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AN INSIDER LOOKS AT UNESCO'S PROBLEMS

INTRODUCTION

- "...a staff atomized by suspicion and fear"
- "professional functionalism and its derived lines of authority threatened with overall collapse"
- "Directors, some of whom cannot direct, while others, who could, are paralyzed by unyielding centralization of power"
- "...despoliation through the willful destruction of professionalism"
- "...an atmosphere of cynical hilarity...demagogic disregard for orderly procedures"
- "financial and administrative officials who attempt to apply the rules are regularly overridden"

These judgments are the latest in a mounting indictment of the management of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. They are not made by the "reactionary" Western press, or by the Reagan Administration, but are contained in a revealing document written by someone who has worked in the UNESCO Secretariat for over 30 years. He is Peter Lengyel, an Australian who joined UNESCO in 1953. For the last 22 years he has been editor of The International Social Science Journal, one of UNESCO's oldest and most respected publications. For a time he acted as the Director of the Division of International Development of Social Science for UNESCO.

Earlier this year, distressed by what has been happening to the organization to which he has devoted almost all of his professional life, Lengyel decided to resign from UNESCO, and on the 30th of May, he wrote to the Director General, Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, spelling out his reasons for doing so. This letter is reproduced in its entirety as an appendix to this study.

Mr. Lengyel's letter is of importance for several reasons:

1) When the U.S. Government announced that it intended to withdraw from UNESCO at the end of 1984, one of the reasons it gave for doing so was that the organization is very badly mis-managed.

2) Some critics of that decision have suggested that the charge of mismanagement is exaggerated or that it is too general and unspecific.

3) Lengyel's experience within UNESCO's bureaucracy is almost without parallel. He thus provides an insider's detailed personal account.

4) Lengyel is in no way prompted by ideological or political considerations and restricts himself entirely to management issues.

THE DESTRUCTION OF PROFESSIONALISM

Peter Lengyel writes throughout as an international civil servant appalled by what he describes as "the despoliation and the destruction of professionalism." As he points out, UNESCO was founded as one of the specialized agencies of the U.N. system, and its founders were concerned to protect it as such. They emphasized distinct functions by carefully delimiting areas of competence, and this was reflected in the constitution, the structures, the staffing patterns, and recruitment procedures of UNESCO.

He asserts that these safeguards to UNESCO's functional core now largely have been destroyed. This has happened in a number of ways: "posts left vacant for prolonged periods resulting in a variety of unsettling stop-gap arrangements, recruitment by favoritism or the application of certain narrow geographical criteria to the detriment of specific skill requirements, absence of concern for orderly succession, the by-passing of the established hierarchy via parallel cohorts of 'co-ordinators', shadowy advisers and grey eminences, junior officials vested with mysterious personal powers, consultants foisted onto divisions which have neither asked for them nor know how to employ them, arbitrary promotions, temporary situations never regularized and so on." As a result of this, Lengyel believes that professional functionalism and the orderly lines of authority deriving from it are "threatened with overall collapse."

One particular aspect to which he draws attention is the deliberate effort to destroy the institutional memory and cumulative wisdom of the organization by discriminating against those with long experience and a knowledge of its traditions. This, usually done in the name of "innovation," is a familiar and necessary tactic for those engaged in the destruction of an institution. So is another strategem to which he refers: that of "divide and rule" by which officers are played off against each other, "busy rumor-mills" substituted for a flow of reliable information, the creation of institutionalized insecurity by the

use of short-term contracts, and the establishment of a second, tame staff association (a "boss's union") to use against the original one.

THE SOCIAL SCIENCE SECTOR

Lengyel details his general charges by giving a particular account of the recent events and trends in the Social Science Sector in which he worked. His account of how programs are devised is particularly shocking--and significant, given that it is sometimes claimed that, despite the "rhetoric" of UNESCO Conferences, the "real" work as represented by programs is sound.

According to Lengyel, the Social Science programs for UNESCO's Second Medium-Term Plan (supposedly the master plan for the next six years) were drawn up by "a hand-picked caucus (excluding the majority of division directors and programme specialists)." This had two results: first, it led to the resignation in protest of the Director and two other officers of the Division of Human Rights and Peace within the Sector (a very important consequence, given the controversial nature of UNESCO's handling of human rights issues); second, it produced a disgraceful result in terms of the actual program. Writes Lengyel: "Many texts read as if UNESCO had been afflicted with collective amnesia: sentences are artlessly stitched together with a careful eye to low common denominators, the elaboration of self-cancelling platitudes and the enunciation of unsubstantiated assertions... an amateurish presentation of this caliber can hardly command respect in informed circles."

The drawing up of the draft program and budget for 1984-1985 was even more distressing. It was prepared in "an atmosphere of cynical hilarity" in response to the Director General's urging to be "imaginative"--at a time when the major donor countries (and especially the U.S.) were pleading for restraint and self-discipline. "The resulting scramble resembled a riotous auction in which each participant throws miscellaneous heirlooms up for sale in the hope of attracting fabulous bids, with wild speculation on budgets sometimes running into hundreds of thousands of dollars." Things are just as bad in the execution of programs. Concentrating on his own experience as editor of a major UNESCO publication, he speaks of:

- the increasing obstruction of editorial autonomy by a notoriously incompetent and conspiratorial M'Bow appointee;
- the precipitate decline of translation and production services, in terms of both quality and punctuality;
- falling circulation;
- the dissipation of financial reserves, so that a Publication Fund which a few years ago had assets of several million dollars is now in heavy deficit.

By the end of his 22 years as editor, Lengyel declares himself to have been "mortified" to have been in charge of such an operation. More generally, he describes a situation which explains why the UNESCO Secretariat has become so thoroughly demoralized:

Directors, some of whom cannot direct, while others, who could, are paralyzed by unyielding centralization of power, program specialists whose expert advice is ignored, financial and administrative officials whose attempts to apply the rules are regularly overridden, technicians deprived of tools, secretaries enervated by recurrent panics...Managerial practices contravene the most elementary principles....

CONCLUSION

Peter Lengyel concludes by saying that the revival of the Secretariat "requires the healing of wounds left not only by despoliation and the destruction of professionalism but also the reestablishment of confidence amongst a staff atomized by suspicion and fear."

That is indubitably true. But the question is: How can such a revival be achieved? On this, current opinion divides sharply. On the one hand, there are those who argue for "working within"--that is, essentially, for negotiating with Director General M'Bow and the Third World-Soviet majority that sustains him to bring about improvements and reforms. On the other hand, there are those who believe that, as long as Mr. M'Bow remains as Director General, real reform is unattainable. A precondition for such reform may well be to remove him and to replace him with a person of proved ability and stature.

On this question there is no doubt where Peter Lengyel stands: "That the self-same regime under which all this had happened should now--under duress--come forward as an active agent of reform by 'restructuration' and the redeployment of human resources must strain the credulity of many."

Currently the U.S. General Accounting Office is preparing a report on the management of UNESCO. It is to be hoped that this report will consider the evidence provided by Peter Lengyel and others like him. Their labor inside UNESCO over the years qualifies them to speak.

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APPENDIX

On the following pages is the complete text of Peter Lengyel's letter of May 30, 1984, to Director General of UNESCO, Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow.



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30 May 1984

Dear Director-General,

It appears to have become a rule for the resignation of senior or long-serving Unesco officials to be treated as no more than a routine administrative incident. Such was the attitude adopted to several colleagues who recently resigned, as in the three months since I sent in my own notice. Nobody in the hierarchy above the divisional level has troubled to enquire why I might have taken this decision, nor, more pertinently, how continuity for my responsibilities might be envisaged, in particular for the International Social Science Journal, one of Unesco's oldest quarterlies, which I have edited these past 22 years. I interpret this indifference to be part and parcel of the wider refusal by the Organization's leadership to entertain any meaningful dialogue with the body of the staff. Following the public outcry concerning the internal administration of Unesco and your own responses to interviews it may also be an attempt to demonstrate that, except for the agitation of a few malcontents, the Secretariat is functioning quite normally. In communicating to you the reasons for my resignation, drawing upon recent personal experiences, I believe that I can indicate this to be by no means so. At any rate, the Secretariat's currently widespread mood of dejection and disaffection is certainly expressed perfectly clearly by the numberless colleagues who have so warmly congratulated me on leaving it.

Let me state unequivocally at the outset that my resignation is in no way prompted by ideological or so-called "political" considerations if these are understood to represent policy orientations. I understand it to be the duty of international civil servants to carry out the directives of the General Conference and of yourself as the chief executive in both letter and spirit within the area of competence assigned to them in their post descriptions. Personally, I never had any fundamental difficulty in accepting that.

My dissent arises from dereliction in the counterpart of this duty, that is to say the obligation implicitly incumbent upon the Organization and its leaders to maintain a structural environment and moral climate shielding the integrity of officials and enabling them to function in ways congruent both with the specifications of their posts and with accepted norms, ethics and values in external professional communities or technical services. For Unesco is not self-contained; it is an open public institution which constantly interacts organically with the world at large, judged by the reputation it thus acquires. Of late, its performance has generally become so deficient that one can, without exaggeration, refer to the despoliation of an Organization formerly held in high esteem.

An Organization despoiled

By no means coincidentally Unesco is amongst the Specialised Agencies of the UN family, the founders of which clearly sought to emphasise distinct functionalisms by carefully delimiting their areas of competence. This is reflected in their constitutions, structures and in the staffing patterns based upon posts with precise specifications, recruitment procedures designed to attract profiled skills and manning by "programme specialists". While this post system has indeed caused many difficulties and inflexibilities, being at the base of numerous anomalies (including the virtual absence of a coherent careers policy and the maintenance of too large a percentage of the staff on fixed-term contracts, particularly at Unesco,) it was conceived as a bulwark to protect the Organizations' functional cores from turbulence and irrelevance of all sorts, and seems to have worked quite well to this effect in several of Unesco's sister agencies.

Within Unesco, especially over the past 5 to 6 years, however, that bulwark has been heavily breached in any number of ways: posts left vacant for prolonged periods resulting in a variety of unsettling stop-gap arrangements, recruitment by favouritism or the application of certain narrow geographical criteria to the detriment of specific skill requirements, absence of concern for orderly succession, the by-passing of the established hierarchy via parallel cohorts of "co-ordinators", shadowy advisers and grey eminences, junior officials invested with mysterious personal powers, consultants foisted onto divisions which have neither asked for them nor know how to employ them, arbitrary promotions, temporary situations never regularised and so on. As a result, professional functionalism and its derived lines of authority, upon which the running of the bureaucratic apparatus necessarily reposes have been increasingly undermined, at first exhibiting localised stresses but more recently threatened with overall collapse. The exigencies of programming, the execution of approved projects and the rendering of normal services have been violated so systematically at all levels that it has indeed become delicate to assess the merits of persons or teams since they are so often in no position to demonstrate what they can do with their assignments, much less to unfold any potential. Advancement through periodic performance reporting has thus become exceedingly hazardous. Even deputizing by seniority, normal in every administration, is strewn with paradoxes. Thus, I was relieved of the acting directorship of the Division of International Development of Social Sciences, (to which I was formally appointed as the senior officer therein, pending recruitment of a director), on instructions from yourself in October 1978. No reason was given at the time, nor could one be ascertained by the Mediator, but I do have it in writing from the Director of Personnel that any conclusion that this step might have been taken because I was judged incompetent is quaintly "entirely devoid of foundation". Evidence which came my way later showed that perfectly irregular manoeuvres had taken place precisely in October 1978. More or less outrageous situations of comparable and different sorts abound in the House. They often affect that generation of veteran functionaries of which I am a member. Indeed, one could be pardoned for concluding that a special animus exists against us precisely because of our experience, the lessons we have absorbed from it and our consequent preference for cumulated wisdom over dubious "innovations" often easily recognizable as past errors resurrected. I propose to illustrate the process of despoliation through the wilful destruction of professionalism at both the level of programming and that of programme execution.

The destruction of professionalism: programming

In the preparation of the Second Medium-Term Plan, though it was not an unprecedented exercise, a full year was lost in a multiplicity of intra-Secretariat consultations, the interpretation of ambiguous instructions and the writing and re-writing of texts along confused lines. Only after all this water had been poured into a sieve was the idea of Major Projects launched at all, their number and delimitation remaining uncertain to the eleventh hour. Within the Sector of Social Sciences, the drafting of the texts notably for Major Projects VI.4, VI.5, VIII, XII and XIII, was hastily accomplished principally by a hand-picked caucus (excluding the majority of division directors and programme specialists), gathered around the Acting Assistant Director-General and the Chief of the Co-ordination and Evaluation Unit. The resulting material thus reflected no broad participation of the Sector's staff (let alone drawing on the consultative or advisory mechanisms specifically requested under 6 (c) and (e) of General Resolution 3/0.1 II adopted by the 20th General Conference) even before it was further manipulated. The most prominent reaction against these methods was the resignation of the Director and two other officers of the Division of Human Rights and Peace.

Many extremely questionable passages occur throughout the final texts, while entire areas of activity successfully pursued for years are totally omitted. Thus, the haphazard list of disciplines supposedly deserving of special attention in 4XC/4 paragraphs 6088-6096 caused foreseeably widespread puzzlement at the Extraordinary Session of the General Conference in 1982, and again at the 22nd Session of the General Conference in 1983, at both of which it was defended as unpersuasively as it had been invented. On the other hand, an entire set of projects involving four professional and six general service posts, with a budget of nearly \$650,000 in 1981-83, including the Social Science Documentation Centre, relations with certain NGOs and a set of activities under former Objective 10.1, linked to the General Information Programme and concerning socio-economic data and information, for which I used to hold broad supervisory responsibilities but on which I was never consulted during programming, quite simply vanished from the Medium-Term Plan. Partly re-established in 22 C/5, paragraphs 06453 and 06460-1 as a result of pressing later representations, these elements constitute an inconsistency between the Medium-Term Plan and the Approved Programme and Budget for 1984-85.

Beyond such details what is striking about that part of the Medium-Term Plan which I feel qualified to assess is its massive failure to resort to the collective memory of an Organization which, over a generation of existence has, after all, accumulated a wealth of data and background. In conformity with 21 C/5 Resolution 100 calling for an analysis of global problems, Member States surely had a right to expect that the introductions to the Major Programmes and Sub-Programmes would be based on documented evidence carefully drawn from Unesco's own unique storehouses and thus represent an authoritative conspectus and perspective in the relevant domains, expertly assembled and compelling in their appeal to the world community of specialists. Instead, many texts read as if Unesco had been afflicted with collective amnesia: sentences are artlessly stitched together with a careful eye to low common denominators, the elaboration of self-cancelling platitudes and the enunciation of unsubstantiated assertions. Such blandly mediocre rhetoric possesses little edge, nor does it articulate convincingly with the objectives and principles of action. An amateurish presentation of this calibre can hardly command respect in informed circles nor does it attest to a marshalling of the Secretariat's available resources.

As for the draft programme and budget for 1984-85 it was initially prepared in the Social Science Sector in an atmosphere of cynical hilarity. In pursuit of encouragement from yourself, all its members were to advance "imaginative" suggestions within the loose framework of the Second Medium-Term Plan in any sphere at all in which the social sciences might remotely be implicated, irrespective of professional specialisation, as of divisional demarcations and hierarchies, in a spirit of alleged "interdisciplinarity". The resulting scramble resembled a riotous auction in which each participant throws miscellaneous heirlooms up for sale in the hope of attracting fabulous bids, with wild speculation on budgets sometimes running into hundreds of thousands of dollars. Naturally, such demagogic disregard for orderly procedure, continuity and rigour led to an utterly heterogeneous submission which ultimately had to be revised from beginning to end outside the Sector. At one stage I was asked, as a trained economist, to draft a project relating to the world economy for insertion into Major Programme VIII. The text I supplied, after consultation with external specialists, was wholly rejected. That which appears in paras. 08117-08122 of 22 C/5 in its place (with which I had nothing to do) has been singled out for public criticism and is proving an embarrassment to the non-governmental association specifically mentioned as jointly responsible for its implementation, as much for its naiveté as for its risible pretensions. Little wonder, then, that the debate in the relevant Programme Commissions of the 22nd General Conference was lack-lustre. The delegates were clearly discouraged by the quality of what was put before them.

The destruction of professionalism: project execution

As the editor of the ISSJ I have been in a favourable position also to observe the process of professional decay at levels of programme execution. A periodical is clearly an eminently collaborative product. Within the Secretariat appropriate performance is required not only from the editorial team but also from the common translation, production and promotion services which together represent the publishing arm of the Organization. When I took over the editorship in 1963, the periodical had already acquired a sound reputation as a scholarly platform in the years since its inception in 1948. What I thus inherited I was able to develop and extend. Circulation roughly doubled between 1965 and the mid-1970s; in 1973 selections in Arabic began to come out from Cairo, later from Tunis; a full Spanish edition began in 1978 and in 1983 I was happy to negotiate the initiation of a full edition in Chinese, appearing from Beijing since the beginning of this year. Translations of material drawn from the ISSJ have appeared as books in 11 languages; a distinguished panel of correspondents stationed in 18 locations around the world collaborates on a continuing basis with the editorial staff and I have had the satisfaction of receiving unsolicited compliments on the consistent quality and interest of issues from members of the Executive Board, delegates to the General Conference, readers and contributors of the most diverse origins. It would seem, therefore, that the ISSJ displays the hallmarks of a desirable Unesco product.

How has this product fared within the Secretariat? Throughout the vicissitudes of fortune to which the former Social Science Department has been subject, its erstwhile incorporation as a junior partner in the Sector for Social Sciences, Human Sciences and Culture, its re-establishment as an independent if ill-assorted Sector by yourself in 1975, very modest budgetary and staff resources at best, great leadership instability, a multiplicity of tiny divisions, and chronic uncertainty of purpose, the ISSJ continued to represent its principal linkage with the world scholarly community. Hence, with the encouragement of Mr. R. Stavenhagen as Assistant Director-General, the initiative was taken to increase periodicity from four to six issues a year as announced in the Approved Programme and Budget for the 1981-1983 triennium, para. 3067 with a proportionately increased budgetary allocation. Very early in 1981, however, the Sector was informed

unequivocally that the technical services were unable to handle a bi-monthly, which surely should have been clarified before the proposal was ever submitted to the General Conference in Belgrade.

As was to turn out, this was but the beginning of a whole syndrome of further frustrations. Basic editorial autonomy and day-to-day functioning were increasingly obstructed under the Acting Assistant Director-Generalship of Mrs. Zala N'Kanza, whose erratically conspiratorial style was infamous in United Nations circles long before her appointment at Unesco. Her deficient grasp of how to run projects coupled with harassment on minor quasi-legalistic niceties which she mistakes for higher policy conduct have alienated the Sector's professional staff to such a degree that nearly one quarter has resigned or obtained transfers in the disastrous two years and a half over which she has been allowed to devastate it. It would be manifestly unfair if the Sector had to pay for misgoverning by dissolution.

Elsewhere, the going proved hardly smoother. Translation and production services have declined greatly in quality and punctuality. Delays of up to three months (for a quarterly!) in the appearance of ISSJ issues have become chronic, while acrimonious disputes about financing have arisen. Promotion is at a practical standstill; even promising campaigns started have been cancelled. All of which is not inexplicable for production and promotion demand punctilious forward planning, which is constantly upset by unforeseen priorities and manpower bottlenecks, both having depended for support on the Publications Fund into which all revenue from sales is fed. Only a few years ago, the Fund boasted assets running into several million dollars. It is now in heavy deficit.

As a result, publications are suffering and the circulations of periodicals are dropping. Thus, the Chinese edition of the ISSJ acquired 4,800 paying subscribers before the first number even appeared, roughly the same as worldwide subscriptions to the English, Spanish and French editions combined after no less than 35 years of publication. Here is a quantified measure of Unesco's promotional effort which I quote deliberately since, in the prolix reporting documentation put out, there has always been notable reticence about revealing the sales and circulation statistics for non-periodical and periodical publications.

While Unesco is not a commercial firm, it is obliged to operate in highly crowded and competitive markets for attention to the messages carried by its publications; the real impact achieved should therefore surely be of primary concern, especially since an Organization which so actively promulgates a New Information and Communication Order would appear to have a duty to set an example through the optimal diffusion of its own, presumably model alternative output. Yet, the ISSJ's modest circulation remains concentrated in North America and Western Europe. It is larger in South Africa than in several populous and clamorous Member States. And the flow of complaints from dissatisfied subscribers everywhere is mounting. I am simply mortified to edit a periodical for which the public is paying twice over - once indirectly to support the Organization, once directly to subscribe - only to be supplied inadequately. Despite these failures properly to support an existing periodical the Second Medium-Term Plan jocularly announces (in paragraph 6087) that "the publication of other similar journals will be envisaged, with a view to strengthening international intellectual collaboration".

Directors, some of whom cannot direct, while others, who could, are paralysed by unyielding centralization of power, programme specialists whose expert advice is ignored, financial and administrative officials whose attempts to apply the rules

are regularly overridden, technicians deprived of tools, secretaries enervated by recurrent panics, running after multiple visas for routine correspondence, antiquated equipment - the Secretariat is at sixes and sevens. Managerial practices contravene the most elementary principles recommended, for example, at the very human relations, efficiency and decision-making courses organized from time to time by the Bureau of Personnel for the benefit of staff members. Moreover, a recent statistical study confirms that both the age pyramid and the distribution of professional staff amongst grades are heavily weighted towards the top. The Secretariat is an army of colonels into which too little invigorating young blood is being drawn. That the self-same régime under which all this has happened should now - under duress - come forward as an active agent of reform by "re-structuration" and the re-deployment of human resources must strain the credulity of many.

The Secretariat as a creative force

I am conscious that the foregoing accumulation of cases could be dismissed as obscuring the wood with a mass of trees. Do not many collectivities suffer from comparable ailments and is not Unesco particularly difficult to govern? Both the Medium-Term Plan and the current Programme and Budget have, after all, been adopted by the Member States. Deeper currents than those agitating the staff or attaching to the Organization's performance in specific instances converge into the crisis which it is currently traversing.

Granted. But to argue along such lines, in my view, is to miss the wider significance of a perspective from the working level within the Secretariat (and notably from one of its most troubled corners) which I have attempted, however summarily and inadequately, to sketch out. For it is surely the purpose of the Secretariat to shape into a greater whole those elements which are collected by it or converge upon it, to add value to them. Unless value is added, what is the point in having a large permanent establishment at all? A skeleton occasional staff could service the mere enunciation and exchange of views by Member States. These, however, rightly expect much more from a Secretariat which they finance. They extend faith for perspicacity in programming, given the heavy mechanisms of examining and approving the drafts submitted; they assume that what is promised will really be delivered. Manifest shortfalls in these respects are widely deplored, causing sharp disappointments which partly explain anger in quarters normally well-disposed to Unesco's aims.

Much has been made of consensus, yet ironically the pursuit of this mirage at all costs and in all directions has led Unesco into the most divisive confrontation experienced by any of the United Nations' Specialised Agencies. Nor is this inexplicable. While certain overarching values attaching to education, science and culture (values which are preached but by no means regularly honoured by Unesco) unite those who pursue such enterprises devotedly they do not, of course, preclude a wide variety of concrete approaches and solutions from existing in different contexts. Occulting or attempting superficially to amalgamate them, instead of realistically acknowledging well-founded differences and working with them has led to disembodied programming and careless project execution. Variations are not infinite; much could be done through the derivation of operational typologies. Unesco cannot cure every ill or please every constituency all the time, but it does not seem foolishly utopian to believe that a soundly recruited pool of international talent, perceptively led and applying itself intelligently to selected major issues could provide dynamic approaches towards a step-by-step solution of existing problems, intractable as they appear to be.

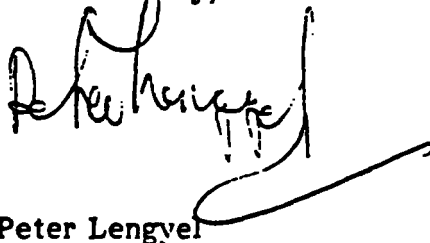
A demoralised Secretariat, forced into the unrewarding role of an overwhelmingly ambitious Jack-of-all-trades is a poor instrument for any purpose.

If reconstruction leads through unflinching priority for a purified programme, the avoidance of easy opportunism and striving after excellence in certain carefully identified areas, as I consider it must, it also means a revival of the Secretariat as a creatively co-operative community. And that, in turn, requires the healing of the wounds left not only by despoliation and the destruction of professionalism but also the re-establishment of confidence amongst a staff atomized by suspicion and fear. For if shared striving after higher common goals is the cement of collegial solidarity its dissolvent is assuredly the classically colonialist stratagem of dividing in order to rule. The signs that this stratagem has been applied are many, from the deficient flow of reliable information allowing busy rumour-mills to substitute for formal guidance to the erection of bureaucracy as an end-in-itself to justify the absorption of employees to "control" substantive functions, and from the award of very short-term contracts making for insecurity in the expectation of extracting "loyalty" in return to the transparently sponsored establishment of a rival staff association pathetically anxious to apologise for the status quo.

Much moral capital accumulated through past successes has been squandered and Unesco's image is in tatters, the worst profligacy being perhaps default in maintaining and handing on a repository of skill and knowledge to serve education, science and culture globally. Unable to discern how I can make further valid contributions in the prevailing arid climate, I join those who have preceded me in their search for more fertile territory. If these reflections, offered after many years of service, can modestly contribute towards the reshaping of an Organization which I feel obliged, with keen regret, to leave I shall nevertheless consider myself richly rewarded.

In this spirit, I remain,

Yours sincerely,



Peter Lengvel

c.c. Unesco Staff Association (STA).