p. 100.

Hammarskjöld was not confronted with the issues of human security and UN intervention until the summer of 1960, but he had reason before that to comment on some of the elements of that discourse. With regard to the protection of national sovereignty, he referred in a speech in 1953 to the classical Chinese philosopher and poet Tao-Tse Tung, who is reported as stating that whoever wants to grip the world and shape it will fail, because the world is a spiritual thing that cannot be shaped. Hammarskjöld later in his speech made clear that the United Nations

> has no power to encroach upon the national sovereignty of any state against the will of its government and people. It would indeed not only be against the letter and the spirit of the Charter [...] to attempt to impose its will in domestic matters. It would also be against the elementary wisdom expressed [...] [by] Tao-Tse Tung.[10]

With regard to the protection of *human rights* Hammarskjöld said at one point that behind the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 'we find literally thousands of people who directly or indirectly participated actively in its drafting'.[11] He thereby implied that the Declaration was *not* mainly a contribution of the West. He further stated that the Declaration could be called a 'universal expression' on the subject in a world where the memory was still fresh of some of the worst infringements of human rights ever experienced in history.

With regard to the principle of *collective security*, Hammarskjöld sometimes referred to the Chapter VII procedure as a necessary requirement for armed action. At the same time, he

10 *Speeches,* p. 43.

11 'The International Significance of the Bill of Rights', Address at Celebration of the 180th Anniversary of the Virginia Declaration of Rights 1776-1956, Williamsburg, Virginia, 14 May 1956, *Speeches*, p. 106.

was prone to relate the matter of collective peacemaking to the other objectives of the Charter. Not surprisingly, he then used a contextual approach. In his view, peace was not solid without human rights, and human rights could not be fully realised unless peace was at hand.[12]

In similar vein he also saw the creation of the UN as something going beyond the exclusive interests of states and governments. In 1958 he made the point that a global cooperative project was not a new idea. The UN Organisation was a body for collective efforts established after centuries of human struggle. He said: 'It is the logical and natural development from lines of thought and aspiration going far back into all corners of the earth since a few men first began to think about the decency and dignity of other men.'[13]

The choice of emphasis on 'men' instead of 'states', and on 'dignity' instead of security, is perhaps telling about how Hammarskjöld regarded the objectives of the UN Charter. Collective security included human dignity. Or, as we would express it today, collective security is not only state security but also human security. The interests of the international society of states could and should not differ from the interests of mankind.

The issue of UN humanitarian intervention in peace operations

When the political situation in the Republic of Congo deteriorated in the summer of 1960, a UN peace operation was launched, ONUC. In August, there were tribal massacres in the province of Kasai: hundreds of Balubas were killed by government soldiers. Villages were pillaged and burned and their

12 Address in New York, 10 April 1957, *Speeches*, p. 127.
13 'The Uses of Private Diplomacy', Address in the Houses of Parliament, London, 2 April 1958, *Speeches*, p. 174.

inhabitants, including children, killed simply by reason of their ethnicity.

Hammarskjöld felt – and made clear to his associates – that the UN could not stand aside and remain passive in what he called 'a case of incipient genocide'. He indicated that the Central Government had to accept this responsibility of the UN. True, the Kasai situation was a delicate one for the UN to interfere in, against the background of an unclear mandate and the non-intervention principle of Article 2(7) of the Charter. But, on the other hand, Hammarskjöld concluded in a cable to his emissary in Leopoldville: 'Prohibition against intervention in internal conflicts cannot be considered to apply to senseless slaughter of civilians or fighting arising from tribal hostilities.'[14]

After a meeting with his advisors in New York, he authorised the interposing of UN troops, using force if necessary, to stop the massacres.[15] As it happened, at the beginning of September 1960 the situation calmed down and there was no need to act upon these instructions.

In reporting to the Security Council on 9 September, Hammarskjöld referred to the atrocities as international crimes. He stated:

> They involve a most flagrant violation of elementary human rights and have the characteristics of the crime of genocide since they appear to be directed towards the extermination of a specific ethnic group, the Balubas.[16]

Hammarskjöld did not at this point ask for an extended ONUC mandate to deal with the humanitarian threats. His moral gut reaction was – as is shown by the cable to

14 Unpublished statement quoted in Brian Urquhart, *Hammarskjold*, *op. cit.,* p. 438.
15 *Ibid.,* p. 438.
16 *Security Council Official Records,* 896th Meeting, 9 September 1960, para 101.

Leopoldville – that it was not necessary. But diplomatic prudence would of course have it that any humanitarian crossing of the borderline between peacekeeping and peace enforcement should be mandated by the Security Council, and if there is no time for that, that Council approval should at least be registered *ex post facto*.

Hammarskjöld´s position in principle was clear. We can assume that it was not exclusively a legal position. His moral 'do good' inclination was probably influenced by his Christian values and he was not prepared to compromise with his personal convictions. In his report to the General Assembly he made clear: 'You try to save a drowning man without prior authorization.'[17]

There was probably also a policy element of human rights involved. Hammarskjöld was normally not a driving force in the field of human rights. The issue was tainted with Cold War controversy and he regularly approached it with caution. In this case, however, he was prepared to use the Secretary-General´s power of interpretation to protect human rights and play the card of 'incipient genocide' to increase his power of persuasion. To him, obviously, this was a matter of values and a mix of law and morality. He was not alien to the incorporation of extra-legal elements in the process of international law. Although he laid heavy emphasis on the non-intervention principle of Article 2(7) of the Charter, he nevertheless thought that the Kasai massacres were outside the scope of that provision. His personal ethics coincided with the natural law proposition that *lex scripta* had to be reconciled with a law of higher order.

17 'Statement on UN Operations in Congo before the General Assembly, 17 October 1960'. See Andrew W. Cordier and Wilder Foot (eds), *Public Papers of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations, Vol. V: Dag Hammarskjöld 1960-1961,* Columbia University Press, New York 1975, p. 154.

Hammarskjöld´s policy-related instincts, focused on a kind of 'UN responsibility to protect' perception, did not leave a significant imprint on the peacekeeping discourse during the Cold War. It is noteworthy, though, that the principle of protecting civilians during peace operations has been brought into the present millennium by the Brahimi report (2000)[18] and through the broader concept of Responsibility to Protect (2005).[19] Hammarskjöld´s instinctive approach to the matter has come to stay and is now codified in the peacekeeping doctrine of the United Nations.[20]

Concluding remarks: Leadership and legal development

The future of the UN Organisation lies, as always in the case of Inter-Governmental Organisations, in the hands of member states. Political will is essential, as is international leadership. Unfortunately, the world today suffers from a lack of both. As to political will, Hammarskjöld did not expect it to surface in multilaterally negotiated documents. Rather, he saw it develop through precedents created by a responsible international leadership. Thus the Hammarskjöld approach to the UN and international law was not to rely on drawn out political compromise, but on *ad hoc* arrangements responding to urgent and concrete needs in line with the purposes of the UN. As Hammarskjöld´s biographer Brian Urquhart has pointed out, the then Secretary-General believed that a just and reliable world order had to rely on precedents (state

18 'Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations', chaired by Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi (Algeria), transmitted to the Secretary-General on 17 August 2000 (UN Doc. A/55/305-S/2000/809).

19 General Assembly Resolution 60/1, World Summit Outcome Document (2005), paras 138-9.

20 'Report of the Secretary-General, Implementation of the Recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations' (UN Doc. A/60/640 (2005)).

practice) made possible through political acquiescence. In that sense, he was a political realist.

Hammarskjöld´s contribution to international law, beyond his innovative and flexible use of the UN Charter, lies in his emphasis on value-based collective decision-making in response to pressing needs. He realised that a progressive development of international law could not be achieved exclusively through multilateral treaty-making, but that, in addition, an element of *development through practice* would be needed. However, development through precedents presumes that those international actors prepared to take the lead, statesmen of governments and organisations, can inspire confidence in their initiatives vis-à-vis the rest of the international community. To find and promote such actors of global leadership, sensitive to political feelings and aware of political opportunities, with distinct trans-cultural outlooks, will be a challenge for nation states and international organisations alike. Statesmen of the calibre of Dag Hammarskjold are hard to find.

Dag Hammarskjöld – Ethics, Solidarity and Global Leadership

Henning Melber[1]

Keynote Address to the Seminar: The United Nations and Regional Challenges in Africa 50 Years After the Death of Hammarskjöld University of Pretoria, 14 July 2011

> 'Sit on the ground and talk to people.
> That's the most important thing.'

It was not a social anthropologist who provided this advice. Rather, this was the answer given by Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations, when asked over dinner by his friend John Steinbeck what would matter most during a world tour.[2] He had followed a similar approach (though not necessarily sitting on the ground while talking to the people) during a five-week trip through large parts of Africa. The journey, from 22 December 1959 to the end of January 1960, took him to more than 20 countries on the continent, over which the 'winds of change' had begun to blow. Upon his return on 31 January, he declared:

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1 Executive Director, The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (www.dhf.uu.se) and Research Fellow at the Department of Political Sciences, University of Pretoria.

2 Per Lind and Bengt Thelin, 'Nature and Culture: Two Necessities of Life', in Sten Ask and Anna Mark-Jungkvist (eds), *The Adventure of Peace: Dag Hammarskjöld and the Future of the UN*, New York and London: Palgrave Macmillan 2005, p. 99 (quoted in Roger Lipsey, 'Dag Hammarskjöld and *Markings*: A Reconsideration', *Spiritus. A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, vol. 11, no. 1, spring 2011, p. 89).

> I would say that this experience over this long journey makes me less inclined than ever to generalize, less than ever willing to say this or that about Africa or this or that about the Africans, because just as there is very much in common, especially the aspirations, there is also an enormous diversity of problems, of attitudes, and of traditions. In such a way, the journey makes me both a little bit wiser and a lot more humble.[3]

In a subsequent press conference, Hammarskjöld elaborated on the approach he had outlined to his friend Steinbeck:

> You can say that to stay in a country one night or two nights cannot give much of an experience. Well, first of all, it can. It can because, if you break through the walls and if you have the necessary background knowledge, even a talk of one hour can tell you more than volumes […] It is not in particular what you can learn in this or that city or from this or that man that gives you valuable understanding of the situation. It is what he says and what you see in one city seen in the light of what you have heard others say and what you have seen in other cities.[4]

Hammarskjöld's journey to Africa was not a mere sightseeing excursion, nor what we in current jargon would call a 'quick and dirty' consultancy job. It was not merely a symbolic gesture by someone already preoccupied with all the problems of the world at the height of the Cold War. Hammarskjöld described it in the same press conference as 'a strictly professional trip for study, for information'.[5] The trip attested to his general mind-

3 'Airport Statement on Return from African Trip', New York, 31 January 1960 (UN Press Release SG/895, 31 January 1960), in Andrew W. Cordier and Wilder Foote (eds), *Public Papers of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations. Volume V: Dag Hammarskjöld 1960-1961*, New York and London: Columbia University Press 1975, p. 522.

4 'From Transcript of Press Conference.' New York, 4 February 1960 (UN Note to Correspondents No. 2108, 4 February 1960), in *ibid.*, p. 525.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 524.

set and practice of seeking dialogue with others to explore the common ground of humanity.

During the inauguration of the Congress for International Cooperation in Africa at the University Institute of Somalia on 14 January 1960 he made reference to the Renaissance (a catchword that would resurface in the African context 40 years later). Commenting on the main challenges facing African leaders, he stated:

> The two problems they will have to solve is to create an international world, a world of universality and unity, and on the other hand to save not only what I would like to call the personality of Africa, but the personality of each country, each group, in this wonderfully rich continent [...] what is needed is unity with diversity, diversity respected within the framework of an even deeper respect for unity.[6]

This pledge to reconcile the unique with the universal was by no means an appeal to abandon globally applicable standards, values and norms in favour of particularism. For him, there existed a dialectical relationship between the local and the global in the sense of the national and the international. At Stanford University in Palo Alto nearly five years earlier, in June 1955, he had devoted an address entitled 'The World and the Nation' to this inter-relatedness. In his talk, he defined the fundamental challenge as follows: 'The question is not either the nation *or* the world. It is rather, how to serve the world by service to our nation, and how to serve the nation by service to the world.'[7]

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6 'Extemporaneous Remarks at Inauguration of the Congress for International Cooperation in Africa at the University Institute of Somalia', Mogadiscio, Somalia, 14 January 1960, in *ibid*., p. 515.

7 'The World and the Nation', Commencement Address at Stanford University, Palo Alto, California, 19 June 1955 (UN Press Release SG/426, 18 June 1955), in Andrew W. Cordier and Wilder Foote (eds), *Public Papers of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations. Volume II: Dag Hammarskjöld 1953-1956*, New York and London: Columbia University Press 1975, p. 509.

He considered the United Nations as the relevant link to enhance this cross-fertilisation and to ensure that we do not get lost in particular obscurantism in hiding behind the shield of national sovereignty. For him, the United Nations was 'an expression of our will to find a synthesis between the nation and the world'.[8] When upon his return from his visit to the African countries, a journalist inquired at the press conference whether the ideological trends in Africa 'stem from the inner realities facing African life today or whether they reflect the often repeated clichés of foreign ideology', Hammarskjöld's clarification left no doubt:

> I do not think that the rights of man is a foreign ideology to any people and that, I think, is the key to the whole ideological structure in Africa at present. It may be that the most eloquent and the most revolutionary expressions of the rights of man are to be found in Western philosophers and Western thinking, but that certainly does not make the idea a Western idea imposed on anybody.[9]

The fundamental ethics that were his moral compass in his commitments as a global leader are obvious in these convictions, which guided his engagement not only with African realities. Not surprisingly, his role as the highest international civil servant representing the global governance institution established after the Second World War as the United Nations was based on values that were permeated by a notion of solidarity. On 26 January 1960, towards the end of his African journey, he declared at the second session of the Economic Commission of Africa in Tangier:

8 *Ibid*., p. 512.

9 'From Transcript of Press Conference', *op. cit*., pp. 533-4.

> Partnership and solidarity are the foundations of the United Nations and it is in order to translate these principles into practical measures of economic cooperation that we are gathered today in this hall [...] The emergence of Africa on the world scene, more than any other single phenomenon, has forced us to reappraise and rethink the nature of relationships among peoples at different stages of development, and the conditions of a new synthesis making room for an accelerated growth and development of Africa.[10]

Hammarskjöld then reverted to a speech he had given a few months earlier at the University of Lund in Sweden, with the title 'Asia, Africa, and the West'. It attests to the enlightened views of the Secretary-General. On that occasion, he had reminded his audience that 'nobody should forget that colonization reflected a basic approach which may have been well founded in certain limited respects, but which often mirrored false claims, particularly when it touched on spiritual development. Applied generally, it was untenable.'[11]

Commenting on the Western perspectives of the early 20th century, Hammarskjöld found it striking 'how much they did *not* see and did *not* hear, and how even their most positive attempts at entering into a world of different thoughts and emotions were colored by an unthinking, self-assured superiority'.[12] For

10 'Statement at the Second Session of the Economic Commission for Africa', Tangier, Morocco, 26 January 1960 (UN Press Release SG/890, 25 January 1960), in Andrew W. Cordier and Wilder Foote (eds), *Public Papers ... Volume V, op. cit.,* p. 517.

11 'Asia, Africa, and the West', Address Before the Academic Association of the University of Lund, Lund, Sweden, 4 May 1959 (UN Press Release SG/813, 4 May 1959), in Andrew W. Cordier and Wilder Foote (eds), *Public Papers of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations. Volume IV: Dag Hammarskjöld 1958-1960*, New York and London: Columbia University Press 1974, p. 381.

12 *Ibid*., p. 382 (original emphasis).

Hammarskjöld, the 'richest satisfaction' lay in 'meeting different spiritual traditions and their representatives', provided one 'approaches them on an equal footing and with a common future goal in mind'. He was confident that this approach would ensure progress 'in the direction of a human community which, while retaining the special character of individuals and groups, has made use of what the various branches of the family of man have attained along different paths over thousands of years'.[13]

He clearly dismissed any claims to superiority over others based on any kind of naturalist concept of dominance rooted in supposed biological advancement and also questioned the legitimacy sought by dominant classes to justify their privileges:

> The health and strength of a community depend on every citizen's feeling of solidarity with the other citizens, and on his willingness, in the name of this solidarity, to shoulder his part of the burdens and responsibilities of the community. The same is of course true of humanity as a whole. And just [as] it cannot be argued that within a community an economic upper class holds its favored position by virtue of greater ability, as a quality which is, as it were, vested in the group by nature, so it is, of course, impossible to maintain this in regard to nations in their mutual relationships.[14]

He therefore concluded:

> We thus live in a world where, no more internationally than nationally, any distinct group can claim superiority in mental gifts and potentialities of development [...] Those democratic ideals which demand equal opportunities for all should be applied also to peoples and races [...] no nation or group of nations can base its future on a claim of supremacy.[15]

13 *Ibid.*
14 *Ibid.*, p. 383.
15 *Ibid.*, p. 384.

He confidently proclaimed that 'the Organization I represent…is based on a philosophy of solidarity'.[16] His advice to Europe was that 'the best and soundest way to perpetuate (its) cultural heritage is to meet other peoples and other cultures in humble respect for the unique gifts that they, in turn, have offered and still offer to humanity' and reminds the continent's peoples 'that it is a sign of the highest culture to be really capable of listening, learning, and therefore also responding'.[17]

He concludes with a telling personal anecdote, shared with him by a colleague from Asia who was educated at European universities.[18]

> He once told me how, in his early youth, he lived with and loved the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. He thought he had made the original text entirely his own, until he came to Britain and became acquainted with Fitzgerald's translation. Then, this in turn became – in the academic surroundings that began to transform him – his 'real' Rubaiyat [...] He returned home, however, and again found Omar Khayyam's poems such as he had once made them his own. The pendulum kept swinging, and, he concluded, 'even today I do not know which Rubaiyat is mine, Omar's or Fitzgerald's'.[19]

Hammarskjöld ends the story and his speech with the vision: 'We must reach the day when…all of us can enjoy in common the Rubaiyat and the fact that we have it both in Omar's and in Fitzgerald's version.'[20]

16 *Ibid.*
17 *Ibid.*, p. 385.
18 According to the editors it was Ahmed Bokhári, a UN undersecretary who died in December 1958. *Ibid.*, p. 380.
19 *Ibid.*, pp. 386f.
20 *Ibid.*, p. 387.

His multicultural vision challenges the predominant hegemonic worldviews. It promotes a counter-culture of global humanity seeking for commonalities while being based on respect for differences. By being a Swedish world citizen, combining a strong sense of cultural belonging with cosmopolitan openness, Hammarskjöld showed that firm roots in one's own society, in its history and culture, are not obstacles or limitations but a valuable point of departure, provided they are not taken as the one and only absolute 'truth'. Awareness of one's own upbringing in a specific social context, anchoring one's identity in a framework guided by a set of values, allows for curiosity towards otherness and explorations of the unknown for one's own benefit and gain. There are no risks in entering a dialogue with 'strangers' if one knows where one comes from.

Hammarskjöld's exchanges with the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber testify to this conviction as does the dialogue he practised in search of solutions to conflicts and differences deeply entrenched in specific sets of values, norms or cultural socialisations. On 16 April 1958, five days after his re-election as the UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, in a letter to Buber expressed his admiration for Buber's philosophy 'of unity created "out of the manyfold"'.[21]

Perhaps a little surprisingly, this exchange in its substance resonated to some extent with the later emancipatory gospel of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed: seeming strangers, as Paulo Freire emphasised, can through mutual empathy become fellow human beings who can relate to one another despite all distinctions. In becoming aware of their commonality as human beings, specific knowledge – wrongly generalised as universal knowledge – can be modified and transformed

21 Quoted in Lou Marin, *Can we save true dialogue in an age of mistrust? The encounter of Dag Hammarskjöld and Martin Buber*, Uppsala: Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation 2010 (Critical Currents, no. 8), p. 11.

through interaction and exchange among equals and thereby turned into common knowledge across boundaries. As Freire puts it:

> The radical committed to human liberation, does not become the prisoner of a 'circle of certainty' within which reality is also imprisoned. On the contrary, the more radical the person is, the more fully he or she enters into reality so that, knowing it better, he or she can better transform it. This person is not afraid to meet people or enter into dialogue with them. This person does not consider himself or herself the proprietor of history or of all people, or the liberator of the oppressed; but he or she does commit himself or herself, within history, to fight at their side.[22]

In this sense, Dag Hammarskjöld – as the measured diplomat and loyal civil servant he was – displayed the virtues of a radical person.

Hammarskjöld also had a strong sense of the need for economic justice. In his last address to ECOSOC, he linked the principles of national sovereignty to the belief that international solidarity and social consciousness must go hand in hand by:

> […] accepting as a basic postulate the existence of a world community for which all nations share a common responsibility […] to reduce the disparities in levels of living between nations, a responsibility parallel to that accepted earlier for greater economic and social equality within nations.[23]

22 Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* New York: Continuum 1996, p. 21.

23 Quoted in Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, 'Poverty and Inequality – Challenges in the Era of Globalisation', in Sten Ask and Anna Mark-Jungkvist (eds), *op. cit.*, p. 222.

The introduction to the 16th annual report of the United Nations became Hammarskjöld's last programmatic statement. Submitted a month before his untimely death, it summarises his legacy in terms of ethics, solidarity and global leadership. It reiterated his firm belief in the equality of peoples and societies, as different from each other as these might be perceived to be:

> In the Preamble to the Charter, Member nations have reaffirmed their faith 'in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small,' a principle which also has found many other expressions in the Charter. Thus, it restates the basic democratic principle of equal political rights, independently of the position of the individual or of the Member country in respect of its strength, as determined by territory, population or wealth. The words just quoted must, however, be considered as going further and imply an endorsement as well of a right to equal economic opportunities.[24]

Importantly, Hammarskjöld once again does not content himself with proclaiming noble postulates by making lofty reference to an abstract equality. As a trained economist, who defended his PhD with no less a person than Gunnar Myrdal as disputant (who disagreed with Hammarskjöld on the argument in his thesis but advocated the award of the highest mark for the undisputable quality of his analyses), he never loses sight of the socioeconomic dimensions of inequality. It is therefore no coincidence that he returns to stress the right to equal economic opportunities:

> So as to avoid any misunderstanding, the Charter directly states that the basic democratic principles are applicable to nations 'large and small' and to individuals without

24 'Introduction to the Sixteenth Annual Report', New York, 17 August 1961, in Andrew W. Cordier and Wilder Foote (eds), *Public Papers ... Volume V*, *op.cit*., p. 544.

> distinction 'as to race, sex, language and religion,' qualifications that obviously could be extended to cover other criteria such as, for example, those of an ideological character which have been used or may be used as a basis for political or economic discrimination [...] The demand for equal economic opportunities has, likewise, been – and remains – of specific significance in relation to those very countries which have more recently entered the international arena as new states. This is natural in view of the fact that, mostly, they have been in an unfavourable economic position, which is reflected in a much lower *per capita* income, rate of capital supply, and degree of technical development, while their political independence and sovereignty require a fair measure of economic stability and economic possibilities in order to gain substance and full viability.[25]

This corresponds with his earlier and continued emphasis on the need to address the economic imbalances inherent in the existing world order. As he stressed in an address as early as February 1956:

> The main trouble with the Economic and Social Council at present is that, in public opinion and in practice, the Council has not been given the place it should have in the hierarchy of the main organs of the United Nations. I guess that we are all agreed that economic and social problems should rank equal with political problems. In fact, sometimes I feel that they should, if anything, have priority.[26]

25 *Ibid*., p. 545 (original italics).

26 'The UN – Its Ideologies and Activities' , in Andrew W. Cordier and Wilder Foote (eds), *Public Papers ... Volume II*, *op. cit.,* p. 668.

He testified further to his awareness of the needs for global economic justice only a few months later in his opening statement during a debate on the world economic situation in ECOSOC. In his remarks, he bemoaned

> the absence of a framework of international policy that compels the underdeveloped countries each to seek its own salvation in its own way without reference to wider horizons. How often have we not heard the voices of those who bewail the fact that this underdeveloped country is moving along the slippery path to autarky, that that country is neglecting its exports, whether agricultural or mineral, or that yet a third country is manipulating its exchange rates in a manner contrary to the letter and spirit of the Bretton Woods agreements? And yet how many of those who belabor the underdeveloped countries in this fashion have given adequate thought to the structure of world economic relationships which has forced these countries into unorthodox patterns of behavior?[27]

The truly internationalist spirit in which the second Secretary-General acted, without fear or favour, during most of his eight years in office included awareness that gross socioeconomic disparities continued to contribute to global challenges. Tackling these disparities within a mindset of global solidarity was among the essentials Hammarskjöld reiterated in his last introduction to an annual report:

27 '1. Statement in the Economic and Social Council Introducing Debate on the World Economic Situation', Geneva, 16 July 1956 (UN Press Release SG/493, 16 July 1956), in Andrew W. Cordier and Wilder Foote (eds), *Public Papers of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations. Volume III: Dag Hammarskjöld 1956-1957*, New York and London: Columbia University Press 1973, pp. 190f.

> The exclusively international character of the Secretariat is not tied to its composition, but to the spirit in which it works and to its insulation from outside influences [...] Anyone of integrity, not subjected to undue pressure, can, regardless of his own views, readily act in an 'exclusively international' spirit.[28]

As early as 1955, he had insisted on a definition of loyalty and integrity – two values at the core of his ethics – for the international civil service in a series of pioneering speeches over the space of ten days at three US universities, during which he emphasised the universal character of duties by transcending national confinements and adopting an international dimension. At Johns Hopkins University, he addressed the question

> whether international service is possible without split loyalties in a divided world. The problem as posed here is to my mind unreal. We are true to this or that ideal, and this or that interest, because we have in openness and responsibility recognized it as an ideal and an interest true to us. We embrace ideals and interests in their own right, not because they are those of our environment or of this or that group. Our relations to our fellow men do not determine our attitude to ideals, but are determined by our ideals. If our attitude is consistent, we shall be consistent in our loyalties. If our attitude is confused, then our loyalties will also be divided. In the world of today there is an urge to conformism which sometimes makes people complain of a lack of loyalty in those who criticize the attitudes prevalent in their environment. May I ask: Who shows true loyalty to that environment, one who before his conscience has arrived at the conclusion that something is wrong and in all sincerity gives voice to his

28 'Introduction to the Sixteenth Annual Report', *op. cit.,* p. 556.

> criticism, or the one who in self-protection closes his eyes to what is objectionable and shuts his lips on his criticism? The concept of loyalty is distorted when it is understood to mean blind acceptance.[29]

He insisted that the problem of loyalties is 'common to us all in all walks of life':

> In fact, it is a national problem; and a problem within whatever group of friends and associates you may be working, just as much as it is an international problem. The essence of international service, and the problem of loyalty as it presents itself in the light of such service, is the essence of all service to fellow men, and it is the problem of loyalty as we face it everywhere.[30]

He ends this, the first of the three lectures, with a strikingly unbiased appeal to combine the universal values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations with the moral guiding principles of one's own convictions as the ultimate compass:

> The attitude basic to international service places the pursuit of happiness under laws of conscience which alone can justify freedom [...] the final issue is what dignity we are willing to give to man. It is part of the American creed, part of the inherited ideology of all Western civilization, that each man is an end in himself, of infinite value as an individual. To pay lip-service to this view or to invoke it in favor of our actions is easy. But what is in fact the central tenet of this ideology becomes a reality only when we, ourselves, follow a way of life, individu-

29 'International Service', Address at Johns Hopkins University Commencement Exercise, Baltimore, Maryland, 14 June 1955 (UN Press Release SG/424, 13 June 1955), in Andrew W. Cordier and Wilder Foote (eds), *Public Papers ... Volume II*, *op. cit.*, p. 504.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 505.

> ally and as members of a group, which entitles us personally to the freedom of a mature individual, living under the rules of his conscience. And it becomes the key to our dealings with others only when inspired by a faith which in truth and spirit gives to them the value which is theirs according to what we profess to be our creed.[31]

Hammarskjöld's firm belief in the fundamental values and principles guiding human beings as their individual moral compasses, wherever they come from or live and on whichever assignments they work, also anchored his understanding and concept of service to the family of nations. He felt strongly that such service would have to respect and embrace the individual's undivided loyalty to his or her own faith and truth. This was for him an integral part of the framework to orient the fulfilment of duties as an international civil servant. In his famous Oxford speech on 'The International Civil Servant in Law and in Fact', which he delivered a few months before his death, he reiterated this conviction in no uncertain terms by dismissing the view that a civil service requires neutrality, in the sense of non-commitment to basic moral convictions:

> It is obvious from what I have said that the international civil servant cannot be accused of lack of neutrality simply for taking a stand on a controversial issue when this is his duty and cannot be avoided. But there remains a serious intellectual and moral problem as we move within an area inside which personal judgment must come into play. Finally, we have to deal here with a question of integrity or with, if you please, a question of conscience [...] if integrity in the sense of respect for law and respect for truth were to drive [the international civil servant] into positions of conflict with this or that interest, then that

31 *Ibid.*, p. 506.

> conflict is a sign of his neutrality and not of his failure to observe neutrality – then it is in line, not in conflict with his duties as an international civil servant.[32]

He once again returns at the end of this paradigmatic lecture to the latent tension between national interests and international advocacy and commitment, when he warns that:

> Recently, it has been said, this time in Western circles, that as the international Secretariat is going forward on the road of international thought and action, while Member states depart from it, a gap develops between them and they are growing into being mutually hostile elements; and this is said to increase the tension in the world which it was the purpose of the United Nations to diminish. From this view the conclusion has been drawn that we may have to switch from an international Secretariat, ruled by the principles described in this lecture, to an intergovernmental Secretariat, the members of which obviously would not be supposed to work in the direction of an internationalism considered unpalatable to their governments. Such a passive acceptance of a nationalism rendering it necessary to abandon present efforts in the direction of internationalism symbolized by the international civil service – somewhat surprisingly regarded as a cause of tension – might, if accepted by the Member nations, well prove to be the Munich of international cooperation as conceived after the First World War and further developed under the impression of the tragedy of the Second World War. To abandon or to compromise with principles on which such cooperation is built may

32 The International Civil Servant in Law and in Fact', Lecture Delivered in Congregation at Oxford University, Oxford, England, 30 May 1961 (UN Press Release SG/1035), in Andrew W. Cordier and Wilder Foote (eds), *Public Papers ... Volume V*, *op. cit.*, pp. 488 and 489.

> be no less dangerous than to compromise with principles regarding the rights of a nation. In both cases the price to be paid may be peace.[33]

In his last words to his staff, Hammarskjöld reiterated again one of his fundamental principles: 'If the Secretariat is regarded as truly international, and its individual members as owing no allegiance to any national government, then the Secretariat may develop as an instrument for the preservation of peace and security of increasing significance and responsibilities.'[34]

Ten days before his death, Hammarskjöld, concluded his remarks on the occasion of the UN's staff day with the following words, which were indeed his final ones to his colleagues. They resonate with the personal tone and philosophy of his diary, which he had left beside his bed in his New York apartment and which was posthumously published as *Vägmärken* ("Markings"):

> It is false pride to register and to boast to the world about the importance of one's work, but it is false humility, and finally just as destructive, not to recognize – and recognize with gratitude – that one's work has a sense. Let us avoid the second fallacy as carefully as the first, and let us work in the conviction that our work *has* a meaning beyond the narrow individual one and *has* meant something for man.[35]

For Hammarskjöld, the work of the UN was to build on the commonality of humankind, its conduct and experience. During a visit to India in early February 1956, he addressed the Indian Council of World Affairs. Prompted by a moving en-

33 *Ibid*., p. 489.

34 'Last Words to the Staff – from Remarks on Staff Day', New York, 8 September 1961, in *ibid*., p. 564.

35 *Ibid*., p. 566 (original emphasis).

counter during a local cultural event performed in his honour, his mainly extemporaneous speech explored the dimensions of human universalism. A commonality beyond Western – or, indeed, any culturally, religiously or geographically limited – ideology or conviction is what he spoke to:

> It is no news to anybody, but we sense it in different degrees, that our world of today is more than ever before *one* world. The weakness of one is the weakness of all, and the strength of one – not the military strength, but the real strength, the economic and social strength, the happiness of people – is indirectly the strength of all. Through various developments which are familiar to all, world solidarity has, so to say, been forced upon us. This is no longer a choice of enlightened spirits; it is something which those whose temperament leads them in the direction of isolationism have also to accept […] With respect to the United Nations as a symbol of faith, it may […] be said that to every man it stands as a kind of 'yes' to the ability of man to form his own destiny, and form his own destiny so as to create a world where the dignity of man can come fully into its own.[36]

Dag Hammarskjöld's ethics, his concept of solidarity, his sense of fundamental universal values and human rights in combination with his respect for the multitude of identities within the human family, as well as his responsibility as the world's highest international civil servant to assume global leadership, set standards that have to this day lost none of their value and relevance.

36 Quoted in Andrew W. Cordier and Wilder Foote (eds), *Public Papers … Volume II*, *op. cit.*, pp. 661 and 660.

About the Foundation

The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation provides a forum for free and frank debate, and plays a catalysing role through seminars, publications and public events on topics such as development, security, human rights and democracy.

Our activities focus on United Nations-related issues. We promote the values of Dag Hammarskjöld, the second UN Secretary-General, within the current global development discourse.

The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation was established in 1962 in memory of the second Secretary-General of the United Nations. According to the charter the broad purpose of the Foundation is to promote, in the spirit of Dag Hammarskjöld, social, political, economic, environmental and cultural development in the South and globally.

While we have limited resources, we have been able to build up and draw on a large network of experts and practitioners in international institutions, governments, the academic community and, increasingly, civil society organisations and social movements.

To our seminars participants are invited in their personal capacity, thereby stimulating an open and creative exchange of views intended to achieve concrete results. Some seminars are conducted in an exploratory manner, while others are specifically focused on the formulation of detailed policy recommendations.

Development Dialogue is the Foundation's main publication.

Geijersgården in Uppsala houses the Foundation secretariat

The Foundation is governed by an autonomous Board of Trustees, which has nine members. The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation's secretariat is located in a historic mansion in the heart of the academic town of Uppsala, where Dag Hammarskjöld spent most of his young life. It houses the secretariat and also provides the premises for most seminars organised in Sweden.

Read more about our activities and download our publications at www.dhf.uu.se

This booklet is published in commemoration of the second Secretary-General of the United Nations half a century after his untimely death in a plane crash in Ndola, Northern Rhodesia on 18 September 1961. It sets out to highlight some of the values and approaches Dag Hammarskjöld adopted in his norm-setting period of office. The booklet comprises the two keynote addresses delivered in July 2011 to the seminar entitled 'The UN and Regional Challenges: Africa 50 Years After Hammarskjöld' and held at the University of Pretoria.

Dag Hammarskjöld
Foundation