

THE WORLD BANK GROUP STAFF ASSOCIATION

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Transcript of interview with

MATS HULTIN

**October 16, 1989
Washington, D.C.**

Interview by: Diana Reisen, Charles Ziegler

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

REISEN: Today is October 16, 1989. My name is Diana Reisen, and I have with me here at the Headquarters of the World Bank, Mr. Mats Hultin, who has kindly consented to participate in the oral history project of the Staff Association. Mr. Hultin was one of the half dozen staff members who were instrumental in founding the Staff Association. He was Chairman of the Working Group that studied the possible forms that the Staff Association might take, and he served as a member of the first Executive Committee of the Staff Association. Mr. Hultin left the Bank in July 1984. Welcome, Mr. Hultin.

HULTIN: Thank you very much.

REISEN: We're glad you were able to join us today. I wonder if we could start by asking you what factors or events led the original group of a half dozen staff to create a Staff Association?

HULTIN: Well, I think it--the way it started was there were some events which were a bit negative regarding the relationship between the management and the staff which in some way started me thinking about it, but we were very careful in not using those events as an excuse. We wanted to start on the Staff Association when there was no definite reason to start one, nor a case to bring up. I think it is important to say that--as far as I remember--it just appeared when there were no specific factors or events which could cause a Staff Association.

REISEN: Interesting.

HULTIN: That was my purpose.

REISEN: Okay. Who were some of the other staff members most prominently associated with the establishment of the Staff Association?

HULTIN: Well, we were six, as you mentioned, and those were Mr. [Thomas A.] Blinkhorn, James Chaffey, Mr. [Soren] Holm, Ian Hume and Frank Stubenitsky. But, those of course, nowadays as far as I understand, Blinkhorn and Chaffey and Hume are still in the Bank. The others have left the Bank, including myself, who are retired. I think two of those are Scandinavians, and in some way we felt that an organization like the Bank--it is a necessity to have some kind of representation, some kind of staff association, and we felt in fact that it was long overdue, the staff association. I mean, the Bank had been in operation for more than 20 years at this location.

But what we noticed, of course, also was that according to rumors--and I say rumors--there were some of our earlier staff who had tried to start a staff association and they had been dismissed. I don't know if this is a true rumor or not. That was what we were told.

REISEN: I see.

HULTIN: We felt, nevertheless, we were prepared to take that kind of risk, and we didn't fear anything. It was a risk. We didn't--I won't say that we didn't believe that we had no clue that it would create that kind of problem. What we, of course, noticed among some of the staff was there was some--when we started feeling around a bit about having a staff association, there were some staff who were a little bit scared, really, because they felt that this would be overreacted by the staff management and they didn't want to be included in the group that would have those kinds of problems.

And there were of course, also, the individual people who felt that this would be bad for their career in the Bank if they engaged themselves in a staff association. But we felt in these six people that--we felt that it was a necessity, really. We wanted to try it. And I was, if you look at that time, like I say, because I was most senior of those in that six, and I was prepared to work as a kind of spearhead in the discussions with management.

REISEN: What was your position in the Bank at that time?

HULTIN: I think I was an education advisor, the division chief's [inaudible] between the division chief and the department. I don't exactly remember now. It might be, that's about deputy staff, deputy director of the education department.

REISEN: These rumors that your group heard about earlier dismissals, do you remember at what period those might have taken place?

HULTIN: No, no. No, and I want to make the point that these were rumors. We had no proof whatsoever. The only point, the only thing was that those rumors, of course, scared some people.

REISEN: Right.

HULTIN: And this is the way I remember it. But I don't want to overplay it in any way.

REISEN: Okay.

HULTIN: And what we found then, of course, the way we did it then--I remember very well we had a meeting in my home up in Great Falls, these six, and discussed this. Then we started into young people, and I remember also that I went around to talk with some of the department directors. And contrary to what some people perhaps said, believed, as far as I can remember now, I don't think I found one single department director who was against it.

REISEN: I see.

HULTIN: Not as I can remember now. Which was in contrast to what some people had believed.

REISEN: Were they in favor of it?

HULTIN: Yeah, I think I remember a particular instance that Mervyn Weiner, he was very positive to it. The way he put it was that, well, he put it, more or less saying that this should have come much earlier.

REISEN: I see.

HULTIN: Earlier in the Bank's history.

REISEN: So how would you characterize the attitude of management in general?

HULTIN: Well, those interviews where we tried to feel around a bit what the reaction would be from the various managers at the department [inaudible] my memory was that it was positive, and in fact, I think more in a way that they were more positive than some of us had expected perhaps.

REISEN: I see.

HULTIN: It's also, of course, interesting that if I look at all the various staff members, their reaction had a bit to do with their national background because, of course, trade unions have a very different reputation in different cultures. It's my feeling, you know, that if you take the Nordic countries where from where I am coming from, of course, there trade union is an accepted part of their life and it's not a dirty word. In some other cultures or societies it was a bit of a dirty word and that really started, "This is a staff association and not a trade union."

REISEN: I see.

HULTIN: I mean, we never intended to use that word "trade union."

REISEN: Right, right.

HULTIN: But what we found was that depending on your national background there were different reactions to it.

REISEN: Was there any sign that management had actually been considering the merits of a staff association before your group . . .

HULTIN: I could not tell you, really. There is a reference in the documents to something mentioned at the Board [of Executive Directors] meeting. I would have to go back to the records to remember that. But the way I remember it, there might have been some, and it could have been the Scandinavian representative made some reference to a relation between management and staff, not in a political way but that was good, would be included perhaps by the--I don't think, as far as I remember, this didn't really influence the group of six, the fact that this might have been discussed at the Board meeting or touched upon.

What I most best remember, of course, is that when we eventually approached the Bank President, that is Mr. [Robert S.] McNamara, and went to see him, this group of six. I don't think we were six at that time in that meeting with him, but a representative of this group. The way I remember it, it was, basically that McNamara had waited for this, wanted it. The way I remember it, I might be wrong, but the way I—my impression now as I remember those discussions was that, “Okay, I'm used to dealing with a staff association for my time in [inaudible] when I was in the government. And you can't request me to start a staff association. Initially it must come from the staff.” That was the kind of overall reaction that I remember, that he had waited for a staff association, just as some of the department directors, because he wanted to have a channel to the staff.

REISEN: So he certainly did not have a negative reaction.

HULTIN: No, no.

REISEN: Okay. Do you remember when you approached him?

HULTIN: No, I don't remember that. It must have been some time in 1971, but I . . .

REISEN: But relative to other events. For example, was it before the meeting of March 16, 1971?

HULTIN: Well, I would think so. Well, I would think so, but I couldn't tell you really. But I am pretty sure that it was. Plus, our group of six had done some work, but I might be wrong on that point.

REISEN: Okay. But following your meeting with Mr. McNamara you felt encouraged to proceed.

HULTIN: Yes, yes, yes.

REISEN: Okay, and how did this group of six mobilize support from the staff at large?

HULTIN: Well, the way we did it then--as far as I remember--is that we went through the, you know, we had the staff in the departments and we tried to pick up people which we felt would be interested. Then we also had departmental staff meetings organized in which one of us or two of us, to which we went and then introduced the idea and asked them to elect people to represent their department in some way or another. I remember, of course, that there were long discussions of this, in what way the staff would be represented, you know, if it would be by departments or some other way.

REISEN: Yes.

HULTIN: And I think the reason why we eventually, at least as far as I remember it, that was two from each department, was that the number of departments [inaudible] were

such that would be a kind of representative group which wasn't too big and too unwieldy, At the same time in this one could get representatives both from--at that time was called professionals and non-professionals, which I hope is a term not used today.

REISEN: You don't hear it as often today.

HULTIN: No.

REISEN: So what were some of the other bases for representation that you considered?

HULTIN: Well, there were some discussions about having it more, for instance, that the professionals would select regardless of the department [inaudible] and the non-professionals would elect themselves also. But eventually we came to this by department and I would be interested in how those things are organized now with the brand new structure of the Bank, but that's the way it was. But this took some time to do that. But it was not that kind of political issue. It didn't create those kinds of problems.

REISEN: No?

HULTIN: No. The idea was, of course, also to have a reasonable--well, the problem was that some departments were very big and some were smaller, of course. That created some kind of discussions, I remember.

REISEN: So, how did you resolve that?

HULTIN: Well, as far as I remember, it wasn't. Departments had two members, representatives, each, the way I remember.

REISEN: So proportional to the number of people in the department.

HULTIN: No.

REISEN: No?

HULTIN: No, it was--as far as I remember--it was two per department.

REISEN: Two per department, I see.

HULTIN: Regardless of the size.

REISEN: Regardless of the size, okay.

HULTIN: It's a bit like representation at the United Nations.

REISEN: Was there any opposition from the staff at large to setting up a staff association?

HULTIN: No, after those first obstacles, which were not really obstacles, I cannot remember that this was. And what we found, of course, was what some people felt that this would not make any difference, you know. One of the main reasons why we wanted a staff association was, of course, that there was a bit of a paternalistic approach in dealing with things, you know, and people were--yes, things were changed without any discussion with the staff whatsoever, not only in minor things like cafeteria business and that whole thing, but more important things about personnel policies.

Also then, of course, the one I most remember, it was Mr. [Hugh B.] Ripman, who was--I think he was head of Personnel at that time, and he assigned people. And I think I can say this, some people were quite scared of going to see him, you know? But there was also no need to be scared. We had a very constructive discussion with him, and he was of course a key person in dealing with personnel matters.

REISEN: When you say the policies were somewhat paternalistic or the attitude of management was paternalistic, can you describe what that meant?

HULTIN: Well, I would like to give some examples, but I can't remember now that easily. Well, there was literally no discussion with staff about even things which--you can take things, even such things as the operations. I think the director and division chief, they are in charge, of course, of administration or management. It's not that point, but I think it's fair that you discuss things with your staff when it comes to going to one place or another place and doing things. There were other factors relating to the staff at large, you know, about pensions or, you know, if you were married and if you were a woman, pregnant, having a baby, what kind of maternity leave decisions would there be. None of those things regarding leave policies or other policies were discussed, even those which have nothing to do directly with operations. And we felt that it should be. I would also like to make the point that we looked at some of the other organizations--and we found, for instance, as far as I remember, that the Inter-American Bank, they had a staff association there which only dealt with Christmas parties and these kinds of things. And we said very strongly in the group of six and then the Assembly that this was not what we were talking about.

REISEN: Something more substantive.

HULTIN: We were talking about discussions about administrative policies, personnel policies and those kinds of things.

REISEN: So the paternalistic aspects seem to be related mostly to lack of consultation with the staff.

HULTIN: Yeah, or some things which related to, had nothing to operations, but with other aspects of the Bank.

REISEN: Was there any indication of arbitrariness in the policies, in the personnel policies?

HULTIN: Well, I think there were, of course, also cases where everyone felt that decisions had been made relating to individual staff members which were unfair or not the way they should be done. And I think it's important, I have a feeling that the fact that we got a staff association paved the way for a more efficient Administrative Tribunal and also setting up for an ombudsman. And previous to that, that was not happening, not at the same time we have had this Staff Association.

REISEN: I'd like to hear more about that. Can you remember how that whole idea developed?

HULTIN: I would like to say that I could, but I only know that these things came more or less simultaneously, and I was, of course, a member of that panel for some time. The point I make is that I thought it was a very important step forward when we got that grievance panel (or whatever you may call it) and the ombudsman. The idea that one should sit around the table and that people felt that they had been dismissed, for instance, unfairly or removed from one job to another without [inaudible] that that could be discussed in a panel with representatives and staff and with the management, that would have been absolutely revolutionary, the idea that this could happen. So I think in addition to the personnel at that time coming and McNamara and with the Staff Association those things changed, and even those who might have revolted and been against that, any staff management, they didn't let their voice be heard.

REISEN: So when you sat on this first . . .

HULTIN: So what we noticed one thing, this [inaudible] a bit. It was very open minded.

One of the most interesting things, you know, with the setting up of the staff association was that I personally came to learn the Bank's managers in a very new way. There were some, I don't know how it worked, really, but there were obviously some managers who believed that the President would be for it and some didn't know what to believe and some obviously didn't want to take a position without knowing what the President would say. So I learned more about the character.

REISEN: Behavior or character.

HULTIN: Well, character . . .

REISEN: Right.

HULTIN: . . . of Bank managers during those interviews than I had done during my whole previous life in the Bank. I saw who had the courage to have their own opinion and who didn't want to have any opinion until they knew what the boss' opinion was, and that was

a very interesting observation. And then, of course, we also noted that some suddenly became very pro-association when they knew what the President said.

REISEN: Oh, okay.

HULTIN: So in that respect--I make that point because that shows you as soon as the President had indicated that this was something welcome and useful to the Bank, then managers accepted it.

REISEN: Very interesting.

HULTIN: Some, of course, they felt they [inaudible] because they accepted what the President said. This is a very strong statement, and I'm prepared to be quoted on it because that's the way it was.

REISEN: And what was the impact of that in terms of helping the staff association to develop when the President welcomed it and the managers started welcoming it?

HULTIN: Well, I can't remember that there were any particular problems in these first Assembly meetings, and they were well attended, as one can see from the record. Of course, then there were some staff members who felt that it wouldn't make any change, really; they didn't believe in the idea as such. But they were--that's the way I can remember it--they were not many, at least they didn't raise their voices in that respect. But there were some, I remember some who didn't think much of the Staff Association at all, but they were in the minority.

REISEN: Did any of the managers actually become involved in helping to set up the Staff Association?

HULTIN: I couldn't tell you that. I know that--yeah. Well, there were some, as far as I remember, who themselves pushed for those departmental meetings and made sure that they did occur, you know, so that there were representatives from his or her department going to the assembly meetings. This is true.

REISEN: You mentioned Mr. Ripman earlier. I think he was the head of the--administration.

HULTIN: He was head of Personnel, yeah.

REISEN: Personnel?

HULTIN: Yeah.

REISEN: What role did he play if any?

HULTIN: Well, I can't remember that in detail. But I remember, as I say, that he supported it. Some people, as I say, they didn't believe that he would, but he did. That's the way I remember it, at least.

REISEN: I see.

HULTIN: And as I said, my most vivid memories are of Mr. Weiner. He was very positive about it.

REISEN: He was in the operations evaluation.

HULTIN: No, that was later.

REISEN: Oh, that was later.

HULTIN: He was what would now be called the vice president in--I don't remember what kind of department.

REISEN: Getting back to the original group of six, can you identify any particular contributions of particular individuals that you would like to relate to us?

HULTIN: Well, I remember, of course, that James Chaffey, I think Ian Hume, they were quite active. And I notice with some interest that Hume, of course, now is chief of the Personnel department, which is in some way a consequence. And I don't know how he is in that capacity, but he has lived with the personnel questions from that time of course as he was very active in the start of the Staff Association. And Chaffey was, of course, the first regulatory chairman of the Staff Association.

But then of course it's also interesting—then, of course, some people felt that it would be a hinder for them in the Bank area to work in the Staff Association. Others may not have felt so. Some might even have felt that it could help them because they got a face in dealing with the management.

REISEN: So what was the actual fact? Did it help or hinder people or both?

HULTIN: I don't think it made a difference.

REISEN: Didn't make any difference.

HULTIN: And that is, of course, good in some way, the way it should be, of course. I don't think it worked in either direction, really.

REISEN: How would you characterize your own role in the creation of the Staff Association?

HULTIN: Well, someone else should make that judgment. Well, I felt in some way, you know, that I think I had been the senior advisor at that time. I felt some kind of obligation to assist in this. I also felt that, "I don't think I would lose anything. I think it would be a gain for the Bank, and there was no personal risk involved in it whatsoever." And I was prepared to take the initiatives necessary as it was founded by the six. And in some ways I think--one point, of course, was that I had been involved in setting up staff associations already in Sweden. I was a school superintendent, and I was involved in starting the Association of Swedish School Managers a few years earlier, before I joined the Bank, 1958-59. So I had some kind of experience in setting up those organizations. And I felt that that experience from Sweden could be of some use.

REISEN: Did you find that it was helpful?

HULTIN: Well, I could at least . . .

REISEN: Or were the institutions very different?

HULTIN: No, of course they were very different, but I could at least relate to that in the discussions so that people I met in management knew that I knew what I was talking about. And I mean the key is--of course, you know that the Staff Association achieves more than to what extent it is consulted and involved in personnel matters. This is what we wanted, what we aimed at, at that time, of course. And we tried to make a very clear difference between--we are not talking about participatory management; we are talking about having an influence on personnel matters and personnel policies in the Bank.

REISEN: Can you just tell us what your various roles were at various stages of the development of the Staff Association after the initial group of six? What role did you play?

HULTIN: Well, I was involved in setting up those first meetings and chaired those first meetings when the Staff Association started. Then I was a member of the working party which developed the suggested rules for the Staff Association. There, of course, we had much help also in the legal department, Staff Association members or those who became Staff Association members who worked in the legal department, and this is the way I remember it. And I have to watch myself, that after the Staff Association started and the first meeting, I took a much more back row, I would say modest.

REISEN: So, you were after how many years?

HULTIN: Well, I would say after the first year.

REISEN: After the first year?

HULTIN: Yeah.

REISEN: Oh, I see.

HULTIN: Yeah, I was a member of the board. I think that I was very active in these first months to set it up and get it done.

REISEN: I see.

HULTIN: But then the major role then was taken over by Chaffey as Chairman.

REISEN: I see. And you felt confident enough in . . .

HULTIN: Well, I was participating in meetings, board meetings. But after having had those meetings with the Bank management and Ripman and McNamara, et cetera, I wouldn't say I was through, but I played a much less important role. I still maintained a role, of course, as a member of the Staff Association, representative in the panel, the administrative panel.

REISEN: Administrative panel which later became the appeals committee?

HULTIN: Appeals, yes.

REISEN: How long did you remain active in that?

HULTIN: Well, I don't remember.

REISEN: Oh, okay.

HULTIN: I would have to check into that. I couldn't tell you.

REISEN: What was the general mode of operation of the Staff Association in those early days in dealing with the management, especially on personnel matters?

HULTIN: And that's a difficult question. I think we expected that, well, things were taken up. It's very difficult, frankly, to tell you. I think the important thing, one thing I remember which I thought about at that time was the effect that the whole Staff Association changed the attitude among many managers.

REISEN: That's important.

HULTIN: It was not a direct thing over this event or that kind of thing, in a case. No, no. It was the very fact that there was a Staff Association.

REISEN: That they need to pay attention to.

HULTIN: And that reduced that kind of paternalistic attitude you had found in some departments in the past.

REISEN: Interesting. One of the recommended objectives of the Staff Association in the report of the working committee in 1971 was to help promote the effective functioning of the World Bank Group. Could you elaborate on the intent of that objective?

HULTIN: I think the idea was that staff members should have a greater chance to suggest changes, for instance, in projects, procedures, and in how to do their job, you know, and in a way not all this had been possible in the past. I also think that the fact that the management should consult a bit more with the staff about other matters of operations would be, indirectly promote the function because if they feel that they have some kind of, enjoy respect in some way or listened to, that promotes the actual operation even if there is no direct thing you can point on. I couldn't tell you any concrete details of this. You must realize this happened . .

REISEN: A long time ago.

HULTIN: . . eighteen years ago.

REISEN: But this was more related to operations than to . . .

HULTIN: Well, already it was felt, you know, that the Staff Association could with our assistance make points which would improve their [inaudible] You know, that the policies are largely the assignment of people to the offices in Nairobi and all those places. We helped the Bank to get that started, helped to start to get better conditions, for instance. That would make the Bank more efficient, of course, because if someone is satisfied they do a better job, of course.

REISEN: Yes.

HULTIN: I think it was more on that, more what we were thinking about.

REISEN: Okay. When the Staff Association was first set up, was there general agreement on the role of the Executive Committee vis-à-vis the Delegate Assembly and the management?

HULTIN: I think that worked out eventually, but I remember there were some discussions about how much the Delegate Assembly, what it would decide and what the Executive Committee as a kind of board would do. I don't remember any--the way I remember it, it was a very difficult issue. The Assembly with some 70 members was, of course, a very large group. This cannot really operate, you know.

REISEN: So as you remember it, what was the role of the Executive Committee?

HULTIN: To represent. Well, to convey to the management the suggestions on personnel policy matters which were very [inaudible] in regard to the Assembly and decided by them and to also bring up things and take them up with the Delegate Assembly if they had something they wanted. I think it was also felt before we had this

ombudsman that individual staff members would be able to go to the Executive Committee and take up things they had all the way.

REISEN: Oh.

HULTIN: Because we didn't have any.

REISEN: So, before the administrative panel.

HULTIN: Well, the way that reality worked was that staff saw those were the members of the Executive Committee, some of us and I guess all of us, we were being approached by some staff members about things they felt were not the way they should be, not personally, not the individual matters, but policy things they felt should be changed and dealt with. And some came to us with their personal problems. This was then taken over by the panel and the Tribunal.

REISEN: I see. Do you feel that the Staff Association has provided a permanent improvement in the channels of communication in the Bank between management and staff?

HULTIN: You have to ask someone else.

REISEN: Maybe permanent is too strong a word, but measurable improvement.

HULTIN: I can only make the point that--as I already made--that my experience is that the very fact that there was a professional association included in these channels of communication. There were some people who came to you that in a good organization, a good chief, division chief or department director, whatever manager he is, it should be possible for staff to go to him if they have problems related to the work or also other problems. I think some of the managers in the Bank, the very fact that there was a Staff Association made them to change their own relation to their own staff, at least be more careful as to what they said and didn't say and what they wanted and didn't want because they felt that otherwise it would be embarrassing to have this coming up, being discussed by an audience like the Staff Association Executive Committee or in the Assembly. Later on in the panel, of course.

REISEN: So just the existence of such an association can have . . .

HULTIN: I think there's another point, also, which one should realize is that--I remember cases when staff members came to us and to me and I told them, "Well, you must realize this is not a good case." And I gave them some--I'd say, "Well, this is the way it is in this unit you work. You must understand that it's no good for you to bring up this position." I may not have told him that he was wrong, but I told him that I don't think this would work, you know. He should realize that. And I'm not quite sure that the management always realized that some cases which we felt--the Executive Committee

this was just not felt--the management felt this was not an issue, really. They were never brought up.

REISEN: So you filtered.

HULTIN: Filtered, yeah. This also was [inaudible] on then by the administrative panel. I remember cases when good judgment and experience say, "This is not a thing to discuss in the Staff Association, but we can help you to talk to someone in Personnel about this thing."

REISEN: I see. You were providing a very useful filter for management.

HULTIN: I don't think there were too many cases of this, but I remember some such cases where we advised people, "You can talk with him and he will help you on this. I think you can talk very openly with him about this, him or her."

REISEN: Well, this is, I think, a difficult question, but what do you feel were some of your greatest achievements during your Staff Association service?

HULTIN: I think that we got a Staff Association.

REISEN: Just the creation of it.

HULTIN: The creation of it.

REISEN: Right, obviously.

HULTIN: This is the only way I can . . .

REISEN: Maybe you could expand a little bit on what you said at the beginning about the fact that you were Scandinavian and one or two of the others were Scandinavian. You felt it was just something that needed to be formed, a staff association. How did some of the other nationalities react, nationality groups?

HULTIN: Well, you find, as you would expect, of course, that in countries where they had staff associations in the civil service or out in the labor market, that this was very natural and should be done. There was other Bank staff coming from other cultures and other societies--well, let me put it this way: it was below the dignity of Bank staff members to be engaged in such things as an association which was, you know, dealing with maybe . . .

REISEN: Labor.

HULTIN: No, dealing with such questions, you know, that a white collar worker shouldn't do that. That was something perhaps for blue collar workers, but not for a Bank staff member. There were some such cases. I remember there was such kind of people.

REISEN: Was there any nationality movement that you could identify with that?

HULTIN: No, I [inaudible] countries with very little tradition of labor unions [inaudible] And there was, of course, also [inaudible]

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

HULTIN: I think in the process we discussed such things as strikes, you know, and I remember someone was saying that, "I don't expect that we are going to be involved in a strike," you know. "There are other means to deal with our problems." Of course, some apparently felt that we were made out of, kind of situation having some countries where we just go and strike at every possible location, and other civil servants, employees. I think in our group of six we felt that we can take up questions with management without having to go to such extremes, and in some way--this is, of course, something in it, that the Bank staff is a very, very privileged group if you look international or nationally, whatever job we are compared with. And some people felt that we are so privileged that we shouldn't go into these kind of questions about associations, staff associations. Of course, we are privileged by almost any national criteria. There should be communication between management and staff and that's what the association would--responsible communication, this is what we felt that the Staff Association could achieve, should achieve.

REISEN: I think you touched on this point earlier, but did you run into any difficult issues, organizational issues, in trying to establish the association?

HULTIN: Well, there were some individuals, of course, in the various departments who felt that this was a useless exercise. They wouldn't make an assurance. But they were . . .

Some kind of logistic problems, perhaps, because at that time we were something like two or three thousand people. The Bank is much bigger now. We had three thousand people. It's a lot of people to deal with in this and have them organized.

What we discussed quite a lot I remember was the memberships of the--how it should be, if it should be compulsory, how it should be done. As far as I remember it was decided that we would automatically become a member if you were in the Bank, but you could opt out if you didn't want to become a member and that took care of that person. I don't think there were--I remember there were a few who opted out at that time, but there were very, very few.

REISEN: Very few.

HULTIN: Yes.

REISEN: You mentioned that some members of the legal department assisted you in setting this up. Did you find that the Bank fell into a sort of legal limbo, not being subject to any national laws?

HULTIN: No, I can't remember that. I remember there were some discussions related to the administrative panel on the Bank's status. If someone called up for something which was legal, I understand how that should be dealt with. I don't remember this. There were some comparisons, you know, with the organizations, the United Nations and OECD [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development] and those, but I cannot remember that. You would have to check with some other people. What I remember was that when it was decided about the Staff Association that the Bank management was forthcoming with office space and those kinds of things.

REISEN: Did your comparisons with the other international organizations help you a lot?

HULTIN: Well, I mean I think we learned, of course, that if you wanted to be a serious organization we should do a bit more, like they had in the United Nations and in some of the organizations in Europe, you know, the civil service organizations in Germany and some other countries [inaudible] just play around with various things as the Inter-American Bank. Their staff association did--at that time at least; it may have changed now--but at that time they all dealt with social issues. I mean, in the eyes of management, social entertainment is perhaps . . .

REISEN: Right. But as far as the legal aspects, was there any comparison that was useful with the other?

HULTIN: Yes, we studied very carefully the various regulations and the laws and what they had in the other organizations and we learned from them, of course. But as far as I remember we had no time to really discuss those things with [inaudible]. We had to rely on what was said in their rules and regulations.

REISEN: Is there anything that you think could have been done better in those early days? Or do you think things went pretty well?

HULTIN: Well, there is one thing, of course. How far should an organization go into--I mean, if you take in the Nordic countries, of course, there is a participatory management point of view, one of the things that the staff associations more or less insist on, which of course in the North American context is absolutely unbelievable. I know that we may not have discussed it, really. But the question was what could be done and what should be done, what could realistically be done. I think where we stopped was where what felt it could be realistically done. The way, then, it has succeeded, this someone else has to tell you. I cannot.

I think the important thing to realize is that--I don't know how you experience it now, but I think at least that the whole relation between staff and management changed after the

Staff Association, if I compare the 1960s and 1970s. There was a more serious listening to the Bank staff. Now, of course, after this--in connection with reorganization, I don't know. But before the Staff Association came, some Bank staff say that they didn't like the organization the way it was [inaudible]

REISEN: The recent one.

HULTIN: Yes, the recent one, the one in '87. Some staffers were moved from one department to another, and I don't know if this is one of those things where the Staff Association could be requested or should be requested to assist [inaudible] if you want to exercise—that's the way I see it, at least.

REISEN: Did the staff association participate in the reorganization of 1972?

HULTIN: I don't remember.

REISEN: But when you say the whole relationship between staff and management changed, when you compare the '60s with the '70s, what would you say was the major identifiable change?

HULTIN: I think I would have said that management was lots more careful when it came to, for instance, moving stuff from one position to another or changing assignments or promoting staff or dismissing staff or demoting staff. It was a very different, the way I experienced it, a very different attitude, I think. I don't know how you feel now. Of course, everything is in his or her perspective. The way it was when I came to the Bank in 1965 was, of course, that there was no consultation. You just were told, "Do this, do that," you know, regardless of what your family conditions were or et cetera.

REISEN: Do you remember any issue about the privacy of files or openness of personnel files?

HULTIN: No. What I remember is that those things were discussed in the administrative panel, but I cannot--there were discussions also in the Staff Association, but I don't remember the content of it. But this was an issue discussed on several occasions, I remember, in the early '70s.

REISEN: I noticed that you are very carefully using "his or her" in your own speech. Do you remember any issue of women staff that stood out in those days?

HULTIN: Not an issue, but I remember that we set as one of our policies at the very early stage to make sure that there was no discrimination. I couldn't tell you a specific case. There might have been some cases in the panel, administrative panel. But I remember we had a policy.

REISEN: So from the beginning . . .

HULTIN: There were some cases I remember where we raised the point early on that women were suited for this, why haven't they got it in that country? Well, I don't think it's correct to give a specific case, but I remember one case.

REISEN: But the founders of the Staff Association were aware, thinking about this?

HULTIN: Yeah. Well, if you look on the records you will find that there were both sexes in the Assembly and in the Executive Committee from the beginning. Not among the six, but that was an accident.

REISEN: I guess in summary, could you define what you feel is the proper role of the Staff Association in the World Bank and whether your view of that role has changed since 1971?

HULTIN: I don't think it has changed. I think it's very important that the Staff Association is consulted and has something to say about the policies in the Bank as regards to promotion, recruitment, appointment, advancement. I'm not talking about the individual. We're talking about the institutional policies.

Also, there's one thing which I was still a bit surprised, you know, is that an area I think that the Staff Association should have a role--if I'm right; I might be wrong--but I was a little bit surprised when I learned about some of the staff appointments in connection with the reorganization. If you find that I'm wrong then you can take this out of the tape. But for me it would have been, it should have been that way--now I am talking as a Scandinavian--that when a new organization sets up with this guy as counsel or [inaudible], you know, new positions or some positions, [inaudible] then staff in the Bank should have a chance to have to apply for that job. Then it's up to the management to appointment one. And it should be a chance given to me who happens to be working in Latin America or happens to be working in India or in China or the Paris office, to apply for the office. Moving up or moving sideways in the organization, a promotion. And as far as I understand it, this was not the way it was done. I had a feeling it was done in a way that he [inaudible] appointed someone and then he appointed this the way he wanted to. And I think that's just basically wrong, and [inaudible] office as an idea I should have been able to take care of, which I don't think is good for the--well, in some ways that reflects an all kind of outdated personnel policy, because it believes that personal relations is more important than the skill and knowledge. You understand me?

REISEN: That the personnel selection is more important than the skill and knowledge.

HULTIN: That the personal knowledge of someone.

REISEN: Oh.

HULTIN: I mean, if I am a department head, if I am given the: "Okay, you choose the ones you want as division chiefs." I can only choose those whom I happen to know in some way or another.

REISEN: Right.

HULTIN: But there might be someone who is very good if there was a chance to apply would apply. And then, of course, the appointment should not be done by one person. It should be done by two or three in the management which would sit down and look at the series and then appoint the one who is most suitable. And that kind of appointment procedure would guarantee that the skill and experience would be more important than the fact that I know someone or someone knows me. And I'm not quite sure if I'm right, but the way it was done in the Bank wasn't the way I feel it should be done on that. That's a very important policy matter the Staff Association could, should deal with.

REISEN: If you had been here at that time, what kind of advice would you have given to the current Staff Association officers?

HULTIN: Well, of course, if you look at this [inaudible] which apparently creates so many feelings in one direction or another, so many changes in staff appointments. And of course the Staff Association should have been very much involved in the actual--they should have been given, should have been asked their advice and give their opinions about the new set up, not about the individuals but on the actual subject. And I don't know [inaudible]

The second thing is that when it comes to the reassignment of people, then I feel the procedures would have been the one I advocated. That's what I'm saying. It, of course, that it should be an application procedure rather than a selection from the top. I mean, my point is that staff should have every chance to apply for the job in Nairobi, for instance, if you want to go to Nairobi. And then there should be an appointment committee looking at the applicants for Nairobi, not just be the assigned post in Nairobi who decides who you want. And in that respect I feel that the Staff Association has a role to play and should try to make a [inaudible] In some ways you'll see it affects, of course, there's a different policy than--well, it affects some countries not other countries, and some people will say that I'm wrong, of course, because someone would feel that.

But it's interesting if you look at management the way it is in some different cultures. In some cultures the personal relationship between me and my boss or my subordinate is more important than my subordinate's actual skill or experience.

REISEN: Many of the countries that we deal with are operating that way.

HULTIN: Yes, that's my problem, and I can see this as an issue and that's, of course, a result of different staff in the Bank. But from a development point of view and a politician's point of view I think we have enough evidence that in an organization of this kind one should have the more [inaudible] which I think a staff association could work on and [inaudible] In some ways, I feel that this is a more important matter.

REISEN: I imagine that one of the arguments the management would have used at that time was a time constraint because they wanted to accomplish this within a certain period of time. Is there any way the Staff Association could effectively deal with management imposing time constraints?

HULTIN: Well, I couldn't answer that question. But in some way, you know, who said that the reorganization must take place within that specific date? I realize, you know, that--I think it's very important, an important thing, this would be the way we were all appointed and assigned, and I am not saying that the Staff Association should be involved in the actual appointment or assignment. It is the policy of what appointment or assignment which I think is very important.

REISEN: At this point I would like to invite Charles Ziegler, who has been attending this interview, to ask any questions he might like to ask.

ZIEGLER: Well, actually, Diana, I think you've done a good job, and you've covered everything I think we need to cover here in the course of this interview. I only wind it up by asking Mr. Hultin whether there's anything that we have not covered that he would like to mention or comment on or say something about.

HULTIN: Well, I think we have covered most things, and I'd like to repeat in some way, you know, that the starting of the Staff Association was a much easier job than some people felt it would be because the time was due for such a thing. And I do feel that it's an absolutely necessary part of the Bank to have a staff association. I would like to think that the staff should particularly involve itself in some of the policies for management of the Bank and not just deal with benefits and those kind of things which are important, but for the whole function of the Bank, the management is the most important thing. [inaudible] the management, but trying to find out where it will improve the whole administration through staff involvement.

REISEN: Well, thank you very much for joining us today. It's been a very enlightening interview and we appreciate your participation.

HULTIN: Thank you.

[End Tape 1, Side B]
[End of interview]