

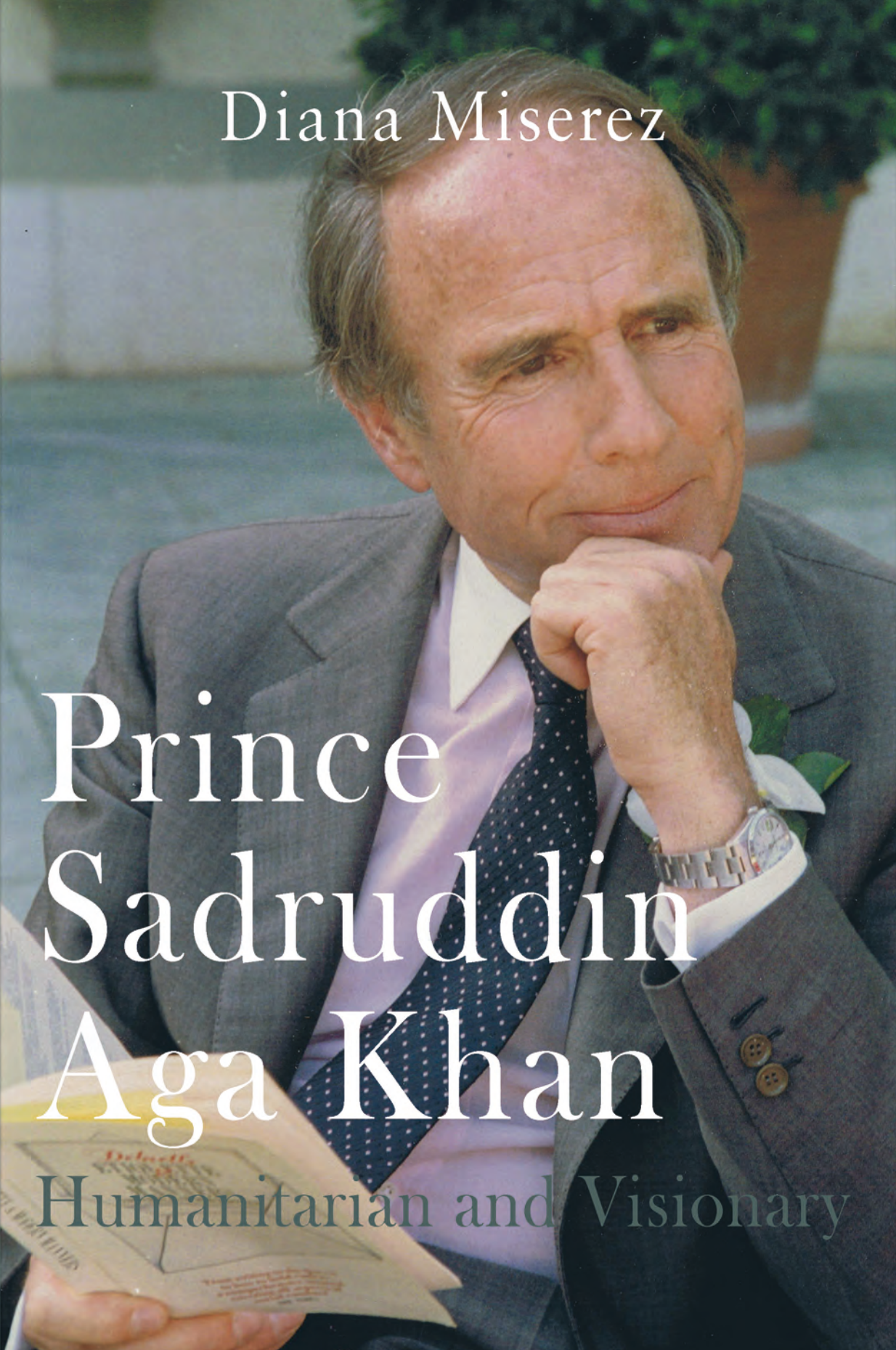
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Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan : humanitarian and visionary

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A color photograph of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, an elderly man with grey hair, wearing a grey suit, a light purple shirt, and a dark blue tie with white polka dots. He is resting his chin on his right hand and holding a small, aged, yellowed piece of paper in his left hand. The background is slightly blurred, showing some greenery and a stone wall.

Diana Miserez

Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan

Humanitarian and Visionary

‘This long needed biography seeks to do belated justice to a great humanitarian, who saw what was coming down the line and what would be needed, and who never abandoned his commitment, not just to principles, but to the capacity for men and women and their institutions to make the world a better, safer place, not least for the uprooted.’

Professor Guy S.
Goodwin-Gill

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Humanitarian And Visionary

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To the survivors of organised violence and their children

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Foreword

by Professor Guy S. Goodwin-Gill

I first met Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan in December 1976, as a recently recruited Protection Officer in the London Branch Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). UNHCR was a much smaller organisation then – with around 700 staff – but with developments in Latin America and South-East Asia, it was already engaged in some of the most difficult and contested refugee crises of the day. The visit – they actually called it a ‘mission’, which sounded so much more important – was one of courtesy, and that is just what I recall; a chance to meet the High Commissioner, to understand something of his philosophy, to appreciate that here was a UN agency with a very definite values base, and to leave inspired and encouraged. Sadruddin stepped down in 1977, but looking back over the forty years since then, I see that, no matter how brief that meeting, his work for refugees and the displaced across the broad spectrum of humanitarian principle has had a lasting influence on my own thinking.

This long needed biography seeks to do belated justice to a great humanitarian, who saw what was coming down the line and what would be needed, and who never abandoned his commitment, not just to principles, but to the capacity for men and women and their institutions to make the world a better, safer place, not least for the uprooted. The chapters which follow fill out that picture and provide deeper insights into the character and abilities of a remarkable man. I hope that these few words of introduction will give a sense of his impact and influence, and of how relevant still are the ideas which he proposed and attempted to put into practice. We do not need to look far to see still how radical change is required if we are to have any lasting, humane influence on the plight of the uprooted, and on the movement of people between States.

When I turned to write the first edition of *The Refugee in International*

Law in 1983, his lectures at the Hague Academy of International Law, also from 1976, were one of the first places I looked. Although ‘legal problems’ were the subject, it was to his vision of the role of the UN and UNHCR in a difficult and uncompromising world that I warmed. As an international lawyer well-schooled in positivist methodology, I nevertheless came rapidly to understand the value of law in its dynamic sense, and what UNHCR could achieve, in partnership and co-operation with States, in moving rules and principles forward to meet new challenges.

Already in 1976, Sadrudin noted how a shrinking world was bringing the plight of the displaced, not just to the notice of the wider international community, but also often to their doorstep. During his time, first as Deputy and then as High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR turned its attention away from Europe towards Africa and Asia, where the numbers and challenges were of a different order. The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, formulated with European refugees very much in mind, had an increasingly discriminatory impact outside the region, and Sadrudin, supported by States in the UN General Assembly, moved to combat that imbalance. The notion of ‘refugee’ evolved in institutional practice, and so also in that of States. New responses were called for – support for self-sufficiency in countries of refuge, support for voluntary repatriation, followed by in-country assistance, none of which had likely been in the minds of those who drafted UNHCR’s Statute in 1950, but all of which resonated, in this period of decolonisation and nation-building, with the sentiments (and resolutions) of the General Assembly.

Under his direction, UNHCR developed its policy and practice of engagement in situations going beyond the strict terms of its statute. But the criterion was always that of humanitarian necessity; and the justification, the availability of an agency having some familiarity at least with the needs of those in distress, whether refugees, or persons displaced by civil conflict or secessionist struggle.

Sadrudin noted in his Hague lectures that, while the refugee may no longer be *res nullius*, he or she was still far from being a subject of international law, and asylum was still a problem. He understood that, then as now, States remained reluctant to make ‘a contractual commitment of a permanent and unlimited nature...’ He hoped that an international conference on territorial asylum scheduled for 1977 might generate a sufficiently concrete measure of international solidarity, such that UNHCR might be able to move beyond persuasion and simple humanitarian concern in its pursuit of solutions, to a

system of positive commitment. It was not to be, and there is still a very real problem in actualising international solidarity, as the recent tragic events in Europe demonstrate only too well. As he remarked, too, 'people tend to forget sufferings which are drawn out and lasting...'

Still, Sadruddin's model of practical humanitarianism during his time as High Commissioner undoubtedly contributed to a broader understanding and acceptance of the concept of the refugee, to recognition also of the capacity of 'good offices' ('quiet diplomacy') to mediate situations of conflict and displacement (then still very much constrained by the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention which may have 'softened' somewhat in the meantime). The interest of the international community in *durable* solutions was also secured through UNHCR's operational engagement in repatriation movements, and in the co-ordination of humanitarian programmes, especially in co-operation with non-governmental organisations.

Sadruddin also anticipated many of the challenges to come, particularly for those uprooted by 'events over which they have no control...' He did much to ready UNHCR for the crises of the late twentieth century, and he went on to lay much of the groundwork for how to approach the next generation of humanitarian questions, and on how those international collaborative institutions, in which he believed so strongly, might respond.

From 1978-1983, I was the Legal Adviser in the UNHCR Regional Office in Sydney, Australia. The Indo-China refugee crisis was a major preoccupation in the South Pacific, Australia at that time was a major player in providing solutions through resettlement and asylum, and in developing international protection standards premised on co-operation, not unilateralism.

The Indo-China exodus, coupled with events in Latin America and developments in Africa, was also generating new thinking in other quarters. As we have seen recently in Europe and elsewhere, whatever the strength of the basic principles, the international refugee regime is weak at the point of coping with large numbers, in sharing responsibility, and ensuring solutions. Much of this had already been anticipated in the work which Sadruddin took on after serving as High Commissioner, in particular, when the UN Commission on Human Rights appointed him in 1981 as the Special Rapporteur on human rights and mass exoduses. In the resulting 'Study', Sadruddin noted the variety of reasons which lead to people being uprooted, including war, repression and underdevelopment, as well as perennial pull factors, such as conditions elsewhere.

Those who leave tend to be written off by their own State, often necessitating large-scale international relief operations, but with too little involvement of the country of origin. The problems of exodus can be further compounded by uncoordinated relief to States of refuge, by inter-agency constraints, and a lack of attention to causes. What was needed was a 'New International Humanitarian Order', an updating of refugee, nationality and labour law, institutional change, a reappraisal of the economic drivers of displacement, and early warning.

Unlike many at the time, Sadruddin was quite prepared to court controversy and to look at causes full-on. His report originally included three useful annexes of case studies summarizing mass movements in the previous decade, but these provoked considerable controversy and were subsequently withdrawn – as the UN document notes, it was 're-issued for technical reasons...' Sadruddin's readiness not to be bound by political constraints inhibiting practical humanitarian action stands in marked contrast, ironically, to the position adopted by UNHCR at the time. It formally declined to contribute to a parallel initiative in the General Assembly on international co-operation to avert new flows of refugees: while UNHCR assists in the solution of refugee problems, it told the Secretary-General, it 'cannot concern itself with the circumstances which have brought them into existence'.

Another striking suggestion, which drew clearly on his experience in quiet diplomacy, was to be found in his recommendation for the appointment of a Special Representative for Humanitarian Questions, whose work could be facilitated by a corps of 'humanitarian observers' to monitor situations and, by their presence, to contribute to a de-escalation of tension. A chance to see how that might work was to come up some ten years later, in the aftermath of the first Gulf War. At the time, however, neither Sadruddin's work on mass expulsion nor the initiative on averting new flows of refugees garnered the necessary political will for change; however, they did help to open up debate on the potential for United Nations machinery to reach solutions to humanitarian problems.

For a refugee law practitioner and scholar, these were exciting times. In 1983, I was posted to UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva as Deputy Chief of the Resettlement Section, concerned then primarily with finding places for the thousands of Indo-Chinese refugees in South-East Asia. That same year saw the setting up of the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues, with Sadruddin as Co-Chairman and his former Executive Director,

Zia Rizvi, as Secretary. The Commission was conceived as a non-governmental organisation with a limited, highly focused mandate; its goal was to support the movement for a 'new international humanitarian order', to try to break the log-jam between resolutions (countless resolutions...) and humanitarian action on the ground, to avoid bureaucratisation and politicisation, and to combine reflection and expert analysis in promotional formats that would sensitise governments and people at large.

In addition to its final report, *Winning the Human Race?*, the Independent Commission produced a series of concise and very readable reports on famine, deforestation, desertification, refugees, indigenous peoples, the disappeared, modern wars, and street children. Thanks to Zia Rizvi, paths crossed again, and I was able to contribute a couple of papers on the legal and other aspects of mass expulsion.

As Sadrudin remarked in another Hague lecture in 1985 and looking ahead to the twenty-first century, the tendency to indifference to humanitarian problems had to be overcome, a new balance established between State interests and peoples' interests, and humanitarian values put back where they belong. Speaking to international lawyers, he underlined that, 'The rule of law should never disregard the dictates of morality.'

In 1988, Sadrudin was appointed Co-ordinator for the UN Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes relating to Afghanistan, which led him to seek funding for large-scale resettlement and reconstruction. 'Operation Salam', as he called his work as Co-ordinator, was to survey the agricultural situation, communications and transport conditions, and to assess infra-structural damage throughout the country. He spoke eloquently of the challenges at the Allard K Lowenstein 1990 Human Rights Symposium at Yale University, once again taking the opportunity to focus on the ways and means of preventing future crises and drawing on the positive experiences of international co-operation, as well as on the need to strengthen grass-roots advocacy groups. By chance, Sadrudin was unable to attend that symposium personally and he gave his keynote speech by video; that accident, in turn, led to my being invited to give the Benigno Aquino lecture the same day. Looking back at my focus on refugees and human rights, I can see how much of it fits within both the outlook and the proposals for practical action which Sadrudin developed and promoted over so many years, and of how the struggle for tolerance and non-discrimination is ever with us.

Three years later found Sadrudin as the UN's envoy to war-ravaged Iraq.

Security Council Resolution 688 on northern Iraq, adopted on 5 April 1991, remains ambiguous and contested, although the idea that 'safe zones' could play an effective role in providing protection and mitigating the necessity for flight continues to receive attention. Perhaps more significant from the perspective of an evolving international responsibility to provide protection was an agreement reached some two weeks later.

On 18 April 1991 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Iraq's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Sadruddin, the Executive Delegate of the Secretary-General, under which the latter assumed supervisory responsibility for humanitarian matters; it was renewed for a further six months on 24 November 1991. Not surprisingly, the relief programme made no distinction between internally and externally displaced persons. Iraq welcomed the UN's efforts to promote voluntary return, but also to take humanitarian measures to avert new flows, and it pledged its full support and co-operation. It agreed to allow the UN to provide humanitarian relief to displaced persons, 'wherever such presence may be needed', through the establishment of UN Sub-Offices and Humanitarian Centres. The Centres were staffed by UN officials, members of non-governmental organisations on secondment, and Red Cross and Red Crescent personnel. Besides co-ordinating the provision of food and other humanitarian assistance, the Centres would also perform a monitoring function, and some five hundred lightly armed UN guards were deployed to this purpose, mostly in northern Iraq. In practice, however, they were unable to prevent fighting between government and Kurdish forces, and the early warning system of human rights violations that had been hoped for did not work out.

If the 18 April Memorandum of Understanding had continued, the UN's humanitarian operations would have been effectively 'internationalised', and we might have been able today to look back at resolution 688, not as institutionalizing a right of intervention (with all its nineteenth century imperialist baggage), but rather an international duty of protection, very much as Sadruddin would have envisaged. Once again, however, while the UN operation helped in the initial provision of humanitarian relief, the broader, more imaginative goals were ultimately frustrated by complex, confrontational politics. As Sadruddin had indicated, and as he sought to implement in practice, the success of international protection efforts, considered at large, will depend on interrelated factors and objectives, including mechanisms to provide early notice of events, such as political

and armed conflicts; a capacity to act towards the objective of resolution or mediation; preparedness; co-operative structures allowing for appropriate sharing of responsibilities; and a continuing capacity to monitor peace arrangements, human rights, population movements, and returns.

This is still a critical part of today's humanitarian agenda, and while some parts may have been operationalised, there are serious gaps and States are still reluctant to commit to co-operation on issues, such as the movement of people, which are perceived as touching too closely on 'sovereign' interests. Sadruddin did not ignore such concerns; rather, he looked for, and often found, principled ways to reduce tensions and align national interests with international humanitarian goals. His life's work has much to offer us.

All Souls College
Oxford
July 2016

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Guy S. Goodwin-Gill, *The Benigno Aquino Lecture in Human Rights-1990*, 'Refugees and Human Rights: Challenges for the 1990s', (1990) 2 *International Journal of Refugee Law, Special Issue-September 1990*, 29

Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Iraq and the United Nations, 18 April 1991; text in (1991) 3 *International Journal of Refugee Law* 359.

On the 'New International Humanitarian Order' see UN General Assembly resolutions 36/136, 14 December 1981; 37/201, 18 December 1982; 38/125,

16 December 1983; 40/126, 13 December 1985; 42/120, 7 December 1987 (taking note of the Report of the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues and drawing it to the attention of governments and intergovernmental organisations); 43/129, 8 December 1988; 45/101, 14 December 1990; 47/106, 16 December 1992; 49/170, 23 December 1994; 51/74, 12 December 1996; 53/124, 9 December 1998; 55/73, 4 December 2000; 57/184, 18 December 2002; 59/171, 20 December 2004; 61/138, 19 December 2006. General Assembly resolution 63/147, 18 December 2008, appears to mark the absorption of the 'new international humanitarian order' into 'strengthening... the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance...'

'Report of the Secretary-General. International co-operation to avert new flows of refugees': UN doc. A/36/582, 23 October 1981

Introduction

The evil that men do lives after them.

The good is oft interrèd with their bones.

William Shakespeare, Julius Caesar, Act 3, Scene 2

William Shakespeare hit upon a sad truth when he wrote this. The evil deeds of centuries, whether committed essentially by whole nations or brought about as a result of the radical ideas of leaders, have already created horrific threats to world security and caused unquantifiable suffering and death. And they may yet have their own dreadful sequels.

Over four decades ago, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, second son of the late Aga Khan III, Imam of the Ismailis through whom he received his title and whose example he would always seek to follow, said the following in the course of a radio interview:

*“The struggle today is against illiteracy, against disease, against over-population, and against a low standard of living, and if that gap between the rich and poor is not narrowed somehow, the rich countries will perhaps suffer even more in due course than the poor countries.”*¹

And in 1981, he wrote *“It is, however, my considered opinion that if we are to succeed in future to spare future generations the spectre of millions of uprooted people, more is required than reports and resolutions, however pertinent and useful they may be.”*²

Throughout his life, Sadruddin would return repeatedly to the subject of third world poverty. At the time of writing, the above predictions certainly have meaning, with the countries of Europe facing the challenge of very substantial numbers of desperate people fleeing war and desolation – some

1 Conversation with a Dutch journalist, 1972

2 Letter to Chairman of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, accompanying his report as Special Rapporteur on the relationship between gross human rights abuses and massive exodus

of these countries beginning to fear for their own economies and for their own culture.

Sadrudin was a visionary. Hailed by many as a great man, cited even in the media as “a prince who would save the world from itself”³ he was throughout his life intensely active, working strenuously to call attention to subjects that feature in this book. Alas for the world, he died in 2003, at only seventy. Many of us who knew him as his subordinates in the United Nations or in some other capacity believe that the onus is on us to publish a book about his life. One of them put it this way:

“Prince Sadrudin’s immense personal qualities of mind and heart and his exemplary contributions in the humanitarian field and to the cause of global peace in general need to be suitably compiled and recorded to serve as a legacy of inspiration for generations of young people.”⁴

I would add to this the prince’s immense concern about the natural world, and his energetic and imaginative work to try to protect the natural environment that countless millions of us share from many different forms of depredation.

I first got to know Prince Sadrudin Aga Khan in the 1960s when a junior member of staff of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), at the Geneva headquarters and in the field. The prince had a remarkable way of getting alongside his staff, and his way of keeping in touch as the years went by was also remarkable. Many of us felt particularly privileged to have such a relationship with him.

The sources of this account of the prince’s professional life and charismatic personality are based on the following:

- books – some on the high-level colloquia, conferences and consultations that he ran and of which he edited the record, others written by former colleagues, still others found to be related to the subject matter;
- material accessed on internet, including UN documentation;
- documents and press articles collected over many years;
- recollections of former UN staff members and others who worked alongside the prince;
- notes, sound recordings; and his CV as given in *Who was Who*.

3 *The Observer*, 27th January 1985

4 Mr Iqbal Alimohamed was a senior officer of UNHCR in postings both at headquarters and in the field

To produce an accurate and adequate picture of the professional life of someone who has been called “A man for all nations”⁵ is not an easy task. However, Sadruddin Aga Khan was so central and so great a figure in relation to the phenomenon of displacement and other supremely important concerns of the 20th century that with the support and encouragement of people who knew him well, I have done my best to portray him in a way fitting to such an exceptional person. Endowed with the best of human qualities, he was uniquely and strenuously dedicated to the humanitarian ideals of the United Nations and passionately concerned about the well-being of the planet’s inhabitants, its *flora* and its *fauna*. His was a uniquely well-rounded, warm personality and he gladly gave of his time and attention to others. Sadruddin had a passionate love of Indian and Islamic art that led him to make up a superb collection, a love of theatre and music that saw him present with his wife at many cultural events, a love of gardens, of sailing, of other pursuits and... of each of the dogs he had over the years.

May Sadruddin Aga Khan’s voice yet be heard, and prove to be an inspiration to those whose words and actions could turn out to be vital in this changing world of ours.

Riaz, Switzerland, December 2015

5 *The Observer Review*, 1st January 1978

Curriculum Vitae of Prince Sadrudin

Prince Sadrudin Aga Khan, KBE 2002, born 17 January 1933, son of His late Highness Sir Sultan Mohamed Shah, Aga Khan III, GCSI, GCIE, GCVO and of Andrée Joséphine Carron

Education:

École du Tournesol, Gstaad (BE), 1940-47

École Nouvelle, Chailly, Lausanne, 1947-50

University of Harvard, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1950-57: Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, Centre of Middle Eastern Studies

Career:

UNESCO, Consultant for Afro-Asian Projects, 1958

Head of Mission and Adviser to UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 1959-60

UNESCO Special Consultant to Director-General, Executive Secretary, International Action Committee for Preservation of Nubian Monuments, 1961

UN Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees, 1962-65

UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 1966-77

Founder and President, the Bellerive Foundation and the “Groupe de Bellerive”, Geneva (Science & Society, Rural Technology, New and Renewable Sources of Energy), 1977-2003

Consultant and Chargé de Mission to the Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1978

Convenor and Co-Chairman, Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues, 1983-6
Convenor and Co-Chairman of the Independent Working Group on the UN Financial Emergency, 1985
Co-ordinator, UN Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes relating to Afghanistan, 1988-90
Founder and Chairman of Alp Action, the International Corporate Funding programme for the Alpine Environment
Personal Representative of UN Secretary-General for Humanitarian Assistance relating to Iraq-Kuwait crisis, 1990-91
Executive Delegate of the UNSG for a United Nations Inter-Agency Humanitarian Programme dealing with problems of Iraq's border areas, 1991
Convenor and co-Chairman of high-level colloquia on nuclear issues and globalisation (in particular: 1985, 1995, 1998)

Other activities:

Member of the International Board, United World Colleges
Member of Board of Directors of television organisations promoting global issues related to human survival (Television Trust for the Environment, UK, Turner Better World Society, USA)
Founding member, Geneva International Peace Research Institute (GIPRI)
Former Trustee and Vice-President, World Wildlife Fund for Nature International from 1986
Founder and Secretary, Harvard Islamic Association
Former President and Founder, Council on Islamic Affairs, New York
Member of Board, Beijer Institute, Stockholm
Life Fellow, The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, UK
Member of Board, International Academy of the Environment, Geneva
Member of World Economic Forum and 1990 Chairman
Member, Friends of Pugwash (Conferences on Science and World Affairs)

Awards

Honorary Fellow, American Academy of Arts and Sciences

Doctor *honoris causa*, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1986,
University of Nice 1988, Hon. LLD Leeds, 1992
Hon. Citizen of Geneva, 1978
UN Human Rights Award, 1978
Dag Hammarsköld Honorary Medal, German UN Association, 1979
Olympia Prize, Alexander S. Onassis Foundation, 1982
Man of Peace Award, Together for Peace Foundation, 1989
Freedom Award, International Rescue Committee, USA
Grand Cross: Order of St. Silvestro (Papal), 1963
Order of Homayoun (Iran), 1967
Order of the Royal Star of Great Comoro (Comoro Is), 1970
Order of the Two Niles (First Class), Sudan, 1973
Commander's Cross with Star, Order of Merit of Polish People's Republic, 1977
Commandeur de la Légion d'Honneur (France), 1979
Hilal-e-Pakistan, 1991
Commander of Golden Ark (Netherlands)

Publications:

Question of the Violations of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms In Any Part of the World, with Particular Reference to Colonial and Other Dependent Countries and Territories (Study on Human Rights and Massive Exodus), Special Rapporteur, UN Commission on Human Rights, 1981
International Protection of Refugees, The Hague Academy of International Law, 1985
Nuclear War Nuclear Proliferation and their Consequences (Ed.), Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1986
Non-Proliferation in a Disarming World (Ed.), Bellerive, 1990
Policing the Global Economy, Why, How and for Whom? (Ed.), Cameron May, London, 1998

Recreations:

Islamic art, sailing, skiing, hiking, kite flying

Author's note

The full name of Prince Sadruddin, without the letters after his name, is His Highness Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan. Journalists sometimes made errors of spelling in referring to him. In this book, I have referred to him variously as “Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan”, “Prince Sadruddin”, “Sadruddin” and “the prince” (as well, naturally, as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UN High Commissioner or the High Commissioner, as appropriate). Prince Sadruddin left people free to address him as they wished. As mentioned in the text, at Harvard he was even known simply as Sadri A. Khan. His principal friends and I understand senior family members called him “Sadri”.

I have seen in another book that the pronouncements of the principal figure in a book can be rendered in italics, so that they stand out as being his, and have followed this pattern here.

I take responsibility for the several translations from French to English.

Royalties resulting from the sale of this book will be directed towards animal welfare.

1

Birth and boyhood in the turbulent years 1933-1950

“Monday’s child is fair of face, Tuesday’s child is full of grace”

English nursery rhyme, 1838

Birth in Paris

Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan was born on Tuesday, 17th January 1933 in Neuilly-sur-Seine, a town in the western suburbs of Paris, to Aga Khan III and Andrée Joséphine Carron.

On his father’s side, Sadruddin came from a line of Persian princes, his great-grandfather having fled Persia after conflicts with the ruling family.¹ Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III (1877-1957), GCSI, GCMG, GCIE, GCVO, PC², was a man of distinction, the only son of Aga Khan II whom he succeeded as Imam (leader) of the Nizārī Ismāīlī sect in 1885, and a Persian princess, the erudite paternal grandmother who lived to the age of eighty-seven, close to her son and her two grandsons. As Sadruddin would say, “my father was truly the product of a meeting between East and West”, for he had been born and brought up in India, but on reaching adulthood he began spending several months a year travelling, mostly to Europe, frequently spending the winters in the south of France where he owned a villa near Cannes.

On his mother’s side, Sadruddin was a “Savoyard”, as he would say to journalists in 1991,³ explaining that his mother was born in the commune of

1 Aga Khan III, *The Memoirs of Aga Khan*. Sadruddin carried an Iranian passport all his life.

2 He was made a “Knight of the Indian Empire” by Queen Victoria, a Knight Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire by Edward VII (1902), and a Knight Grand Commander of the Order of the Star of India by George V (1912). He was appointed a GCMG in 1923.

3 Patrice Dujon-Neumann, *Le Messager, Sadruddin Aga Khan, le prince savoyard de l’ONU*, 18 octobre 1991

Chambéry and Saint-Jean d'Arvey. His parents met in Aix-les-Bains, where Mademoiselle Carron had a haberdashery and dressmaking shop, though it would appear that she was working in a "*boutique de mode*" in Paris at about that time. "My father was very attached to Savoie. He it was who built the Aix-les-Bains racecourse. On my mother's side, our origins are simply middle-class and unpretentious (*tout à fait bourgeoise, modeste*). My grandfather used to own a hotel in Chambéry. And I still have numerous cousins and nephews there." ⁴ Princess Andrée, the Begum, was a gentle Frenchwoman who would be married to the Aga Khan III for fourteen years, until their divorce and his remarriage, again to a Frenchwoman, during the Second World War.

Sadrud-din's father was the forty-eighth Imam of the Ismailis for over fifty years, the spiritual leader of a Shia community of an estimated 20,000,000 people who revere their imam as a god and donate a proportion of their wealth to him. They are spread across the Muslim world from East Africa to South East Asia. The late Aga Khan's Pakistani biographer, Professor K. K. Aziz, writes that he guided and directed the Muslim nationalist movement in India for a far longer period than any other political figure, leading the Simla Deputation⁵, nursing the All India Muslim League into a strong and united organisation, inspiring the foundation of the All India Muslim Conference, and acting as the spokesman of India and of her Muslims at the 1930s Round Table Conferences in London. We read that for years, "he threw himself into the work of social reform and educational advance with insight, deep commitment and enthusiasm. In East and South Africa, he encouraged and worked for the development of society, especially in the fields of education, economy, communal amity, and race relations. To his Muslim followers and fellow-believers he showed the path to a liberal and rational interpretation of Islam, the acceptance and practical interpretation of which would bring them into the mainstream of modern life without in the least betraying the fundamental tenets and injunctions of their religion."⁶ Professor Aziz goes on to say that in common with other men of distinction, the Aga Khan issued a call to re-examine and reconstruct the original message of the Quran without departing from its spirit.

4 Guy Mettan, *Bilan* 2/91

5 The Simla Deputation (1906) represented the demands of the Indian Muslim community, showing the British Government that Muslims were anxious to take part in political activities as a separate entity.

6 K.K. Aziz, *Aga Khan III Selected Speeches and Writings of Sir Sultan Muhammad*, pp.xxv-xxvi.

The Aga Khan was passionately interested in horses and horse-racing. He owned some of the finest racehorses in the world, and became best known to the general public as the winner of many of the most prestigious races, such as the Derby and the Grand National in Britain. His elder son Aly shared this interest (while Sadruddin never did). He too made a great deal of money from horse-racing and from the expert training and trading of racehorses.

About Sadruddin's mother, the Begum for those fourteen years, the Aga Khan wrote in his memoirs that he had known the former Mademoiselle Andrée Carron and her family for twelve or fourteen years. She was thirty when he proposed to her. She hesitated for a long time before accepting him; and it was not until nearly two years later – December 1929 – that they were married at Aix-les-Bains. Throughout the exhausting and protracted sessions of the first two Round Table Conferences organised by the British Government to discuss constitutional reforms in India, she had, he wrote, been of quite invaluable support and help to him. Theirs was for many years a happy and well-knit marriage. Princess Andrée went everywhere with him, being received in England by their Majesties the King and Queen in 1930 and invited to luncheon at Ascot. "She shared my social life actively and fully for many years."⁷

In his early years, Sadruddin's father was away a great deal, mainly in Geneva where he represented India in the assemblies of the League of Nations. His mother used to take the little boy to stay in a country house in the mountains, of which he retained fond memories. "I remember how when I was little we used to have long walks in the mountains and sometimes slept under canvas."⁸ He loved the mountains, and his love of the whole of nature goes back to those early years. The Swiss magazine "*L'illustré*" of 18th January 2000, in a four-page feature on Sadruddin's life, shows us a confident little seven-year-old walking across snow and pulling his mother on a little sledge. Twenty-five years later, when Sadruddin was United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Princess Andrée liked to attend some of the meetings or assemblies to which he was reporting, for example the Economic and Social Council of the UN General Assembly, rather as her late mother-in-law had given support to her son, Aga Khan III, throughout his very active years in

⁷ Aga Khan, *op.cit.*, page 207

⁸ *Point de Vue – France, Sadruddin Aga Khan, prince en mission*, 31 octobre 1991

international *milieux*, in particular of course his years at the League of Nations.⁹

For all that Sadruddin had an august background, indeed a princely one,¹⁰ he was born into a world that was unfortunately far from stable, as he would surely realise before he reached his teens. The 1930s decade even came to be termed by one eminent journalist “The Nightmare Years”.¹¹

The world scene had changed rapidly and startlingly in 1929, the Wall Street crash ushering in years of economic depression, the longest, deepest and most widespread depression of the twentieth century. Lasting right up to the outbreak of the Second World War, it had a drastically damaging effect on industry, finance and even on agriculture across the whole Western world. A fortnight after Sadruddin’s birth, Germany’s elderly Head of State, President Hindenburg, acting in a perfectly constitutional manner, on 30th January 1933 entrusted the chancellorship to Adolf Hitler. A noted journalist wrote later, “The Hohenzollern Empire had been built on the armed triumphs of Prussia, the German Republic on the defeat by the Allies after a great war. But the Third Reich owed nothing to the fortunes of war or to foreign influence. It was inaugurated in peacetime, and peacefully, by the Germans themselves, out of both their weaknesses and their strengths. The Germans imposed the Nazi tyranny on themselves. Many of them, perhaps a majority, did not quite realise it... but they were soon to learn.”¹²

From then on, Germany was rearming secretly, in flagrant violation of the Versailles Treaty of 1919. As the facts gradually came to light, the governments of Britain and France, both of them pledged to pacifism, avoided recognition of the fact that Hitler represented a distinct danger to peace. In London throughout the years 1933 to 1938, none of the successive British Prime Ministers (Ramsay Macdonald, Stanley Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain) heeded the increasingly urgent warnings of Winston Churchill, who had several times been a minister but was then merely a Member of Parliament, about Germany’s mounting military strength. Churchill the visionary was

9 I had the privilege of meeting Princess Andrée towards the end of her life, on the occasion of a luncheon at the Château de Bellerive, Sadruddin’s home from the time he was twenty-four. She was a beautiful woman, and her manner was very gracious, like that of her son.

10 As *The Economist* observed in an article dated 22nd May 2003, “The British Royal family, which knows a thing or two about heredity, recognised Sadruddin as a true prince and he was treated accordingly.”

11 William L. Shirer, *The Collapse of the Third Republic* (1969) and *The Nightmare Years* (1984)

12 William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (1960)

frustrated year after year over getting his warnings received in the House of Commons, while *The Times* newspaper, hitherto a very satisfactory instrument for getting an important message across, declined until 1940, when he was appointed Prime Minister, to publish any of his writings.¹³

Indecision in Britain and events further afield

In 1932 and 1933, the British Government was active at the League of Nations in supporting measures towards world disarmament. Delivering a speech in the House of Commons on 23rd March 1933, Churchill – who would later become world famous for his incomparable use of the English language – spoke of the foreign policy of the Prime Minister. He said that over the whole of the previous four years that Mr. Baldwin had directed Britain's foreign policy, no one could pretend that the results were satisfactory. He asserted that on the contrary, the state of Europe, the condition of the Far East, Britain's relations with Japan, the authority and prestige of the League of Nations and Britain's own security had markedly deteriorated. Then he couched one of his very first warnings, uttered *barely six weeks* after Adolf Hitler had become Chancellor of Germany:

“When we read about Germany, when we watch with surprise and distress the tumultuous insurgency of ferocity and war spirit, the pitiless ill-treatment of minorities, the denial of the normal protections of civilised society to large numbers of individuals solely on the grounds of race – when we see that occurring in one of the most gifted, learned, scientific and formidable nations in the world, one cannot help feeling glad that the fierce passions that are now raging in Germany have not found, as yet, any other outlet but upon Germans.”

¹⁴In speech after speech, Churchill sought to warn of the dangers of allowing Germany to steal a march on Britain in military and air preparations.

Throughout the remainder of the 1930s, however, Britain's Conservative government remained blind to realities until it was far too late to put obstacles across Hitler's path. The man to whom the future chief of Hitler's army, Field-Marshal Werner von Blomberg, had once contemptuously applied the

13 William Manchester, *Winston Churchill, L'épreuve de la solitude 1932-40*

14 Speech by Winston Churchill in the House of Commons, 3rd March 1933, in *Churchill, the power of Words*, Sir Martin Gilbert, pages 189 – 191

epithet “tiny midget”¹⁵ had become a giant, and the British Government saw appeasement as the only way forward. The fascist dictator who, along with Mussolini, would help General Franco take over Spain at the cost of well over 500,000 lives and another 500,000 refugees, would soon dominate – and terrorise – virtually the whole of Europe.

Hitler in the 1930s was in the process of tearing up not only the Versailles Treaty of 29th June 1919, which forbade Germany to re-arm, but also the Locarno Treaty of 1st December 1925, which provided *inter alia* a mutual guarantee between Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain and Italy, under normal circumstances providing protection to countries of Eastern Europe. But throughout those years circumstances were far from normal, and Britain and France were far from being prepared for what lay ahead. In Russia, Josef Stalin and Leon Trotsky had yet to settle their differences by one means or another, while the Russian population lived in fear and deprivation. Benito Mussolini, fascist dictator of Italy, had designs on Ethiopia and would invade that unfortunate country in 1937, despite the fact that both countries were members of the League of Nations. The ill-fated League of Nations, set up after the “Great War” in the hope that it would be an instrument for peace, had few chances of succeeding in enforcing its provisions, despite the efforts of statesmen like Sadruddin’s own father, its President in 1937.

There had been growing unrest for some time in India, for which the hardening attitudes of colonial staff and their wives towards Indians could be held at least partly responsible. The Indian nationalist lawyer Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, better known as Mahatma Gandhi, to whom the Aga Khan in his Memoirs would attribute “unique political flair allied to his vast personal prestige... a major figure in world history”, organised non-violent forms of civil disobedience that in 1930 caused tension to be at its height. The Aga Khan, very much involved throughout much of his life with the question of India’s political and constitutional evolution, wrote about men of that period, such as Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan and its Governor-General until his death, as being “animated by the same dynamic faith which shakes the nations... conscious of a cause outside (themselves)”.¹⁶

Of Mahatma Gandhi, whom he knew for forty-five years, the Aga Khan

¹⁵ Aga Khan, *op cit.*, page 240

¹⁶ Aga Khan, *op cit.*, page 293

wrote, "His vision was of an India whose society, economy, and whole life would be based on certain pacifist, moral principles, the objective existence of which meant much more to the Mahatma than anything in himself." Both he and Gandhi would participate in 1930 in the first Round Table Conference presided over by King George V at which British notables, including the leaders of all the political parties, met with the British-Indian delegation that included Muslim, Hindu and Parsee representatives drawn from many shades of political opinion. The Aga Khan was elected chairman of the British-Indian section of the Conference – that is to say of all the Indian representatives except the ruling princes "who had come, of course, as their own representatives and in their own capacity as the sovereigns of their various principalities and states".¹⁷ Two other Round Table Conferences were to follow. But if India was gradually and irrevocably moving towards independence, the work of reconciling the expectations of all parties was an insurmountable task.

In the Far East, fighting broke out in 1931 between the imperialist forces of Japan and China, and by 1937 there was full-scale war. Frustrated at having failed to take Shanghai that year in the face of strong opposition from the Chinese, the Japanese Imperial Army marched into Nanking and massacred half the population – 300,000 people, an atrocity that came to be called "The rape of Nanking". These were troubled times across the world, and of course by that time, war in Europe was imminent.

Unrest in France

As for France, Prince Sadruddin was just one year old when Paris was in a state of uproar from one day to the next. For months there had been a succession of governments, none of which had managed to last more than a few weeks, or sometimes even a few days. Then on 6th February 1934, as reported by a journalist, William Shirer, who found himself in the midst of it all and later described it in his book *The Collapse of the Third Republic*¹⁸, the big circulation dailies as well as the political newspapers of the Right carried what he called flaming appeals from the various leagues calling on their members and all good Parisians to take to the streets that evening in a massive demonstration

17 Aga Khan, *op cit.*, pp. 214-215

18 William L. Shirer, *The Collapse of the Third Republic* (1969)

against the government. They seemed to be making a call to insurrection, he reported, or at least to violence leading to insurrection, having finally lost patience with successive governments weakened by corruption. *L'Action Française* even listed certain cabinet ministers as among those who would be “killed without mercy”.

Shirer wrote that late on the afternoon of 6th February he was assigned by the *Paris Herald* to go down to the Place de la Concorde, across the Seine from the Chamber, to see if the threatened demonstrations were starting up. He found only a few hundred shock troops of *Action Française*, *Jeunesses Patriotes* and *Solidarité Française*, trying unsuccessfully to push back the police towards the bridge that leads to the Palais Bourbon, the seat of the Chamber of Deputies. However, only an hour later the scene had changed and the square was now packed with several thousand demonstrators standing their ground against repeated charges of the mounted *Garde Mobile*. The guards, Shirer saw, were slashing away with their sabres, and a crowd was stationed beside the railings, pelting the police and guards with stones, bricks, garden chairs and iron grilles ripped up from around trees. The fighting continued, reportedly by no means an unequal fight. The rioters were using sticks with razor blades attached to one end to slash away at the horses and the legs of the mounted men, and they were throwing marbles and firecrackers at the hooves. A number of horses went down and their riders were attacked. Both sides began to carry away their wounded. A flying bullet killed a woman journalist who had been standing with twenty or so others on the balcony of the Hotel Crillon.¹⁹

The demonstrators stormed the Chamber, and some recognised Edouard Herriot, three times premier and head of the Radical-Socialist party, who was making his way home on foot. “He was seized by fifty ruffians, roughed up, and, to their cries of ‘Throw him into the Seine,’ dragged towards the river bank, where he was rescued by a platoon of gendarmes just as he was about to be tossed into the river’s muddy waters.” The premier Edouard Daladier resigned the next day. Shirer was to observe “The Third Republic had had a narrow escape.”²⁰

Yet despite the turbulence in Europe, this was in fact a period in which art flourished, that of the European Modernists, Cézanne, van Gogh, Gauguin, Matisse, Picasso, Kokoschka, Grosz and Chagall. There was a

19 William L. Shirer, *op cit*

20 William L. Shirer, *op cit*.

great deal of new music, with composers like John Ireland, Benjamin Britten and Sergei Prokofiev coming to the fore, and with the introduction of American jazz. Among the many writers achieving international renown during the 1930s were André Malraux, George Orwell and Ernest Hemingway.

* * *

At the end of 1933, Princess Andrée paid her first visit to India with her husband, leaving the baby to be cared for in the south of France. They travelled all over the country, seeing most of the famous historic sites and going on to Burma. When they were back in April 1934, they of course found Sadrudin much grown, a healthy, strong little boy.²¹

No doubt Prince Sadrudin at fifteen months was walking unaided. One wonders who had the honour and the pleasure of looking after him in his parents' absence! After being away from Europe for several months, his parents could begin to visit the Paris theatre and opera again, although for the time being, while the Aga Khan was no longer involved with India as before, he would be needed almost without a break at the League of Nations. He was the head of the Indian delegation, work that took him to Geneva from 1932 to 1938, except for the year 1934. In September 1937 he was elected President of the League of Nations – a great honour.

When Sadrudin was three, his half-brother Aly married Mrs Joan Guinness. The young prince would soon become uncle to Karim, the future Aga Khan IV, and Ayn Khan. Thirteen years later, Aly married Rita Hayworth, and Yasmin, Sadrudin's niece, was born.

Family bereavement: The grandmother to Aly and Sadrudin dies at eighty-seven

The Aga Khan related that he was asked to continue to hold the presidency of the League of Nations General Assembly for another year, as he put it “a rare honour and a responsibility, for mine would have been the duty of summoning a special session and presiding over it, had one been found necessary”. However, the unexpected death of his mother that same winter

21 Aga Khan, *op cit.*, page 231

came as a shock and caused him considerable grief. He wrote that his work in the international field, and its climax in his year as president of the League, had especially delighted his mother. Although she was well over eighty, she had followed his work in Geneva with unflagging interest. When the 1937 session of the Assembly ended he took his wife and little son to their home in the south of France, with no reason to believe that his mother's health was causing any serious anxiety.²²

His biographer writes that Lady Ali Shah suffered a stroke in November while stepping out of the Turkish bath in her palace in Bombay. The Aga Khan was in Antibes when the news reached him. He flew to Bombay and found her with seriously impaired faculties.²³ As a precaution, his mother having always wished to be buried in a Muslim land beside her husband, he managed to move her to Baghdad. When he was told of the further deterioration of his mother's health, he went to her and on 5th February she died with her head resting in his lap. He arranged for her to be laid to rest at Nejef near Kerbela.²⁴

Sadrudin had a close relationship with his paternal grandmother throughout his first four and a half years. In later life, he mentioned more than once that his grandmother used to recite Persian poetry to him when they were together. His father wrote this about her at the end of her long life:

"She had seen both my sons, Aly and Sadrudin, the latter of whom, as a little boy, was a special joy and comfort to her, both when she came to Europe, and during a summer which he and his mother spent with her in the Lebanon. Sadrudin, too, bore the name of my elder brother who had died in infancy, and this particularly rejoiced my mother's heart. Eager, affectionate, pious, alert to every new happening and new interest, my mother in her last years was someone who radiated a sense of joy and goodness among all who knew her."²⁵

Sadrudin, whose name translates as "defender of the faith" in Arabic, looking back on his childhood and his father's eminent position at the League of Nations, said that Geneva had been familiar to him from his very early years and he remembered seeing the Palais des Nations under construction.

22 Aga Khan, *op cit.*, p. 268

23 K.K. Aziz, *op cit.*, page 17

24 Aga Khan, *op cit.*, pp. 269-270

25 Aga Khan, *op cit.*, page 269

As a boy of five he was even present, as he said, at its inauguration in 1938. As for his schooling, he explained in an interview in early 1991 that he first went to school in Paris. He can have been there only for a year or two in view of the events of May and June 1940, when he was seven.

* * *

The advent of war

If the French government had seemed to be skating on thin ice after the events of 6th February 1934 and had managed to restore calm, it now faced war and conquest. France little imagined that it was vulnerable after spending billions of francs on building a particularly solid line of defence, the Maginot Line, and having what was esteemed to be the strongest army in Europe. Besides, the British Expeditionary Force was with them! Neither the French nor the British had realised the danger they were likely to face, despite the ease with which the Germans had taken Poland and Norway.

On 10th May 1940, the German army and air force threw themselves against Holland, and in no time “the avalanche broke”²⁶. Preceded by waves of Stuka dive bombers, parachutists and airborne troops, an army of tanks unprecedented in warfare for size, concentration, mobility and striking power, which when it had started through the Ardennes Forest from the German border on 10th May stretched in three columns back for 100 miles far behind the Rhine, broke through the French Ninth and Second armies and headed swiftly for the Channel. It encircled the French and British forces and forced them to retreat to the coast at Dunkirk. On 15th May, the French Premier Paul Reynaud called Winston Churchill, who had become the British Prime Minister only five days earlier, to say “We have been defeated! We are beaten!” Churchill refused to believe it. The great French Army vanquished in a week? It was impossible. But after only six weeks of fighting an unequal battle against Hitler’s military might, the elderly head of the army, Maréchal Pétain, now the new Prime Minister of France, signed an armistice on 22nd June 1940.

The late Aga Khan wrote of this critical period that in the winter of 1939-40 he went to India for some months, and on his return in April he, his wife and Sadruddin went to his villa at Antibes, in the south of France, as he had

26 William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (1960)

been accustomed to doing for years. But the cataclysmic events of May and June 1940 took him, as it did so many others, utterly by surprise. During his years in Geneva he had come to know many French statesmen, and all along their confidence in the French Army's strength had been so supreme and so unshakable that when French resistance collapsed along almost the whole front from the Rhine to the Channel and the Nazi motorised divisions swept south and west across France, the Aga Khan was shocked and appalled beyond belief. When Italy declared war on the Allies and the French Government, abandoning Paris as an open city, took refuge in Bordeaux, he realised that the family was in danger of being trapped in a country likely to be completely overrun. With his wife and Sadrudin, he made his way as quickly as he could to Switzerland.

Sadrudin said later that the family was on the Germans' black list, as the Aga Khan was on the side of the Allies, bidding his followers to give their fullest support to Britain.²⁷ The family took refuge in Gstaad in the Bernese Oberland, which would be Sadrudin's home for the war years, a calm and beautiful place for the growing boy, though he would be cut off from his relatives on both his mother's and his father's side. Neutral Switzerland was a haven, but for several years it was an isolated and solitary haven for his father, who was debarred from political activity and cut off from most of his contacts with the outside world.²⁸

The people of the area in which Sadrudin and his parents now lived, the Saananland, say that when God created the earth He rested His hand there, with the result that there are five Alpine valleys. One is the valley leading off to Bulle in the canton of Fribourg, via Château d'Oex, a second rises to the Simmental valley and Zweizimmen, Spiez and the lakes of Thun and Brienz, the third passes through the villages of Feutersonoy and Gsteig to the Col du Pillon, beyond which point one can go on to reach the Rhône valley. The fourth is the valley leading to Lauenen with its pretty village and ancient church at the foot of the giant Wildstrübel range; and the fifth is the Turbach valley, named after its tumbling river that flows down to become part of the Sarine River, a tributary of the River Rhine. Turbach in the 1940s, five kilometres from Gstaad, was reached by an earth road – one no doubt very familiar to the growing boy – that first ran alongside the river to the group of riverside chalets and the village shop.

²⁷ See Annex I, also Aga Khan, *op cit.*, page 271

²⁸ Aga Khan, *op cit.*, pp 271 & 273

Then following a very violent summer storm in 1948 that destroyed the riverside shop and other chalets, the road was rebuilt to wind upwards in steep zigzag bends to the reconstituted village of Turbach, but it remained an earth road for another twenty years – very familiar of course to Sadruddin on his subsequent visits to the area (as it was to the writer from 1960 onwards).

Gstaad is surrounded by mountains with names like Eggli, Rüblihorn, Gifferhorn, Wassergrat and Hornberg. The nearby Wildstrübel range rises to well over 3,000 metres (or almost 10,000 feet) above sea level. In the 1930s, Gstaad, little more than a stone's throw from Saanen village and its eleventh century church, was still a small village. Its acquired glamour dating from the post-war years was largely attributable to the fact that the Aga Khan made his home there, and celebrities from all over the world gravitated to the little resort, both for the skiing and for the nightlife – as of course they still do. Yehudi Menuhin, one of the world-renowned visitors and a close friend of the family, used to play his violin year after year in Saanen church – initially for his own pleasure, people told me when I got to know the area well. Nowadays Gstaad is the venue for the yearly Yehudi Menuhin Festival – in its sixtieth year in 2016– as well as for a wealth of other events of an international nature that draw the crowds throughout the seasons. It now has some forty hotels, 100 restaurants and an array of over 1,000 cultural and sporting events per year.

Sadruddin, speaking of his boyhood years later, said, “So I grew up in Switzerland before going to study in the United States, and I used to roam all over the mountains. Tourism was not nearly as developed then as it is today. In the winter, we went hiking with seal skins on our skis, and in the summer we went rock-climbing, mountaineering and camping. I got to know the natural world, the cycle of the seasons, the *fauna* and *flora*, and so I have always especially loved the mountains.”²⁹

Sadruddin was enrolled at Gstaad's Ecole du Tournesol, where he was a pupil until 1947, when he was fourteen (the usual scholastic cycle in Switzerland). One imagines a boy of seven starting in 1940 to experience Swiss cuisine, traditions and culture. He must have been learning Swiss German both in and out of school, and he learnt to speak it flawlessly, as

29 Olivier Binst, FEMINA, Lausanne, Le Prince Écolo: *Défenseur des Droits de l'Homme, le Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan l'est aussi de la Nature*, janvier 1991

was the case with several other languages, including Persian, learnt with a tutor alongside his brother Aly. His father had him learn the Quran.

The sensitive boy must gradually have become aware as the years passed of the increasingly tragic situations beyond Switzerland's borders. As a neutral state, Switzerland was of course largely immune from the violence of the war years. There were some restrictions and food was rationed, but the Swiss did not suffer unduly from the fact that the rest of the world was at war, even though there was always a fear of invasion, and a few Allied bombs actually fell on Swiss territory in the vicinity of some heavy industry. While professing neutrality, Switzerland had divided loyalties during the Second World War and played a somewhat ambiguous part as a neutral country (as did Sweden). The fact that the Swiss supplied arms components to Hitler and purchased his stolen gold has been no secret for years. Meanwhile, however, numbers of terrified people under threat (though unfortunately not all) found sanctuary, while some of the Allied pilots downed by the Germans over Germany or France managed to evade capture with help from residents of Switzerland (some of whom happened to be British and French nationals), mostly succeeding in returning to their air bases to resume flying.

During the war years in Switzerland, Sadruddin's family circumstances changed again when his parents divorced. As the Aga Khan wrote years later, "Maritally, my third wife, Princess Andrée, and I drifted apart, although our affection, our respect and our true friendship for each other were in no way impaired. We realised that it would be better for us to change our marital to purely affectionate relations, and in these circumstances and by mutual consent we were divorced in a civil court in Geneva in 1943."³⁰ Sadruddin was ten. A year later, in 1944, his father married his fourth wife, Mademoiselle Yvette Labrousse in Cairo. He said that he had known her for many years, and she had converted to Islam in Cairo. He wrote that in this relationship he had found "a true union of mind and soul".

Sadruddin said in the course of various interviews that during his childhood and adolescence he travelled widely with his father to Muslim countries, "coming into contact with his Islamic roots" from a young age. He described Iran as "the cradle of his family", though he never lived there.³¹ One trip was to accompany his father and stepmother, the Begum

³⁰ Aga Khan, *op cit.*, page 274

³¹ The UNESCO COURIER, May 1991

Aga Khan, to India for his father's Diamond Jubilee (Bombay, 1946), when the sixty-nine-year-old Aga Khan was weighed by his faithful followers in diamonds. From 1947 until the end of his schooling in 1950, Prince Sadruddin attended the École Nouvelle at Chailly, Lausanne.³²

32 Guy Mettan, *Bilan 2/91*

2

Harvard years, 1950-57

*The future is where you and I will be spending the rest of our lives. We had better be aware of it and remember that a society which does not defend itself is not worth defending.*³³

Sadrudin Aga Khan

The second twelve-year period in Prince Sadrudin's life, from the time he was still a schoolboy in Gstaad to when at twenty-four he left the University of Harvard with two degrees was, like the first, one of tremendous moment for the world at large. By way of giving the briefest of summaries, I quote from a University of Washington history professor's Timeline: ³⁴

1945 Feb	Yalta Conference
May	World War II ends in Europe
Aug	U.S. drops an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan
	Potsdam Conference – Truman, Stalin and British (sic) divide up Europe
1946 Jan	First East European Communist government set up in Albania
1947 Jan	Communists seize power in Poland
March	Truman Doctrine announced
1948 June	Berlin Airlift begins (ends May 19 th , 1949)
1949 April	North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) established

33 The Energy Crisis and Human Rights, The American International Club of Geneva. 25th April 1980

34 Dr Quintard Taylor, Jr., *United States History: Timeline: Cold War*, University of Washington

Aug	Soviet Union explodes its first atomic bomb
Oct	Communists win Chinese Civil War
1950 June	U.S. and other U.N. members fight North Korean forces (the Korean War ends 27 th July, 1953)
1953 Aug	U.S. sponsored coup overthrows Iranian government
1954 June	U.S. sponsored coup overthrows Guatemalan government
Sept	Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) formed
1955 May	Warsaw Pact formed
July	First Summit Meeting between President Dwight Eisenhower and Premier Nikita Khrushchëv
1956	Red Army crushes the Hungarian Revolution

Then there was the Suez crisis of 1956-7, when General Abdul Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal in the face of strenuous opposition by both Britain and France. It was resolved in 1957.

* * *

In 1950 Prince Sadruddin left Switzerland to study at the University of Harvard, Cambridge, Massachusetts. His academic path, listed in his entry in *Who's Who*,³⁵ embraced both Harvard's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and its Centre of Middle Eastern Studies, where he graduated with a Master's degree and became a member of the society Phi Beta Kappa.³⁶

Harvard University, named after its first major benefactor, John Harvard, was founded in 1636, and is not only the oldest institution of higher learning in the United States but it is one of the most prestigious universities in the world. It is a modern research university boasting, at the time of writing, seventy-nine individual libraries housing over 18,000,000 volumes. In the

35 Later to be found in *Who was Who*

36 Phi Beta Kappa: according to the Oxford English Reference Dictionary, the oldest American college fraternity, an honorary society to which distinguished undergraduate (and occasionally graduate) students may be elected, named from the initial letters of its Greek motto *philosophia biou kubernêtês* –“philosophy the guide to life”.

period 1945–1960, Harvard’s admissions policies were broadened to admit students from a more diverse applicant pool. No longer drawing mostly from rich alumni of select New England schools, the undergraduate college was now open to middle class students from public schools. However, while many more Jews and Catholics were admitted, there were few blacks, Hispanics or Asians.

Sadrudin was at Harvard for seven years – critical years for him, of course. He did not wish to use his title, and had himself known as Sadri A. Khan. It cannot have been easy for someone as sensitive as he was to remain serene in a country affected by the very diverse events of the 1950s, in particular the Cold War, the situation in Vietnam, McCarthyism, and the quite severe intercommunity tensions. He came to abhor racial injustice, and joined the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People.³⁷

Cultural activities

In 1953, with his pronounced taste for culture, Sadrudin became a co-founder of the *Paris Review*, established with the aim of bringing original creative work to the fore. He was living in Eliot House with Paul Matisse, grandson of French artist Henri Matisse, with future *Paris Review* co-founders George Plimpton and John Train and with Stephen Joyce, a grandson of Irish writer James Joyce. At Harvard he found himself among people who would go on to be leading lights in American politics. He said: “*Many of my professors at Harvard went on to Washington. It was there that I met Kissinger, Schlesinger, Galbraith, Bundy and others who joined the Kennedy administration in the early sixties.*”³⁸ Sadrudin also met Edward Kennedy during that period and they remained friends. He later spoke of his love of swimming and other sports. He was a member of the university swimming team, specialising in long-distance swimming. He was a co-founder of the Harvard Islamic Society.

It was while at Harvard that Sadrudin initiated an art collection that forty years later would become a travelling exhibition of Islamic art, on show first of all at the British Museum, London (see chapter 22). His father had

³⁷ *The UNESCO COURIER*, May 1991

³⁸ Guy Mettan, *Bilan 2/91* and *Politique internationale*. “*Politique internationale*” is a quarterly French political affairs magazine covering international relations. It has published interviews with leaders from both France and the rest of the world.

written in his memoirs that in 1907 he “went to stay at the St. Regis; fifty years later it was the habit of my younger son, Sadruddin, to stay there when he was a Harvard undergraduate whenever he was in New York”.³⁹ Sadruddin told people that he found very many of his art treasures in New York, in the company of a recent graduate and budding art historian, Stuart Cary Welch.

World events and American society: “The USSR bomb”, Vietnam, McCarthyism and race relations

William L. Shirer vividly describes the currents in American society in the second volume of his autobiography “*20th Century Journey*” entitled “*A Native’s Return, 1945-1988*”.

“New York, 24 September, 1949. A historic day yesterday! President Truman announced that ‘we have evidence that within recent weeks an atomic explosion occurred in the USSR.’ As Shirer wrote, the balance of power in the world was abruptly upset. Since Hiroshima in 1945 the United States alone had possessed the bomb, perhaps the chief reason for Stalin abandoning the blockade of Berlin. But now the US had lost – or would shortly lose – that staggering advantage, and he suggested that either the two rival superpowers would have to work out some agreement to coexist in the atomic age, or they would collide and blow up the planet.”⁴⁰

One imagines the impact on young intellectuals such as Sadruddin of the development by the USSR of atomic power. In time he would devote supreme efforts to warning the world about the very serious dangers of nuclear proliferation.

Four years on, Dwight D. Eisenhower coined one of the most famous Cold War phrases in the widely-reported speech he made on 7th April 1954 in which he suggested that the fall of French Indochina to the communists led by Ho Chi Minh could create a “domino” effect in South East Asia. Speaking to a population that until then had had little interest in that part of the world, the President explained the significance of Vietnam to the United States. He spoke of the economic and political importance of “materials that the world needs (and) the possibility that many human beings pass under a dictatorship that is inimical to the free world”. In

39 Aga Khan III, *The Memoirs of Aga Khan*, page 101

40 William Shirer, *A Native’s Return 1945-1988*

explaining his theory, he suggested that it would lead to disintegration in South East Asia, with the “loss of Indochina, of Burma, of Thailand, of the Malay Peninsula, and Indonesia following”⁴¹. He foresaw that even Japan could be in danger.

A month earlier, a force of 40,000 heavily-armed Vietminh had started to lay siege to the French forces at Dien Bien Phu. The Battle of Dien Bien Phu is remembered as the final confrontation between the French Union’s Far East Expeditionary Corps and the Vietminh communist revolutionaries. The Vietminh were victorious on 7th May 1954 after fifty-seven days of siege, an event that unexpectedly signalled the end of French colonial influence in Indochina and cleared the way for the division of Vietnam along the 17th parallel, as came to be agreed at a meeting of governments in Geneva. The Eisenhower domino theory laid the foundation for US involvement in Vietnam, increasing US economic and military assistance to South Vietnam against the backdrop of bitter divisions among Americans. This would end only in 1975, by which time the increase in the numbers of US armed forces sent to Vietnam from 1965 onwards had reached undreamed-of proportions. A new word had been born: “escalation”, and the displacement of whole populations in all three countries of Indochina (Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos) would later become a major concern of Sadruddin’s.

The Oxford dictionary defines McCarthyism as “a vociferous campaign against alleged communists in the United States government and other institutions carried out under Senator Joseph McCarthy”. In the late 1940s, phobia about communists and communist influence was already making itself felt, with the sacking of numbers of liberals from education and the media, as often as not without any accusations being made, and as often as not depriving innocent people of their jobs.

Senator McCarthy, a former circuit judge and Republican senator, rose to prominence in 1950 on alleging in a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia that 205 communists had infiltrated the State Department! His speech created a furore and catapulted him into the headlines across the country. Subsequently required to testify before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, he proved unable to produce the name of a single card-carrying communist in any government department. Nevertheless, he gained increasing popular support for his campaign of accusations by capitalising on the fears and frustrations of a country weary of the Korean War and

41 This day in history, April 7th

perturbed by the spread of communism in Eastern Europe and in China. McCarthy's nationwide militant anti-communist "crusade" received support from a select group of powerful individuals. Most conservative members of Congress backed McCarthy's search. "McCarthy also had the support of the Roman Catholic Church due to its anti-communist stance. It also helped that John F. Kennedy, a prominent Catholic, future President of the United States and quite possibly the only Democrat to do so, supported McCarthy. All of this powerful political backing helped McCarthy escape federal libel and defamation suits."⁴²

Senator McCarthy after his re-election in 1952 obtained the chairmanship of the Committee on Government Operations of the Senate and of its permanent subcommittee on investigations. For the next two years he was constantly in the spotlight, investigating various government departments and questioning innumerable witnesses about suspected communist affiliations. He even went so far as to accuse President Eisenhower and other Republican and Democratic leaders, at the same time making unsubstantiated charges of subversion by U.S. Army officers and civilian officials. In the extraordinary atmosphere of official threats to life and liberty, few felt safe. But finally, on 2nd December 1954, the Senate, now with a Democratic majority, felt secure enough to formally condemn McCarthy on a vote of sixty-seven to twenty-two for conduct "contrary to Senate traditions", thus ending the era of McCarthyism. Students at Harvard probably breathed sighs of relief, along with millions of others.

Prince Sadruddin said that he returned from his years at Harvard "abhorred" by the state of race relations in the United States. Against a background of racial segregation by law, African-Americans had been disenfranchised and violence against them had been all too common for years without number. Blacks returning from military service in both World Wars were among those pressing more urgently for full civil rights, and African-American activists adopted a combined strategy of direct action, non-violent resistance and the organisation of events described as civil disobedience, giving rise to the African-American Civil Rights Movement of 1954 onwards.

Segregation remained intact into the mid-1950s, when many states began gradually to integrate their schools following the Supreme Court decision in

42 <http://study-com/academy/lesson/mccarthyism-and-the-red-scare-definition-causes-eff...> and Encyclopaedia Britannica

Brown v Board of Education that overturned the Plessy v Ferguson ruling of 1896 that had been responsible for making segregation law.

Sadraddin went to the United States before the Civil Rights Movement really got underway. Starting in 1954, it gained strength from the early 1960s when Martin Luther King had his “dream”. The prince was very uneasy about the reality of race relations in the US, one of his highest priorities being respect for people of races other than his own, as it was one of his father’s. This was something that he would recommend to his staff the day that he was leaving his post as UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

* * *

In 1956, Prince Sadraddin acquired the Château de Bellerive, a property of several hectares on the southern shore of Lac Léman (Lake Geneva), a few miles from the city of Geneva. It would be his home for the rest of his life. Sadraddin would explain with humour many years later that his Geneva home had once been Savoyard, that is to say French, “*for Belle-Rive was a commune of Savoy until 1815, the date that it was attached to Switzerland after the Congress of Vienna!*”⁴³ A visitor from London found it entrancing, and wrote:

“If ever East meets West, it could be said to do so at Prince Sadraddin Aga Khan’s 17th-century home, the Château de Bellerive on the shores of Lake Geneva. Flanked by two square towers, the stone façade of the château with its tiled roof, wooden shutters and arched doors of studded oak is austere but arrestingly beautiful. While the outside may be simple, the rooms inside are crammed with exotic bibelots, orchids, oriental rugs and textiles.”⁴⁴

Death of Aga Khan III, first marriage and the start of a UN career

In 1957, Sadraddin returned to Switzerland to face bereavement, his father now being close to death.

In the mid-1950s, while Sadraddin was engaged on his Master’s degree, the Aga Khan had been in failing health. He had acquired a villa in Versoix, in the canton of Geneva, found for him by his wife, the Begum Aga Khan. Its name, *La Rivière*, was changed to *La Barakat* (“the blessing” or “good

43 *Le Messenger*, Sadraddin Aga Khan, le prince Savoyard de l’ONU, vendredi 18 octobre 1991

44 June Ducas, *Telegraph UK*, *Hidden secrets of the universe*, January 1998 © The Telegraph

fortune”). However, the elderly man still spent a lot of time in his Villa Yakymour near Cannes, inviting his grandson and heir, Prince Karim, to spend time there with him.

In the spring of 1957, the Aga Khan’s state worsened and he was flown back to Switzerland. He died in the early hours of 12th July. His family was there: the Begum and Karim who had kept vigil, Aly and Sadruddin, and Aly’s daughter Yasmin.

The Aga Khan had made a will two years earlier, in London. It was read out by a solicitor in the presence of the whole family, and contained the following statement: “I appoint my grandson Karim, the son of my son Aly Salomone Khan, to succeed to the title of Aga Khan and to be the Imam and Pir of all my Shia Ismailian followers.”⁴⁵ With the death of the 48th Imam, Prince Karim assumed the status and duties of the forty-ninth Imam of the Ismailis.

The Aga Khan had expressed the wish to be buried in Aswan in Egypt, and orders were immediately issued for the preparation of a temporary resting place in the grounds of the house he had built there. “The heavy oak coffin was carried by hearse from Versoix to Geneva airport, then flown in a chartered DC 6 to Cairo, and thence to Aswan; the Begum, Prince Karim and Aly Khan travelled with the mortal remains. At the villa, after the customary prayers, Aly, Sadruddin, Karim and Amyn carried the coffin on their shoulders to the vault. With this burial on the banks of the ancient Nile, an era came to an end.”⁴⁶

The Swiss chronicler Guy Mettan was privileged in his interview with Prince Sadruddin in the second quarter of 1991 to be given very personal details of the prince’s state of mind after the death of his father.⁴⁷ Denying having been disappointed that his nephew Karim had been chosen to succeed his father, he said: “*I cannot be disappointed about a thing that could never have happened, because that high charge goes from elder son to elder son, even if in this case it skipped a generation. Had I been the elder son, my destiny would have been different.*” But he admitted that his father’s death had been a great shock, and that he had realised that at this stage in his life he would have to do some very serious stock-taking, and find a way to develop a career quite distinct from his Ismaili family. “*My first battle had to do with my name and my family. This*

45 Aziz, K.K. (ed.), *Aga Khan III – Selected Speeches and Writings of Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah*, pp 19-20

46 Aziz, *op.cit*

47 Guy Mettan, *Bilan 2/91*

required a lot of time and patience. If I was going to choose an active public life, I would have to face and resolve this problem. That was my greatest challenge: to gain acceptance from others and from myself as an individual.”⁴⁸

He went on to say that it was his time at Harvard and the death of his father that had set him on his path in life.

Years after the death of Aga Khan III, Sadruddin wrote of his father in a tribute published 100 years after the late Aga Khan's birth (*The Times* of 5th November 1977 – see Annex I), of which the following is an extract:

“To many in the West he remains the religious leader who was weighed against precious stones, the racehorse owner who won five Derbys or the man whose eldest son, Aly Khan, once married Rita Hayworth.

“For those who are more familiar with the East he was the most gifted hereditary religious leader or forty-eighth imam of some 12,000,000 Ismaili Shia Muslims who are to be found from the Great Wall of China to the southern tip of Africa, a direct descendant of Prophet Mohammed and a true believer in the precepts of Islam.

“Students of history or the older generations may recall the Aga Khan as a statesman who was received by Queen Victoria in 1898, became the youngest member of Lord Curzon's legislative Council in 1902, presided over the Muslim League from 1906 until 1912 and led the Muslim deputation to the Round Table Conference in 1930 which paved the way for the independence of the sub-continent.

“In addition, 1937 saw him preside over the ill-fated League of Nations when he later visited Hitler in Berchtesgaden in a last-ditch effort to avert war.

“For me, of course, he was all of these things and many more. It remains challenging but essential for the son of any great father to do away with the labels which are inevitably attached by history to the public figures of our time and to attempt an impartial assessment. This I hope to do in a book some day.

“My father was first and foremost a deeply religious man who had no difficulty in integrating an active political and social life and everything it entailed in terms of formality and obligations in the post-Victorian era, with the close communion with God which is the aspiration of every practising Muslim.

“He was truly the product of a meeting between East and West.”

48 Mettan in his article which runs to several close-written pages quoted elements from the magazine “Politique internationale”.

When his father died, Sadruddin was engaged to Nina Dyer, an Anglo-Indian model previously married to Baron Von Thyssen, reportedly the wealthiest man in Europe, who had bought her an island and two panthers on a golden chain. They were married in August 1957. The marriage lasted three years, during which time Sadruddin was travelling the world a great deal. Their divorce was pronounced in June 1962. Nina Dyer died by her own hand in July 1965. Staff of UNHCR were aware that month that their Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees was desolate. In the space of eight years, he had lost three people who had been very dear to him, his father, his ex-wife and his half-brother Aly, killed in a car crash in 1960.⁴⁹

* * *

Throughout his lifetime Sadruddin would reflect the values learnt in boyhood, seeking to honour his father in his choices as a young adult. Following in the footsteps of his father and only months after his death, Sadruddin started in United Nations work, taking on – then as later – unusually demanding tasks. In 1958, his exceptionally long, varied and prolific relationship with the United Nations Organisation began when he became a UNESCO Consultant for Afro-Asian Projects. In 1959 and 1960 he was Special Envoy and Adviser to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and in 1961 he was appointed Special Consultant to the Director-General of UNESCO and Executive Secretary of the International Action Committee for the Preservation of Nubian Monuments.

Sadruddin never agreed to receive from the UN more than the

49 Sadruddin's half-brother Aly, to whom the prince would quite often refer in interviews, died in a car crash near Saint Cloud, Paris on 12th May 1960. He was only forty-eight. Prince Aly Khan had studied law at Lincoln's Inn, and had been a sportsman, soldier, and eminently successful horse breeder and trader before becoming a diplomat. After his father's death, he was offered the appointment of Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, New York by the President of Pakistan, Iskander Mirza. At the time of the accident, Aly was reported to have been driving slowly because he had just taken delivery of a new Lancia, and wanted to run it in carefully. With him was his fiancée Simone Bodin, a French model otherwise known as Bettina, and his chauffeur. A Monsieur Bichaton at the wheel of a Simca swung his car across to the centre of the road as he came round a bend and hit the Lancia. Aly was killed outright, while the other occupants of both cars escaped with only shock and minor injuries. Aly's death was of course a tremendous shock to the family and to the whole Ismaili community across the world. (Based on a report in www.gentlemansgazette.com/prince-aly-khan)

mandatory one dollar per year, having his own means and covering all his own expenses (and those of his second wife, who after their marriage in 1972 would accompany him very often on his official travels). The United Nations administration diverted the salary he did not wish to accept to a fund used, in due course, to meet urgent humanitarian needs. Furthermore, the prince never used his hereditary title in any UN documents or correspondence.

3

UNHCR Special Envoy for World Refugee Year, 1959-60

I have a very deep faith in the United Nations and in the UN system as a whole⁵⁰.

Sadraddin Aga Khan

The late Aga Khan had in 1937 presided over the League of Nations. Twenty-one years later his younger son, at the age of twenty-five, started to do what he could in the framework of the United Nations. Over the several decades that elapsed from that point on, it was the humanitarian work of the world body which would benefit most. Prince Sadraddin could not have imagined, while engaged as a UNESCO consultant in 1958, that he would be needed by another United Nations agency to travel the world as a matter of urgency to champion World Refugee Year (WRY) and in particular, promote the creation of a worldwide postage stamp issue!

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had been created only a few years earlier, with a mandate to provide protection and to find solutions for the remaining refugee problems in Europe. These were principally, though not exclusively, the problems of people who had been living in makeshift camps for years, some even since the end of the Second World War. Under the heading “A Global Humanitarian Organisation of Humble Origins”, UNHCR describes its start in life as “the UN refugee agency (that) emerged in the wake of World War II to help Europeans displaced by that conflict.” Optimistically, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established on 14th December 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly with a three-year mandate to complete its work and then disband. The following year, on 28th July 1951, the United Nations Convention

50 Prince Sadraddin, in a NBC interview, 10th February 1966

relating to the Status of Refugees – the legal foundation of assistance to refugees and the basic statute guiding UNHCR's work – was adopted.

In 1956 UNHCR faced its first major emergency, an outpouring of refugees when Soviet forces crushed the Hungarian Revolution. As the UNHCR website explains, the expectation that UNHCR would become unnecessary has never resurfaced. In the 1960s, circumstances surrounding the decolonisation of Africa produced the first of that continent's numerous refugee crises needing UNHCR intervention.

The Western world's wave of sympathy for the Hungarian people's uprising that was so dramatically crushed by Russian tanks resulted in resettlement offers being issued rapidly to the 200,000 or so Hungarians who fled their country. Before long, the United States announced that it could admit 80,000, Canada set no limit, the United Kingdom announced a quota of 11,000 and France one of 8,000.⁵¹ For refugees stranded in post-war camps in Austria, Germany, Greece and Italy who were certainly not in the news, many or most of whom had been turned down more than once by the selection missions of Western countries, it must have seemed that there was very little concern about their fate. They were living in inferior conditions that one could describe as abject, and needed something special to be done if they were ever to leave those camps.

But something special *was* done: in 1958, a British woman, Joyce Pearce OBE, who ran an NGO called The Ockenden Venture, sowed the seed of a great idea in the mind of an eminent Olympic athlete and Member of Parliament, Christopher Chataway, by inviting him to visit some of the camps with her. As a result, a call soon came in the political quarterly *Crossbow*, drafted by four young British MPs, for a World Refugee Year, to be proposed to the United Nations General Assembly by the United Kingdom delegation. The result was that by UN Resolution A/RES/1285 (XIII) passed by a very large majority, the very first UN Year was proclaimed. It ran from 1st June 1959 and had two main aims:

To focus interest on the refugee problem and to encourage additional financial contributions from governments, voluntary agencies and the general public, and

To encourage additional opportunities for permanent refugee solutions, through voluntary repatriation, resettlement or integration, on a purely humanitarian basis.

51 The *Central Europe Review* of 1st November 1999

Anyone who has noted the comparatively poor impact that subsequent “UN years” have had might find it hard to imagine the extent to which the first of these achieved its aims. Ninety-seven countries were to join the effort out of 100 UN members at that time. In Britain, there was unanimity on the worthiness of the cause which had the patronage of H.M. the Queen and of all three political parties. Fifty very notable people made up the UK’s Advisory Council and all were actively involved. There were 1,090 WRY committees formed throughout Britain to sponsor local activities. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Dr Auguste Lindt, was fully supportive, as were the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and the Director-General of UNRWA, the UN relief agency for Palestinian refugees.

The WRY stamp plan

Prince Sadruddin later said in an interview with *The UNESCO Courier*: “*I was Head of Mission and Advisor to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. I was principally concerned with World Refugee Year (1959-1960). Through a philatelic programme to which all member states of the UN and the Universal Postal Union contributed, we collected a large sum of money and also gave pleasure to stamp collectors.*”

The idea was originally conceived, I surmise, in the fertile brain of a staff member of UNHCR, a Dutchman, Cornelius (Kees) Brouwer, a man who had been decorated after the war for his bravery as a resistance fighter and who in the 1960s was the head of fundraising at headquarters. It meant that the High Commissioner, Dr Auguste Lindt, needed to find someone of very high standing and plenty of energy, since he would have to travel to as many capital cities as possible to explain the idea to governments and their postal authorities, and encourage them to join the international effort. Dr Lindt succeeded in recruiting Prince Sadruddin for the outstanding qualifications that he knew that he had, not only because of the prince’s academic record but because of his unusually distinguished East-West background.

Sadruddin was to travel widely throughout Europe and to Africa, Asia and Latin America. He would call on Heads of States and governments, address parliamentary groups, non-governmental organisations and citizens’ associations and above all, discuss and organise the WRY Stamp Plan with postal administrations.

It was a record in philatelic history, a special issue on a commonly-agreed day, 7th April 1960, in a humanitarian cause. The cause was of course refugees and the occasion World Refugee Year, or *Weltflüchtlingsjahr*, *Année Mondiale du Réfugié*, *Anno Mondiale del Rifugiato*, *Weeldjaar voor de Vluchteling*, *Varldsflyktingaret*... and so on. The message went out in dozens of languages. The uniqueness of this stamp issue was its worldwide character, with its effect on public opinion. From illustrious postal administrations such as those of the United States or Brazil to the tiny one of the Maldiv Islands, all were persuaded to adopt this means of recognising the importance of the displaced in the world of 1959 and of sending the message around the globe.

The WRY stamps were beautiful. Most of the designs reflected the theme in a special way. Many, whether or not they included art work depicting the refugee experience, used the uprooted tree, designed by the United Nations to symbolise the refugee for the purposes of the special stamp issue, or the protective hands (a pair of hands within a laurel branch arched to protect a human figure), the United Nations symbol for World Refugee Year, a symbol still seen over fifty years later on UNHCR trucks and tents in far-flung areas of the world.

Sadrudin suggested to the various postal administrations across the world a wide choice of appropriate and imaginative themes to illustrate the refugee story, which begins with flight and extreme stress and ends, sometimes, in hope and resettlement. Eire, Luxembourg and the Vatican, for example, depicted on their stamps the flight into Egypt, with the Holy Family seen in different art forms. Colombia's stamps illustrated the desperate flight of a young family of three, with the father looking back fearfully to see if they were being pursued. Austria portrayed a family attempting to escape over steep, snowy mountains, a small boy on his mother's back, the father shouldering a heavy suitcase. Italy's L.25 and L.60 values showed a strong man, accompanied by an anxious young boy, staggering under the weight of a wounded compatriot (this was in fact a reproduction of a Raphael fresco showing Aeneas saving his family from Troy). The Icelandic stamps reproduced Einar Johnsson's statue *The Outlaw* which shows a refugee carrying his dead wife over his shoulder, their baby in his arms, accompanied by his only friend, a dog.

The United States stamps featured a refugee family halfway along a tunnel at the end of which there is light. Belgium's 6F surcharged stamp showed a woman standing weeping beside her bundles of belongings – all that

remained of her home – and the 40c one was of a small boy seated against a wall, desolation written all over his face. Norway and Finland had chosen the theme of a woman alone with her baby in a virtual sea of refugees.

Greece had chosen to have a sailing ship potentially in difficulty in stormy waters, but the lighthouse beamed out a strong light of hope. The stamps of Chile, Peru and Uruguay were designed to show people on the threshold of a new life. Indeed in Peru the newly-arrived refugee was at work ploughing a field.

A few countries limited themselves to overprinting, such as Laos which featured a splendid working elephant. Some issued first-day covers with a common design by Jean Cocteau. Quite a few issued surcharged stamps, thereby collecting extra funds for the refugee cause.

Eleven countries of Africa took part (this was before decolonisation), twenty-one in the Americas, twenty in Asia, twenty-three in Europe and two in Oceania, while the United Nations issued its own WRY stamps. It seems a great pity that the United Kingdom, having initiated the idea of a World Refugee Year, was in this particular instance conspicuous by its absence. No doubt Prince Sadruddin was politely advised in London that by law, every British postage stamp had to feature only Queen Elizabeth II – a law which has since been modified.

The overall effort was certainly a tribute to the effective entreaties of Prince Sadruddin, whose life for months before the simultaneous date of issue of seventy-four countries' stamps, 7th April 1960, must have been hectic in the extreme. But typically, he did not spare himself, and typically he achieved a result beyond anyone's imaginings. After all, three quarters of the States members of the UN had agreed to go ahead. The participating countries donated 10% of the issue to the United Nations for sale on behalf of refugees. The proceeds, which were to amount to over \$1.5M, were divided between UNHCR and UNRWA. UNHCR was allotted a space in the open-plan office of the UN Postal Administration, along with a small windowless storeroom to keep the precious merchandise in safe custody. The stamps were sold by sheet to philatelic wholesalers the world over, first by a Hungarian girl, Anki Tauber, who then moved to a more senior post, then by the author. By the end of March 1961, all the stamps had been ordered, paid for and parcelled up for dispatch.

The funds were gradually allocated to specific assistance programmes of the two UN agencies. At that time, UNHCR's annual budget, contributed

by governments, was not much over \$4M dollars, and the Stamp Plan, considered to have been of great public relations and fundraising value to the UN, was the first major fundraising effort of the young agency. Overall, World Refugee Year made it possible to collect special contributions amounting to some \$30,000,000. Assistance measures included the building of housing for people who had spent years in camps in Greece and Italy, the establishment of a protected workshop in Italy for those unable to achieve successful rehabilitation because of handicaps of a severe nature, and the part-financing of new homes for elderly refugees in various countries of Europe, mainly elderly White Russians trapped in China. But that was not all! In a May 1991 interview for *The UNESCO Courier*, Sadruddin, who had been speaking of the Stamp Plan, was asked: "Was this for the benefit of European refugees alone?" He replied, "No. *World Refugee Year was very useful for the Palestine refugees, since the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which was responsible for providing them with assistance, had been in existence since 1949. But it is true that around this time refugees began to appear in the Third World who did not benefit from United Nations aid. One such case was that of the Vietnamese who had fled from the north of their country after the battle of Dien Bien Phu. In Africa, the first refugees from Angola were entering Congo-Kinshasa and Congo-Brazzaville. Refugees from Algeria were flowing into Morocco and Tunisia. These were new situations for UNHCR, which had been originally created for refugees from Eastern Europe and was a kind of European club. Very early on, and perhaps this is the best thing I have done in my career, I tried to avoid all discrimination between European and third world refugees.*"

Asked by the UNESCO journalist why there were different categories of refugees and what form these differences took, Sadruddin replied, "*They were the result of constraints that were essentially legal. United Nations action was subject to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, an international instrument which was drawn up during the Cold War and, as everyone now accepts, made UNHCR a propaganda instrument against the Eastern countries.*"

"*In order to benefit from UNHCR protection, a refugee had to be able to prove that he or she was persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality or political opinions, was outside his or her country of origin, and could not enjoy that country's protection. At that time refugees were pictured as people who crossed the Iron Curtain and were fired on from frontier watchtowers. But where did this leave the African populations who were victims of general instability, fleeing tribal warfare on both sides of frontiers traced arbitrarily by*

the colonial powers? In Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 people knew where the frontiers with Austria were. But there was not a single frontier post between Angola and what was then Congo-Kinshasa!

"It was necessary to widen the UNHCR mandate, and this was a long and legally complex process. The protection of the High Commissioner was finally extended to new categories of refugees by virtue of a Protocol which was adopted in 1967 and which I myself strongly supported. These same refugees were also able to benefit from the so-called "good offices" resolutions voted by the General Assembly of the United Nations."

The UNESCO COURIER: It looks as if Third World refugees were a frightening prospect at that time.

*"People saw millions of men, women and children who could not be integrated. They feared the economic and financial consequences and the repercussions on the labour market. It was already a North-South problem. If it was easy to resettle Czechs, Russians or Hungarians in countries like Australia, New Zealand, the United States and even South Africa, it was difficult to integrate in those countries displaced people originating from Africa or Asia. In any case, most of these refugees did not wish to be resettled permanently. They looked forward to the day when they could return home."*⁵²

In two statements made by the former High Commissioner, Dr Lindt, we can see something of the impact of World Refugee Year. In a statement to the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly on 2nd November 1959, governments learned that there were already optimistic signs of the camps nearing the end of their prolonged lives. Speaking of the camp clearance programme, the High Commissioner said:

"World Refugee Year was viewed, not least by the refugees themselves, with considerable scepticism. Would it be possible to settle people who had endured for so many years the deteriorating effect of camp life? But when camps were actually closed – and one or two symbolically burned – the atmosphere changed. The counsellors of the voluntary agencies, who know each family in a camp, are now able, thanks to the means made available by my programmes, to find concrete individual solutions for each case."

At the tenth meeting of the Council of the Inter-Governmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM)⁵³, Naples, 5th December 1960, the High Commissioner said:

52 The UNESCO COURIER: Interview, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, May 1991.

53 Now the International Organisation for Migration, IOM

“World Refugee Year has had already a very great impact. I would like to limit myself here mostly to the impact it has had on emigration of refugees. Here I should like to highlight one very revolutionary thing. There was in each refugee grouping up to now a category which was labelled “unemigrable”. This label constituted a stigma, not only on a person but on the whole family. World Refugee Year, in its impact, has changed and liberalised this concept of the “unemigrable”. The European countries to a very great extent never knew the concept of the “unemigrable” and at an increasing pace during the last year, especially under the leadership of the Scandinavian countries, in particular Sweden, they have taken badly handicapped refugees and proved that they could be very valuable assets to the country which offered them hospitality.”

Joyce Pearce continued with her work for refugees arriving in Britain, well pleased no doubt with the result of her remarkable initiative!

4

The Prince, UNESCO and the Nubian Monuments, 1958 & 1961

*This is the century of the uprooted man.*⁵⁴

Sadrudin Aga Khan

As touched upon in the previous chapter, Sadrudin was initially recruited in 1958 by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) as Consultant for Afro-Asian Projects. In that capacity, he was responsible for the co-ordination of projects to promote women's rights, women's organisations and vocational training centres in third world countries. Then came the pressing request of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Dr Auguste Lindt, to devote his energies to the first UN "Year", World Refugee Year.

As soon as his "WRY" duties had been accomplished, Sadrudin became an Adviser to UNESCO's Director-General, and was appointed Executive Secretary of the International Action Committee for the Preservation of Nubian Monuments. In that capacity, he was responsible for the co-ordination of the campaign to save the Nubian monuments that came to involve more than sixty national archaeological teams. He had extensive discussions with governments at the highest levels, *inter alia* meeting President Kennedy and his Administration in Washington, and addressing many university and other groups to explain the campaign and whip up the initial financial support needed of \$10,000,000. Being directly responsible for raising that sum to initiate the ambitious project to save the Abu Simbel temples and other architectural masterpieces in the same area was no mean challenge, one that however he managed to meet while planning was going ahead for the

54 Sadrudin Aga Khan in a radio interview, 7th October 1972

rescue of the monuments – along with the relocation of some 100,000 Nubian people who had to be moved from their traditional homes. Unfortunately, we do not hear anything more about these uprooted people who did not fall within the mandate of any international organisation, so have to assume that the Egyptian government did its best to resettle them.

There are people who on hearing the words “Abu Simbel” may think of these extraordinary archaeological monuments as the fictional field headquarters of MI6 in the 1977 James Bond film *The Spy Who Loved me*; or possibly as a way to the oasis of Ahm-Shere in *The Mummy Returns* (2001). They are two massive rock temples on a rock cliff at Abu Simbel, a village in Nubia, southern Egypt (near the border with Sudan and east of the majestic River Nile), that Prince Sadruddin and an international team were instrumental in saving from inundation at the site of the new Aswan Dam. Situated on the western bank of Lake Nasser about 230 kilometres south-west of Aswan, the complex is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site known as the “Nubian Monuments”.

Many years later, Sadruddin talked to a journalist of *The UNESCO Courier*, who asked him about the early years of his international career, saying: “I believe you started by taking an interest in the problem of the Abu Simbel temples.” Sadruddin replied,

“Yes, I took my first steps in international life at UNESCO, which at that time was conducting an exciting campaign to save the monuments of Nubia, a campaign which in my opinion remains one of UNESCO’s great achievements. In the middle of the Cold War it was quite remarkable to get East European archaeologists to join archaeologists from the United States and other Western countries in order to save the treasures of ancient Egypt. Not to mention that since 1956 Nasser had not exactly been the most popular Arab figure in the West.”

The prince was asked: Did the general feeling that Abu Simbel should be saved crystallise at a precise moment? He replied,

“Not only Abu Simbel. There were other monuments which were just as important: the temples of Philae and Kalabsha, the Christian churches of Nubia. The Upper Egypt of the great pharaonic civilisations did not stop at Aswan, it extended to Nubia, to Khartoum in the Sudan. In order to develop, all these regions needed the resources that tourism could bring them.

“From an entirely different point of view, in face of the threat of the flooding of archaeological sites by the construction of the Aswan dam, all kinds of

*people from many countries, independently of their political orientations, were united in thinking that something should be done. At that time, I was executive secretary of UNESCO's international action committee for the preservation of the Nubian sites and monuments, and I was strongly aware of this feeling.*⁵⁵

The Nile

To understand the reasons for a vast area being threatened by flooding once a new Aswan Dam would be functioning, it is perhaps of interest to go back to the history of the great river. The longest river in the world, the Nile (6,853 kilometres or approximately 4,250 miles long) is, as every European schoolchild learns, responsible for the extraordinary civilisation that developed along the Nile valley in the time of the Pharaohs. Over centuries, magnificent monuments were built that became wonders of the world, protected in comparatively recent times from degradation once it was realised that some of the burial sites of time-honoured Pharaohs were being vandalised, while the passage of time could not but affect adversely the outer layers of stone.

The planet's most elusive secret from the time of the Pharaohs was where the source of this great river could be. The Greek historian Herodotus, who about 450 BC travelled up the Nile as far as the first cataract at Aswan, believed that the Nile owed its birth to "fountains" at the foot of high mountains somewhere in the centre of Africa. But how could the river flow unfaillingly every day of the year for practically 2,000 kilometres through the largest and driest desert in the known world without being replenished by a single tributary? Small wonder that its annual inundation of the Delta in the hottest month of the year gave rise to awe! Sir Samuel Baker, one of the famous 19th century explorers of the Nile, tells us that 2,000 years ago the Emperor Nero, as described by Seneca, sent an expedition under the command of two centurions, "but even Roman energy failed to break the spell that guarded these secret fountains" for they were stopped by the immense swamp extending for hundreds of miles, halfway from the river's still unknown source to its mouth.⁵⁶

55 *The UNESCO COURIER*, May 1991

56 Sir Samuel Baker, *The Albert N'yanza*

Jim Neal in his 2011 book *Explorers of the Nile* writes: “When Alexander the Great was shown the temple of Ammon in Siwa, the first question he asked is said to have been: ‘What causes the Nile to rise?’” Now we know that Herodotus was right, the main tributaries of the “White” Nile are two rivers, the Nyabarongo and the Ruvubu, that rise in Rwanda and Burundi respectively, flowing into the Kagera River and on into Lake Victoria, the great lake considered since the discovery of John Hanning Speke at Owen Falls to be the true source. Then the “Blue” Nile coming from the Ethiopian Highlands joins it at Khartoum, and as a result of the heavy tropical rains in those highlands is responsible for much of the flooding that has been the enrichment of Egypt for countless centuries.

The Abu Simbel temples

Construction of the temple complex is said to have started around 1264 BC and to have lasted for about twenty years. Known as the “Temple of Rameses, beloved by Amun” it was one of six rock temples erected in Nubia during the long reign of Rameses II. Their purpose was to impress Egypt’s southern neighbours, and also to reinforce the status of Egyptian religion in the region.

With the passage of several centuries, the temples fell into disuse and eventually came to be covered by sand. Already in the 6th century BC, sand covered the statues of the main temple up to their knees. The temple was forgotten until 1813, when Swiss orientalist Jean-Louis Burckhardt found the top frieze of the main temple. He talked about his discovery with Italian explorer Giovanni Belzoni, who a few years later succeeded in entering the complex. This was several decades before British explorers in the middle of the 19th century resolved the mystery of the source of the Nile, and brought about the opening up of the central regions of Africa and the suppression of the slave trade, that for centuries had robbed immense areas of their populations, millions of men, women and children being snatched and taken in chains to Zanzibar’s slave market.

Egypt’s State Information Service (SIS) describes the two temples at Abu Simbel, 280 km from Aswan, as among the most magnificent monuments in the world.

The main temple, the Temple of Re-Harakhte (The Sun Temple of Rameses II) was dedicated to Rameses II and to the four universal gods

Ptah, Re-Harakhte, Amunb-Re, and Rameses II himself. Of the seven temples Rameses II built, Abu Simbel is considered to be the most impressive. The State Information Service describes it as follows⁵⁷:

“Above the doorway in a niche stands the sun god, a falcon headed representation of Rameses, holding a war-sceptre which shows the head and neck of an animal on his right and a figure of Ma’at on his left. This setup ingeniously creates the Kings Throne name of User-Ma’at-Re. At the top of the façade is a row of baboons which are thought to be greeting the morning sun and indeed the monument looks best at that time. The sides of the thrones next to the entrance are decorated with Nile gods symbolically uniting Egypt, while below are prisoners, representing conquered nations, to the left, African and to the right, Asian. The entrance leads into a Grand Hall which is 57 feet high and 52 feet wide and was cut from the rock. It is supported with eight pillars with statues of Ramsis.” (The name of the Pharaoh is variously spelt Ramsis, Ramses and Rameses.)

Nefertari’s Temple of Hathor (Abu Simbel – Small Temple):

Hathor was the wife of the Sun God so in a symbolic way, the two Temples, that of Rameses II and that of Nefertari, bring Rameses II and Nefertari and Hathor and the Sun God together as one. The façade of the temple is a receding Pylon, like the larger temple of Rameses II. On either side of the entrance to the temple is a deified statue of Nefertari with statues of Rameses II on either side of her. The statues of Nefertari are the same height as those of Rameses, which is unusual. As at Rameses II’s temple, there are children depicted around their feet. There are cobras protecting the Temple door.

It is believed that the axis of the temple was positioned by the ancient Egyptian architects in such a way that on 22nd October and 22nd February, the rays of the sun would penetrate the sanctuary and illuminate the sculptures on the back wall, except for the statue of Ptah, the god connected with the Underworld, who always remained in the dark. People gather at Abu Simbel to witness this remarkable sight, on 21st October and 21st February, dates alleged to be the former king’s birthday and coronation day respectively.

57 State Information Service of Egypt, *Nubian Monuments from Abu Simbel to Philae*

The Building of the First Aswan Dam and the Inundation of Lower Nubia

At the peak of the Nile's yearly flood brought about by the late summer rains in the plateau region of Ethiopia, the volume of the river's flow increases by as much as sixteen-fold and has been recorded as variously between 12 billion cubic metres of flood water (as in 1913-1914) and 155 billion cubic metres of water (1878-79).

In 1899, construction of the first Aswan Dam was begun to provide hydroelectric power and ensure the future of agriculture across a vast area. Completed in 1902, its height was raised in subsequent building campaigns of 1907-12 and 1929-34. Even with these renovations, the first or "Low" dam proved inadequate. It was decided that a second dam was necessary at Aswan, and in the early 1950s, designs began to be drawn for what was to become the High Dam at Aswan. With the signing of the Nile Water Agreement by Egypt and the Sudan in November 1959, work began on the second Aswan Dam.

Many of Sadruddin's contemporaries will probably still remember the worldwide concern throughout the latter years of the 1950s over the distinct likelihood that the construction of the new Aswan Dam could or would mean the submersion in the waters of Lake Nasser of some of the very precious ancient monuments built by the Pharaohs 3,000 years earlier. With the optimistic perspective of saving the Nubian monuments, the Egyptian Government launched a worldwide appeal. It was part of Sadruddin's brief to co-ordinate the campaign and to raise some \$10,000,000 for the preservation of these great Nubian monuments that his father had once visited.

The Nubian desert lies between 20.30°N and 33.00°E. According to the Köppen-Geiger climate classification system, the average high temperature in °C from May through September is in excess of 39°C (over 100°F), with an average low of some 25°C. Average precipitations in millimetres are reportedly zero throughout the twelve months, and mean daily sunshine hours are either ten or eleven throughout the year. One hopes that 3,000 years earlier, the climate was more forgiving! To work there day after day in the 20th century must have been extremely taxing.

Rescue of the monuments

Sadrudin slipped into this work with enthusiasm. His top-level job as adviser to the Secretary-General of UNESCO naturally brought him into contact with President Nasser and his entourage, with whom he had already been on good terms as a visitor to Egypt⁵⁸. He now worked alongside the Minister of Culture, H.E. Sawt Okasha and sixty national archaeological teams and diplomats from a range of countries of both East and West – despite the Cold War!

The description of Sadrudin penned much later in relation to the Abu Simbel project was of a gentle, urbane man, popular among UN staff and international diplomats. But this brief mention overlooks the fact that the prince was extremely dynamic, and in his role as a UNESCO expert one cannot doubt that he used all his talents and all his energy to help move the whole gigantic project forward. Of course it was a multi-year task. The temples came to be preserved over several years by the combined efforts of a multinational team of archaeologists, engineers and skilled heavy equipment operators working under the UNESCO banner.

The entire site was carefully cut into large blocks (of up to thirty tons each), dismantled, lifted and reassembled in a new location sixty-five metres up the sandstone cliff on which the monuments had been sculpted more than 3,000

58 Prince Sadrudin's family had close ties with Egypt. In 1899, the twenty-two-year-old Aga Khan III made his first visit to Africa, being then on his way home to India, and he visited Egypt for the first time – becoming entranced with it! He wrote that those who have not experienced it, “who have not been lucky enough to fall under Egypt's spell, will find it difficult, I suppose, to realise the sheer magic of the first sight of Egypt. There is a unique quality about Egypt's charm: the wide, tranquil skies, the extraordinary clarity of its light and atmosphere, the glories of its sunsets and its starlit nights, and its tremendous monuments of a majestic past.” *Memoirs of Aga Khan*, pp.60-61. The first trip that Sadrudin's father made after the end of the Second World War was to Egypt, and he wrote in his memoirs: “In Egyptian Court and political circles I had countless friends, including many members of the Royal Family. Three at least deserve, in my view, more than passing mention: King Farouk, whom I now met for the first time as a grown man; his Prime Minister, Nahas Pasha, and his Heir Apparent, Prince Mohammed Ali. Prince Mohammed Ali and I have been friends for fifty-five years. When I first went to London in 1898 he and I stayed at the same hotel, the old Albemarle in Piccadilly. He dined at Windsor Castle as Queen Victoria's guest either shortly before or after I had the same honour. By a curious and delightful coincidence, fifty-five years later, in Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation Year, he and I who had been Queen Victoria's guests at dinner were in the same summer her young great-great-granddaughter's guests at tea.” *Memoirs of Aga Khan*, pp. 280-281 The late Aga Khan's place of rest is in the mausoleum that can be seen on the right bank of the Nile at Aswan, not far from the residence he owned in which he used to spend many of the winters.

years earlier. Here they were reassembled “in the exact same relationship to each other and to the sun, and covered with an artificial mountain”. According to the SIS, most of the joins in the stone have now been filled by antiquity experts, but inside the temples it is still possible to see where the blocks were cut.⁵⁹

By 1967 when the mammoth task was finally completed, Sadrudin had been travelling the world for a number of years as Deputy United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (1962-65), and had been appointed High Commissioner.

At the time of writing, the civilised world is holding its breath that the fanatics of the so-called Islamic State now starting to operate in Egypt will not get hold of these and other precious monuments and try to destroy them. Meanwhile, in a magazine received this very day⁶⁰, a Swiss tour operator, VAC, offers us a really extraordinary 12-day trip at prices that defy belief to visit the Abu Simbel monuments and other treasures: first at Luxor, then, in the Valley of the Kings, Queen Hatshepsout’s funeral temple and the two Memnon giants – and so on. On the seventh day, your “five-star floating hotel” brings you within reach of the Abu Simbel monuments, and you still have other treasures to visit before you are invited on the eleventh day to take a day of rest on the Red Sea. Will tour operators really attract takers at this time of dubious security?⁶¹

59 Wikipedia

60 15th September 2015

61 VAC net tours, Voyages de sept.2015 à juin 2016

5

Deputy UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 1962-65

Wherever he went, and whatever his mission, his view of the world was always truly global.

Kofi Annan

Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, in over forty years of very active work, came to devote well over half to the United Nations, and no fewer than seventeen of those years to UNHCR. When in 1962 he was appointed Deputy United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN “specialised agency” of which he would be asked at the end of 1965 to take full charge was only just over ten years old. The primary purpose of the Office of the High Commissioner was to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees, striving to ensure that everyone who fled persecution in their country could exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another, in line with Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

Dr Fridtjof Nansen had been a League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. At the end of the Second World War, there were countless millions of displaced people who had nowhere to go, and a first intergovernmental agency, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA – 1943-47) was set up even before the end of that war, and before the United Nations was formally constituted. It helped millions of people for whom there was to be no going back. Then the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) took over until finally, UNHCR was created by the 1950 United Nations General Assembly. The first High Commissioner for Refugees appointed by the UN was Dr G.J. van Heuven Goedhart, a veteran of the Dutch resistance. He set the tone in saying on the occasion of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Office on 12th December 1955:

“The refugee problem has nothing to do with charity. It is not the problem of people to be pitied, far more of people to be admired. It is the problem of people who somewhere, somehow, sometime, had the courage to give up the feeling of belonging, which they possessed, rather than abandon the human freedom which they valued more highly.”⁶²

Governments hoped that the remaining post-war refugee situations could be resolved rapidly and that UNHCR could therefore cease to exist. However, as we have seen, new refugee flows occurred both in Europe and further afield, and the mandate subsequently came to be renewed every five years for several decades. Finally, it was recognised that UNHCR was indispensable.

Dr van Heuven Goedhart died in office. His successor was Dr Auguste Lindt (1956-60), who very soon after his appointment mobilised support for the Hungarians who fled to Austria and Yugoslavia as a result of the Soviet Union's suppression of the 1956 uprising. Subsequently he provided assistance to some 260,000 Algerians who had fled to Tunisia and Morocco during the Algerian war of independence.

The third UN High Commissioner for Refugees was Mr Félix Schnyder (1960-65), with whom Prince Sadruddin would work for nearly four years as his deputy. The two when alone would converse in Swiss-German, a language more or less incomprehensible to anyone else!

All three High Commissioners before Prince Sadruddin assumed that role accepted the fact that the Office would address the problems of refugees in post-war camps in Europe and of elderly Russians needing to leave China. These would be people defined as refugees in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, namely:

(ii) Any person who, as a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear or for reasons other than personal convenience, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear or for reasons other than personal convenience, is unwilling to return to it.

From the start, the Office had dual responsibility for protection and assistance to refugees. As already touched upon and as we shall see, in the

62 UNHCR: *a Mandate to Protect and Assist Refugees*, 1971

early 1960s many new situations arose in which people whose status did not necessarily come within the above definition would need protection and assistance.

Meeting the staff

One day in 1962, the UNHCR Director of Operations Thomas Jamieson accompanied the new Deputy High Commissioner round the three floors of UNHCR's headquarters in the Palais des Nations, to introduce him to members of staff one by one. Most of us had had no prior indication that we were about to meet Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, the new Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees. Many of us probably failed to grasp the name and even less could we have expected to be meeting a future UN High Commissioner who would very soon face awesome challenges and lift the organisation onto new levels.

We smiled and shook hands with this good-looking man of medium height, who seemed to have the quietest and friendliest of manners. We soon learnt that the new high United Nations official of twenty-nine was not on his first UN assignment but had already been active as a UNESCO consultant and as a Special Envoy for UNHCR. Later we were of course in a position to learn much more about him, and over subsequent years some of us found ourselves in his company on numerous occasions, both within the stately Palais des Nations, and in "the field".

Little could any of us have imagined that we had just met a man of real brilliance who was already passionately dedicated to the ideals of the United Nations, specified in Article 1 of its Charter, which reads:

The Purposes of the United Nations are:

1. To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;
2. To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the

principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;

3. To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; and
4. To be a centre for harmonising the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

Sadrudin Aga Khan would use all his talents, imagination and energy to serve the UN at practically every level. In many quarters he would even come to be seen at three periods (1981, 1986 and 1991) as the best possible potential candidate for the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations, once actually receiving the majority of votes – before one member of the Security Council used its power of veto.

UNHCR's modest staff at that period

In 1962, UNHCR was not large, and compared to the 9,000 staff working in many parts of the world today, it was very small indeed. The High Commissioner disposed of only a few dozen posts for international staff, a few of whom operated from branch offices in Austria, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Greece, Italy and the United Kingdom. The Geneva headquarters staff worked in pleasant offices at the far end of the splendid Palais des Nations, as the crow flies very near the village of Pregny, home of Baron Rothschild. UNHCR's suite of offices was accessed through Door 20 of the stately building, as mentioned earlier originally built for the League of Nations.

Sadrudin, on meeting UNHCR headquarters staff on his first day, certainly realised that the sprinkling of nationalities was predominantly European and even Anglo-Saxon.⁶³ Quite a few of the staff in the 1960s had been drafted from the former IRO. At a time of recent and imminent decolonisation, the UN had to focus more than ever on achieving an

63 If my memory serves me well, there were thirty-four professional staff in UNHCR Geneva, of whom at least eleven were British (and two former refugees from Nazism probably had British passports, making the total thirteen or over one third of the whole). The others were from Austria (two), Belgium (two), Czechoslovakia (three), France (three), Germany (two), Holland (three), Italy (one), Switzerland (one), USA (two), Australia (one) and New Zealand (one).

equitable geographical distribution of professional staff, in line with Article 101 of the Charter. It was not surprising, therefore, that the number of British staff at UNHCR aroused the concern of the new UN Secretary-General, U Thant, to the extent that he was said to have actually instructed the High Commissioner to desist from recruiting any more of them.⁶⁴ Big changes were afoot: an Indian national of distinction, Viru Dayal, came at about that time, and worked closely with Prince Sadruddin before moving across the Atlantic to become Chef de Cabinet to the UN Secretary-General. In the 1970s, I was briefed for a year in Indochina by a senior Pakistani and for eighteen months in Zaïre by a Cypriot, while the deputy head of HR was a Ghanaian (Kofi Annan) and the regional representative in Kinshasha an Ethiopian.

In no time, Prince Sadruddin got to know the staff. While travelling much of the time, he nevertheless wished to be consulted about staff matters on a routine basis, to ensure that fair decisions were taken in regard to people's status and their postings.

The tasks assumed by the prince

As Deputy High Commissioner, Sadruddin was largely responsible for developing new refugee programmes in third world countries, particularly in Africa, such as the extensive relief programme for Algerian refugees that was needed throughout the period of the liberation struggle, and refugees in the Great Lakes area. He visited Morocco and Tunisia frequently to co-ordinate and monitor relief operations. Programmes for refugees from Angola, Guinea Bissau and Mozambique prior to the independence of those countries evolved under his supervision, and he established and maintained regular contacts with liberation movements. He visited other African countries for on-the-spot supervision of projects in the field and to renew contacts with heads of States and governments. He established and consolidated the humanitarian nature of the work, sometimes despite some highly delicate political constraints, such as strong pressure from colonial powers. He succeeded in having the Office obtain unanimous support in the General Assembly through resolutions proposed by the Third Committee, to which the High Commissioner reported regularly.

64 This certainly cut across my career at the time. I had been recruited into the "General Services" despite my degree.

At the height of OAS (Organisation armée secrète) terror and despite personal death threats, Sadruddin made frequent visits to Algiers. He participated in the secret negotiations which preceded the Evian Accord, and had many meetings with the Algerian provisional government in exile, headed by Ferhat Abbas and later by Ben Khedda. He was responsible for the inclusion of UNHCR in the text of the Evian protocol as the responsible agency and operational partner to plan and implement repatriation. When the time came, following the signing in 1962 of the Evian Agreement between France and the FLN (Algeria's national liberation front), the prince organised and supervised the repatriation of Algerian refugees. To procure the necessary funding for assistance to be made available to returnees to Algeria to speed up their reintegration, he negotiated with donor-governments and addressed many voluntary agencies, refugee councils and national committees. He also initiated and strengthened contacts between his office and socialist countries, particularly Poland, a country that he visited regularly.

When at the end of Sadruddin's four years as Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees the United Nations General Assembly came to elect him by acclamation as High Commissioner, the following was put on record:

"Prince Sadruddin's cultural and religious links with Islam had provided distinctive insight and understanding for his visits to Iran, Burma, Thailand, Malaya, Indonesia, the Philippines, Japan, Vietnam, Ceylon, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar as Chargé de Mission for the UNHCR and during the World Refugee Year. As Special Adviser to the HC, he had assisted at the fifteenth and sixteenth Sessions of the General Assembly (1960 and 1961) and at the HC's request had undertaken a mission in order to discuss Angolan refugees with the Government of the Congo. He had taken a significant role regarding the repatriation of Algerian refugees in Morocco and Tunisia and undertaken various missions to East, Central, and West Africa and to Latin American and Western European countries. He was well known to the members of the Executive Committee to whom he had given a report on the development of refugee situations in a number of countries (Togo, Congo, Tanganyika, Uganda, and Burundi in Africa, and Macao in Asia) and a final report on assistance to Algerian refugees."

Quite a programme!

The report went on: "The delegates of the Assembly greeted the new HC with great confidence and enthusiasm because, as the US delegate remarked, "of his valuable experience, his understanding of the problems

involved and his compassionate concern for refugees throughout the world.”⁶⁵

The above is worth quoting to indicate that from the first, Sadruddin was involved in every aspect of the Office’s work, and foresaw problems with remarkable clarity which he then set about resolving to the best of his ability. He certainly travelled very widely to consult with the relevant authorities, with his staff and very often, with the refugees themselves. His management approach was unlike that of most senior officers: he respected the views of everyone concerned with a specific problem, and he therefore regularly consulted them and based his decisions on an overall assessment of the problem.

Three particular aspects of UNHCR’s work at that time deserve mention, pointing to the range of problems Sadruddin would inherit from the end of 1965.

Fundraising and Public Information

There was never a time that additional funds to those granted by governments were not needed. One successful project in the overall fundraising campaigns that Sadruddin supervised was the production of long-play gramophone records, the first of which was entitled “*All Star Festival*”. The DHC was the major mover in getting top artists, most of whom he probably knew personally from his years in the USA, to participate in this project. The High Commissioner’s Office also gave a measure of support to non-governmental organisations that planned fundraising campaigns in their countries, such as the 1966 campaign initiated by the Dutch fundraising professional, Kees Brouwer, who worked with NGOs of twenty European countries (see Chapter 7).

UNHCR needed to make or to sponsor films about the new refugee influxes. Its “*Refugees*” magazine became a monthly report on new situations, sometimes featuring human interest stories.

International protection

Within the Protection Division in those years there was an indemnification section administering funds made available to the High Commissioner by

65 Quoted by Holborn, Louise W., *Refugees: a problem of our time*

the Federal Republic of Germany, in accordance with an agreement made in October 1960. In his report to ECOSOC (the UN Economic and Social Council) on the work of his office in 1964, the High Commissioner said that by the end of that year, 11,781 victims of Nazi persecution had been indemnified and the major part of the fund amounting to \$12,281,680 had been disbursed. The Office continued to co-operate with the authorities of the Federal Republic of Germany on the application of the agreement to those refugee victims of persecution who had suffered permanent damage to their health.

The report further announced that the Office had been invited by the secretariat of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU – established on 25th May 1963 in Addis Ababa, with thirty-two signatory governments) to co-operate in the drawing up of a convention relating to the status of refugees in Africa. This second convention would prove to be of the utmost importance in relation to the protection of African refugees.⁶⁶

During those years, work was proceeding also on a Protocol to the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 28th July 1951, a remarkable document of which an excerpt appears above, drafted in record time and ratified over time by 145 governments (the 2015 figure). In the light of newly-emerging refugee situations, it was important to draft a protocol to remove the deadline and geographical restrictions from the Convention. The Protocol came to be signed in 1967, forming part of the legislation that has underpinned the work of UNHCR ever since.

Resettlement of “White Russians”

Sadrudin was certainly aware from his first few days in office that while the camp clearance programme was enabling the last few thousands of European refugees to start a new life, among the refugee groups of concern to the Office were elderly White Russians in China, Armenians in Turkey, Jews in Egypt, Cubans in Spain, Spaniards in Morocco and numbers of African refugees, particularly Rwandans. It may be apposite to describe the process that enabled the elderly Russians to leave China and spend the rest of their days in homes in Europe or Argentina. Refugees from revolution and famine over forty years earlier, they had fled further and further east until they crossed into China.

⁶⁶ Report to ECOSOC chapter XI, Assistance to Refugees

Their children born in China had had no real difficulty in leaving. Now living in Australia, Brazil and perhaps the United States, they were powerless to have their surviving parents join them because of the terms of immigration legislation. To a large extent, it was thanks to World Refugee Year that new doors opened for these elderly people, the Chinese having made no secret of their wish to see them leave the country.

Once they were armed with visas for one of the countries agreeing to accept them, and had made the long two-day rail journey down to Hong Kong from Harbin or Shanghai in open carriages, they were put on charters or entrusted to Swissair, to arrive in Geneva at five o'clock in the morning. They had been names on our card-index, dossiers which had come through in sheaves from the office in Hong Kong set up jointly by UNHCR and ICEM, the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration. They were in their sixties, seventies, eighties – even nineties. One intrepid lady with an unmarried daughter registered for resettlement at the age of ninety-nine. Their dossiers had been submitted by UNHCR's Resettlement Section, of which I was the latest recruit, to governmental and voluntary agencies in Belgium, Britain, France, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland, and there was a home for some of them in Rio de Janeiro. They would spend the rest of their days in a home in The Hague which had formerly belonged to Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, or in Barton-on-Sea, Sussex, or in the Bernese Oberland, or in Oslo, Liège, Paris or Nice. For those in poor health, classified as "chronic sick" by the United Nations and concerned agencies, places were found in nursing homes or sanatoria where they would receive the care they must have sorely lacked in the People's Republic of China. By 1964, the programme was starting to wind down, but 480 people came through from Hong Kong that year, while 1,440 others for whom visas had been issued were waiting for exit visas from the Chinese authorities.

At Geneva Airport we would see many of them come through from the Hong Kong flight with an air of bewilderment and with pathetically small bundles of luggage. Each individual had a name label attached to his or her lapel. They were yet to travel on to their final destinations. Only one or two of the agency people meeting them in at Geneva could muster appropriate words in Russian. Only relatively few of the refugees could now manage to call up responses in a Western European language. But they would be safe from harassment, and would be among their countrymen and women. They could correspond with relatives back in their homeland. Some of them managed to

learn, or recollect perhaps, the language of their new home, and a few even played some part in their communities of adoption.

The gradual winding down of these resettlement activities and the imminent or actual closure of the infamous post-war camps in Europe coincided with the second eruption of inter-ethnic violence in Rwanda, and with circumstances in other parts of Africa that were also leading to refugee flows.

6

African refugees

Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, the diplomat, the leader of men, the accomplished artist and the humanitarian combines all these qualities with the same humility that characterises his community.

Mr Mwaluko,
Delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania,
General Assembly, 3rd December 1965

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the cry “UHURU” – Independence – echoed across much of Africa. Uhuru, Uhuru, Uhuru... Between 1st January 1960 and the end of 1964, no fewer than twenty-six African countries obtained their independence from Belgium, Britain and France, and during the same period, a number of African governments called for support from UNHCR. The Government of Senegal asked for assistance for some 30,000 refugees from Portuguese Guinea in the Casamance region of Senegal, setting up an emergency operation with the aid of \$60,000 from the High Commissioner’s Emergency Fund, pending decisions on more permanent measures. There were refugees from Angola, refugees from Algeria, student refugees from South Africa... All these situations became the concern of the Deputy High Commissioner, none more than the successive flights of tens of thousands of Rwandans into the four surrounding countries.

Refugees in the Great Lakes area

In 1959, in common with many other countries of Africa, Uganda (then a British Protectorate), Tanganyika (a British colony, soon to be renamed the

United Republic of Tanzania), the huge Belgian Congo and the tiny UN Trust Territory called Ruanda-Urundi administered by Belgium, were due to receive their independence very soon. But Rwanda, traditionally headed by a Tutsi king or “mwami” through whom first the Germans, then the Belgians administered the country, had for some years been the scene of certain colonial and church policies so ill-conceived that by the end of the 1950s, there was an upsurge of animosity on the part of the Hutu agriculturalists towards the Tutsi cattle herders. In 1961, a Hutu government led by Grégoire Kayibanda took over the reins of the country, but Hutu resentment had already begun to find expression in sudden inter-ethnic violence that had led to refugee flows into Rwanda’s four neighbours. Without any real warning, mobs of Hutus attacked Tutsis in their homes, mutilating and killing whole families and burning their property.

One large mob was within minutes of reaching the Kagame family, saved *in extremis* by the terrified chauffeur of the Tutsi King, Mwami Mutara III Rudahigwa, who managed to sweep them to safety. Although he was only two years old at the time, Paul Kagame, thirty years later the leader of the young liberation army and President of Rwanda from 2000 to the present, remembers the grim, blood-curdling cries and the crowd of excited men and boys waving knives and spears, intent on killing them. Six months later, following another outbreak of Hutu violence, the Kagame family and tens of thousands of others left Rwanda for Uganda to the north, Tanganyika (Tanzania today) to the east, Congo on Rwanda’s western flank and Burundi, the small southern neighbour still linked to Rwanda under the terms of a League of Nations Trust, converted to a UN Trust and administered by Belgium from the end of the First World War.

67,68

Rwanda, known as “the land of a thousand hills”, is a beautiful highland country endowed with forests, lakes and rivers, a green and lush country where for centuries the Nilotic or Hamitic tribe of pastoralists known as the Watutsi

67 Among them was the Gasana family – Matthieu and his wife Agnès, their baby Alice and their parents, all well known to me in Bujumbura in 1964-5. Fifty years on, the little two-year old stateless Eugène who used to sit on my knee every time I visited them is now Rwanda’s Ambassador to the United Nations, New York, standing at 1m96 (dwarfing Mr Putin when he presented his credentials in Moscow). We met again earlier this year in Kigali, after an interval of over twenty-five years. Rwanda now advertises itself to its visitors as “*The land of a thousand hills and a million smiles*”! Its recovery can only be described as miraculous.

68 Kinzer, Stephen, *A Thousand Hills*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

or Tutsi, lived more or less as overlords among the Bantu people known as the Hutu and the forest-dwelling pygmies, the Batwa. Before colonial times, the Tutsi with their monarchical system of government had for centuries enjoyed a good relationship with the other Rwandans.

The history of man is really a history of migration, as Sadruddin once remarked to his staff, saying “people often vote with their feet.” The Tutsi are only one of several tribes living in central Africa whose physique and cultural traditions are somewhat different from those of many other African peoples, and whose origins many people have thought to be Ethiopia or present-day Somalia. Sir Samuel Baker, who introduced himself to those he met on an epic journey up the White Nile in 1862-63 as “a traveller”, listed in his journal the tribes then living along the Nile from Khartoum to the border of Uganda: the Bagara, the Dinka, the Shillook, the Nuehr, the Kytch, the Bohr, the Aliab, the Shir, the Bari, the Tollogo and the Latooka. In his book *The Albert N’yanza*, Baker remarked on the differences in physique of some of these peoples, and on the cultural differences that he often had ample time to note, for he and his valiant Hungarian-born companion Florence frequently had weeks or even months in one spot because of unforeseen obstacles to their progress southward.⁶⁹

The Tutsi, like the Masai of Kenya and Tanzania and the Lakoota of the Sudan-Uganda border area, were largely cattle-owning people who used their cattle only for milk and blood. Rwanda had, as it has now, a pastoral economy, with subsistence farming carried out by the majority of the population. For centuries, wealth was generally measured in head of cattle. Under the feudal system instituted by the Tutsi (known as *ubuhake*), the Tutsi controlled the cattle population and the Hutu, skilled agriculturalists, were in the position of serfs, though some of the Hutu also owned cattle and curiously enough (as it seems) they could then consider themselves Tutsi. This social structure, headed by the *mwami* (or king) who was held in universal respect by all Rwandans, was damaged by colonial policies, including the obligation to follow instructions given by Europeans, to focus on producing tea and coffee, and – above all – to carry a card giving the individual’s supposed ethnic origin.

A visitor to my house told me recently that a little Rwandan boy of eight, Emmanuel Kolini, was slapped by his teacher, a Belgian priest, because he did not answer the question as to whether he was Tutsi or Hutu. The next day, the

69 Sir Samuel Baker, *The Albert N’yanza* (2 vols.), Sidgwick & Jackson

boy's father (a Tutsi) went to see the priest, who claimed that he had slapped the boy because he had supposed that he was being impertinent. But the child had no idea of his ethnic origin, for as his father told the priest, he had never talked to his children about their ethnicity. The family fled to Uganda in 1959 when there were the first outbursts of violence against the Tutsi. Emmanuel studied hard and became an Anglican priest and many years later, he was appointed Anglican Archbishop of Rwanda. In November 1993, seeing that the Tutsi were again in mortal danger, he left Rwanda, but returned after the genocide to help with the immense task of recovery and reconciliation. It was his sister, Imma Rukamba, who told me all this. That very dignified lady whom it was a delight to meet had come to attend a beautiful niece's wedding here in Gruyère. Such is the diaspora...

As the 1950s progressed, even though there had always been intermarriage between people of the two major ethnic groups, relations between Hutu and Tutsi rapidly deteriorated, the former becoming increasingly conscious of the political power of their numbers. The Hutu's *Parmehutu* policy, publicly backed by Belgium, did not bode well for the Tutsi. The sudden death in suspicious circumstances in July 1959 of the Tutsi *mwami*, invited by Belgians to a meeting in Bujumbura and dying within hours of starting to have lunch, led to escalating inter-tribal hatred and brought about the overt acts of violence mentioned above and the exodus of large numbers of Tutsi. Between November 1959 and January 1964, more than 300,000 Tutsi fled Rwanda to the four countries surrounding theirs, with a few making their way to Europe or North America.

As the author H.H. Osborn wrote later on events linking the November 1959 violence and the granting of independence,

"A United Nations Commission of Inquiry was sent to Ruanda-Urundi in April 1960 and meetings were arranged between the political parties in order to arrange for elections. In October of that year, a provisional National Assembly was constituted with a Hutu Prime Minister, Grégoire Kayibanda. A mass meeting organised by the political party of the Hutu, PARMEHUTU, was held at Gitarama. Rwanda was declared a Republic and a new provisional National Assembly and President were elected. A United Nations mission proposed elections to the National Assembly, combined with a referendum on the status of the Rwandan king. The elections were held in September 1961, followed by claims and counter-claims of unfairness and rigging. They also sparked off a new wave of violence and thousands more Tutsi fled the

country. On 1st July 1962, Rwanda and Burundi were separately granted full independence by the Belgian Government.⁷⁰

But the damage had been done. Until 7th April 1994, a date many people can never forget, there continued to be periodic outbreaks of violence against Tutsi resulting each time in death, trauma and further streams of desperate people seeking asylum in the surrounding countries.

* * *

For Sadruddin, having taken on responsibility for new refugee situations, it was obvious that the Office would have to tackle new and unfamiliar tasks in that part of Africa as a matter of urgency. A regional office was rapidly planned, to oversee relief and resettlement measures for the Tutsi refugees and to have at least a watching brief on new developments in Africa – in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa in fact. Sadruddin had already entered into talks with the concerned authorities of the four countries receiving Tutsi refugees from Rwanda. At that stage, relief assistance to the Tutsi was set in motion under joint UNHCR/Red Cross agreements signed in the various capitals between Sadruddin, Henrik Beer, Secretary-General of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the authorities. Sadruddin had a high regard for non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and very much favoured forming partnerships with those who had the relevant experience to meet not only emergency needs but longer-term needs too.

As for the siting of a regional office, the potential merits of Léopoldville, soon to be renamed Kinshasha, Dar-es-Salaam, Kampala and Bujumbura were considered and finally, it was decided to choose Bujumbura because of its relative proximity to the areas affording asylum to the hundreds of thousands of Tutsi from Rwanda.

Bujumbura, or “Usumbura” as some people still called it from the time that it had been the capital of the League of Nations/UN Trust Territory of Ruanda-Urundi, lies at the northern tip of Lake Tanganyika, the longest lake in Africa. The Regional Office – such a grand name! – was established in a three-room villa on a dirt road near the centre of the small capital, and in September 1963 Prince Sadruddin introduced the designated UNHCR Regional Representative, Jacques Cuénod (a Swiss), to several governments of East Africa – in splendid style! The two high international civil servants,

70 Osborn, H.H., *Fire in the Hills*, Highland Press.

in the course of visits to Heads of State, were accompanied by a motorised escort in each capital. The prince was very highly regarded by the East African governments, and the members of sizeable Ismaili communities were out in force on each of his visits, thrilled to get a glimpse of the second son of their former Imam (and uncle of the current Imam, Karim). Despite his international status, Sadruddin was nevertheless in danger when he travelled to two areas of the Congo, Kivu and Katanga.

The prince laid groundwork both for important land settlement programmes intended to help Rwandan refugees in camps in the four asylum countries to settle down, and to monitor tensions in Angola and elsewhere in Africa thought liable to lead to further refugee flows. The UNHCR Regional Office, naturally the first of its kind in the world, given UNHCR's short life to date, was initially staffed from September 1963 on a very modest scale in that small villa amongst the brilliant flamboyant trees (*delonix regia*) and fragrant frangipani (*plumeria rubra*): namely a regional representative, Jacques Cuénod, and an international secretary, Nicole Pianet, who recruited three staff locally: a typist, a messenger and a night watchman. A Dutch programme officer, Frits Pijnacker-Hordijk and a British protection officer, Richard Nottidge, were expected to arrive early in 1964. Two community development officers recruited on short-term contracts, Rachel Yeld from Britain and Bill Rose from the USA, arrived before the end of 1963 and got to work. François Preziosi, a Frenchman, had already been transferred from the Rome branch office to a new duty station in Bukavu, capital of Kivu Province, Congo at the southern tip of Lake Kivu. An international secretary, Marie-José Gremillet, went as his secretary in 1964, and then a new recruit with the very Swiss name of Otto Hagenbüchle set up a small branch office in Kampala and appointed a girl from Buganda, Restitutor Basigara, as his secretary. In distant Dar-es-Salaam, a branch office was set up too, to liaise with the Tanzanian Government and with the Lutheran World Federation, responsible for land settlement work as UNHCR's "implementing agency".

Events in Rwanda in December 1963/January 1964

The Regional Office skeleton team very soon needed reinforcements, for shortly before Christmas, numbers of Tutsi refugees, with the intention of

overthrowing the Hutu government and reinstating the monarchy, launched poorly co-ordinated armed attacks on Rwanda from the surrounding countries' borders. All the horror of the Hutus' reaction, triggered by intense tribal hatred and sheer panic, may be imagined. The Government was even rumoured to have fled the capital, Kigali. The unsuccessful invasion was followed by a new upsurge of violence, resulting in new refugee flows. Jacques Cuénod cabled headquarters for more staff, seeing the need for more field workers and mentioning my name for the growing financial and administrative tasks. Agreeing instantly to go, I was given vaccinations, a briefing and a ticket to central Africa.

Though Sadruddin and his colleagues had been monitoring the situation in various African countries, especially of course Rwanda, and had had reports from their regional representative, Jacques Cuénod, on what had been going on in Rwanda during those tragic weeks, concrete news only just began to reach the outside world. Embassy staff, people working on technical assistance projects and expatriate teachers reported on what they had actually seen – and filmed. Electrifying reports began to appear in the Western press. The more sensational papers ran headlines such as “Giants invade homeland”, and “Mighty 7-ft Tutsis try to take Rwanda back”. The *Daily Telegraph's* Special Correspondent in Nairobi, Richard Beeston, filed a report “Extermination threat to Rwanda Tribe” (3rd February 1964):

“British travellers arriving in Nairobi from Rwanda claim that Rwanda Government Ministers are conducting a campaign of genocide against the 250,000 Tutsi tribe living in the republic. The travellers claim that the massacre of the Tutsis, former rulers of the area, who form one-tenth of the population, is going on at an ever-increasing pace and that between 20,000 and 30,000 have been killed in the past month.”

And the article went on to say,

“One British resident believes that unless international action is taken, the entire Tutsi population faces extermination. He said that the massacres, which began over a month ago, are being carried out by organised groups of the Hutu tribe, formerly subservient to the tall, aristocratic Tutsi. The Hutu are armed mostly with pangas. They are slaughtering entire families, regardless of age or sex.”

Articles about Rwanda vied for space in these Western newspapers with those about the rebellion in Congo, shortly to steal the headlines. In Bujumbura, we would see some of the Congolese rebels racing into town in

their Jeeps for supplies, armed to the teeth and far too threatening for any of the Burundi border guards to think of trying to stop them.

The Hutu Government of President Grégoire Kayibanda in Kigali was seriously perturbed about the ongoing ferment amongst the Tutsi refugees. Calls were made for measures to be taken to curtail and control the activities of known Tutsi agitators (who called themselves *inyenzi* – cockroaches!) who had been seen haranguing refugees resigned to settling outside their country's borders – for they claimed, “We're going to be going back!” These issues had to be discussed at every level with governments, and Jacques Cuénod was travelling almost without a break, and of course in constant touch with Sadruddin and colleagues at headquarters. He sometimes found himself in Geneva somewhat unexpectedly, for in those days there were no East-West flights across Africa, and from Senegal the fastest way back to the Rift Valley area was via Europe.

That January (1964), one could hardly see the Regional Office villa for people. Newly-arrived refugees massed around the little building, queueing at the front and back doors, standing on the lawns and flower-beds, surrounding our vehicles, spilling over into the road. Thin old men stood leaning both hands on the top of their five-foot staffs. Young women with hair swept up into the traditional beehive shape sat leaning against the trees feeding their infants. Toddlers solemnly held onto their mothers and children of school age grouped together to try to play, somewhat half-heartedly. Young men jostled a bit for a better place in the queues. They had just arrived from Rwanda, weary after the long, dangerous journey away from terror.

What UNHCR could do for them was firstly to refer them to an NGO for food and clothing. Then they would be moved to one of the three agricultural centres being laid out several hours' drive to the east, with the initial emergency phase run by the international Red Cross on behalf of UNHCR gradually merging into a land settlement programme that the government would take over. Three such settlements were being established, Kayongozi, Muramba and Kigamba and a fourth, Muramba, would soon be planned.

Events in Congo

In Congo, François Preziosi was supervising the establishment of land settlements at Bibwe and Ihula, each in a highland area beyond the Virunga

volcanoes which, rising to over 4,000 metres (13,000 feet) above sea level, straddle the Congo/Rwanda border to the north of Lake Kivu. Each settlement required initially the demolition of trees to clear the land that would certainly be very fertile. On one occasion, Jacques and I left together for Bukavu, he to see the burgeoning agricultural settlements, I to brief Marie-José Gremillet on UNHCR's branch office administrative and financial instructions. Jacques was amused when we found that there would be no return flight next day (travel schedules of colonial times were no longer valid, apparently). "Good", he said, "you can come round the centres with me!" François and his wife Ann welcomed us at their lakeside home, and we spent all the following day in the heights, meeting Knud Dahl, the Danish Red Cross delegate who was supervising one of the centres. "Elephants have trampled all my crops", he complained, smiling. He spoke of the difficulties he experienced in persuading the Tutsi to cut down trees. "They have no wish to be agriculturalists", he said. "But I cut down trees with them and they begin to realise that they really have no choice."

On the way back to Bukavu, Jacques and I stopped at a tea planter's to ask for a drink. The owner, a Belgian with a beautiful African wife, advised us on no account to continue along the same road, for he said, "The rebels are only a few kilometres further on." We drank delicious thirst-slaking tea and turned back. Jacques had already said the previous morning as we took our seats in Air Congo's DC-3, "This is probably the last time we shall be able to come to Kivu for quite some time." But as we returned to Bujumbura two days later, little did we imagine that we might never see François Preziosi again.

The country certainly was in chaos, and one is bound to say that the history of colonialism resulting from the realisation of King Leopold's ambitions lies at the base of practically everything that was wrong with Congo at that juncture.⁷¹ Throughout the first half of 1964, the escalating situation with Mulelist rebels achieving further successes brought to Bujumbura large numbers of Europeans fleeing in panic. Once Bujumbura's few hotels were full to overflowing, people were grateful to be given even floor space in any of our homes. Ann Preziosi was among them, transferred on headquarters' instructions. Prince Sadruddin, seriously concerned about the welfare of staff and dependants, stood ready to return to the Great Lakes area at any time.

71 Henry Morton Stanley has been wrongly vilified for Congo's unhappy fate. He was a man of principle who acted for King Léopold in good faith, far from realising that the king's agenda was not what it seemed. Cf. for example Tim Jeal's *Stanley – The impossible Life of Africa's Greatest Explorer*

But before he could do so, on 17th August François Preziosi and Jean Plique, a colleague from the International Labour Office (ILO) who decided to go with him to warn refugees in Bibwe and Ihula against taking sides in the Mulelist rebellion, were set upon by a mob and killed. Their Congolese driver George escaped on foot. We had the appalling news once George reached Bukavu, but there was nevertheless nerve-wracking uncertainty for several days. Finally, the bodies of the two brave men were found in shallow graves, and came to be reburied shortly afterwards across the border in Cyangugu, Rwanda.

We were naturally all in a state of shock, desperate to show our compassion to Ann Preziosi and to Jean Plique's widow and children, but feeling poorly equipped to do it adequately. Prince Sadruddin was with us in no time, and knew how to express to the bereaved the condolences of the whole UN family. He was of course the centre of attention of the Burundi authorities and of the members of the Ismaili community, the latter very anxious to pay tribute to him in the form of wonderful hospitality that the prince accepted on condition that his staff could sit down with him at each meal. The handful of staff received the warmest support from Sadruddin, and I will relate later how he came unannounced into my small back office where I was dealing with travel claims, sat on the edge of my desk and chatted with the familiarity one would expect only from a brother or close friend.

Later, Geneva headquarters published a report written by François Preziosi a few weeks before he was killed, which explained why our very brave colleague had been taking his protection function so very seriously. "If I seem to take some risks by going frequently to the front lines, it is not out of pure curiosity, but to be able, when the time is ripe, to intervene and try to prevent any inconsiderate action against the refugees, both in the field and in their resettlement centres... I have become a familiar sight among the officers and soldiers." As UNHCR wrote after making the posthumous award of the Nansen Medal to François Preziosi and Jean Plique, their tragic death highlighted the extremely fragile and contradictory environment that international relief officials were working in, even in those early years. François was the first UNHCR staff member to be killed in the line of duty, since when forty-two others have been lost to date, some from road accidents or tropical illness.

Transfer to Tanzanian Highlands

It was not long before it was realised that the white-collar refugee workers who had sought asylum in Congo, working in Bukavu, were not safe. After some high-level negotiations carried out between the Deputy High Commissioner and the authorities of both Congo and Tanzania reached a satisfactory conclusion, an operation was set up to allow large numbers of these refugees to be transferred by air and road to a new settlement in the Mwesi Highlands. The proposed settlement area was almost entirely uninhabited and said to be quite fertile. It was thought to be ideal except for the presence of a few wild animals and tsetse fly, the latter reportedly being gradually eradicated.

In the insecure conditions of that time, it was decided to embark the refugees on a boat plying between Bukavu, at the southern tip of Lake Kivu, and Goma, on the northern tip of the lake, there being an airstrip in Goma while there was none in Bukavu. The three-pronged operation went ahead. A valiant German recruit, Hiltrud Becker, worked from the Bukavu office to organise the group departures with the help of the Congolese Red Cross, while an Australian, Bill McCoy, also working with the Congolese Red Cross, awaited at Goma's Hotel des Grands Lacs the arrival of both the boat groups and the aircraft. In the absence of hard and fast schedules, Bill could not anticipate with any accuracy either the arrival time of the boat or the appearance of the aircraft, and he told me, "As often as not, I'm just taking my first spoonful of soup when the plane roars overhead", and he would have to leave his meal to race to the airstrip, where the crowd was waiting to be boarded. Most had never been inside an aeroplane before, and I remember their expressions of mixed awe, wonder and fearfulness.

Kai Nielsen, a Dane who had joined our team in Bujumbura, was now in place at Tabora, a small Tanzanian settlement known to the early explorers Burton, Speke and Stanley, to meet the plane in at the airstrip and see the refugees loaded onto trucks for the last part of the journey. The Lutheran World Federation had agreed to take responsibility for this new settlement operation.

More than once over the years, Prince Sadruddin had occasion to speak confidently of the various settlement programmes set up with both government and NGO support for the Rwandan refugees, and of course for other groups. After the 1994 genocide and the establishment in Kigali of the broad-based Government of National Unity, the vast majority of the Tutsi exiles returned home, although according to UNHCR, several years

later there were still an estimated 100,000 Rwandans outside their country's borders, many of them living in the camps of Kyaka, Kyangwali, Nakivale and Oruchinga in Uganda.⁷²

In 1994, Prince Sadruddin must have felt agonised throughout the 100 days of the genocide. Had he only been in charge of the United Nations that terrible year, would he not have foreseen the mass violence and found means of preventing such an appalling loss of life?⁷³ As the years went by, however, he was perhaps consoled to see that President Paul Kagame and his government were succeeding, against all the odds, in pulling the country through to a viable future.

72 IRIN humanitarian news and analysis, March 2012, quoting UNHCR statistics.

73 This theme will return in chapter 19

7

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (I), 1966-72

*Let us show great humility towards the peoples we wish to help,
for we have very little to teach them.*⁷⁴

Sadruddin Aga Khan

It so happened that as soon as Prince Sadruddin assumed the mantle of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in December 1965 (to be re-elected by acclamation twice thereafter), new refugee situations proliferated one after another, in the Near East, Africa, Asia and Latin America – and even in Europe.

The magnitude and nature of refugee problems changed beyond anyone's worst imaginings, providing the Office and the young, energetic person at its head with some of their greatest challenges. With so many new emergencies arising in that twelve-year period, the High Commissioner was of course very hard pressed to succour the survivors of each new convulsion. His approach was described by an *Observer* journalist who wrote that he had "made his mark from the start, both in tackling problems like the Sudan's – and in the way he established himself in the High Commission. Sir Leslie Kirkley, former head of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies, recalls watching him win the confidence of the Director of Operations, Thomas Jamieson, a tough, blunt little Scot, much older than Sadruddin and with a very different background. There were outspoken arguments but no hostility, and a close working relationship developed between them. Largely thanks to the good offices of UNHCR, and to Sadruddin's patience, tact and sheer diplomatic skill, first as deputy, then as head – he got the job in 1965, at thirty-two – nearly three-quarters of a million Sudanese refugees and displaced persons

74 Sadruddin Aga Khan in an interview with *The UNESCO COURIER*, May 1991

were repatriated or resettled. An even bigger test came with the violent birth of Bangladesh.”⁷⁵

As it is not possible to enter into detailed descriptions of either the background to all the situations that arose while Sadruddin was High Commissioner, or his work in dealing with them, we can select a few in this chapter and the next to illustrate the complexity of the High Commissioner’s function and his wisdom in devising, with concerned governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and his subordinates, the best possible forms of assistance and protection measures.

Obviously the procedures set in place earlier whereby the UN High Commissioner reports annually to his Executive Committee (then of forty Governments, now of ninety-eight) and delivers detailed reports to the Economic and Social Council of the General Assembly (ECOSOC), and the General Assembly itself, imposed considerable time constraints on Prince Sadruddin. The General Assembly referred to earlier at which his nomination was passed by acclamation was that of December 1965. The post of High Commissioner is considered the highest UN post after that of Secretary-General, and is the only post other than that of Secretary-General of the United Nations requiring the vote of governments.

Ahead of the youngest UN High Commissioner to accept the function were, as it turned out, twelve years of intense activity on all continents except Antarctica, the longest period any High Commissioner has served, either before or since, and involving *inter alia* a very great deal of long-distance travel. But first Sadruddin paid a rapid courtesy visit to The Netherlands.

European Refugee Campaign, 1966 and Tibetan refugees

Mr Cornelius Brouwer, the Dutch staff member mentioned earlier as probably having had the inspiration for the seventy-four-nation World Refugee Year Stamp Plan, thought up the idea of a massive fund-raising campaign, to take place on a single day in 1966. The idea was this: on 24th October 1966 (UN Day), after a short run-in through the press, all the media, strongly supported by various national personalities, would concentrate practically all their efforts on refugee situations needing assistance. They would each feature

75 Quoted by John Silverlight, *A man for all nations*, *The Observer Review*, 1st January 1978

programmes and articles so appealing that the hearts of the nation would be softened, whereupon a nationwide door-knock by an army of volunteers would facilitate the translation of emotions into deeds. Sadruddin seconded Mr Brouwer (relieving him of his normal duties as UNHCR Representative in The Hague) to take charge of the Campaign Secretariat and the co-ordination of the twenty-country campaign, and invited me to join this energetic gentleman in The Hague for the year.

The refugees on Mr Brouwer's mind were Tibetans stranded in the mountains of India, and with almost universal use of a TV film shot in those remote heights that we called *Seven Years of Courage*, the planned "blitz drive", as Mr Brouwer called it, resulted in more than satisfactory donations in most of the twenty countries that participated. Millions of people all over Western Europe who saw that film could not help but be moved by the sight of little Tibetan mothers, babies tied on their backs and toddlers trying to hang onto their skirts, moving heavy rocks by hand onto old wooden wheelbarrows after an Indian foreman had blasted away another section of mountainside. One saw the stoicism of these people who were left high and dry as soon as each road contract came to an end.

Prior planning had regularly brought together the principal planners in Amsterdam, and we heard how each country was moving ahead. For example, at the start of one of our early morning meetings, the dynamic Secretary-General of the Danish Refugee Council, Ole Volting, laying aside his cigar for a few moments, reported that even the Danish royal family and the army were behind the campaign. The former's patronage of course was proving wonderfully helpful in enlisting widespread support, the latter, in the event of too few door-to-door collectors being found, ready, literally, to "carry the can" for the campaign. The group was presided over by H.H. Prince Bernhard, Queen Juliana's husband. On the occasion that we were joined by Prince Sadruddin, we were afterwards received at Soestdijk Palace, where we were amused to see the Queen ride up to us on her bicycle to wish us all welcome. The funds raised on 24th October did not necessarily go to UNHCR programmes. Some did, earmarked for African refugees, but a consortium headed by Mr Brouwer worked with the Government of India on a multi-year land settlement programme for Tibetans, to be funded thanks to the European Refugee Campaign 1966.

It became apparent before long that Prince Sadruddin had a knack for talent-spotting and for bringing in exceptionally competent people from

countries as far apart as Cyprus, Denmark and Ethiopia. Mr Volting was offered a senior post at UNHCR and for many years headed the fundraising team with his habitual effectiveness.

Perhaps once they were settled, the Tibetans felt that it had not been in vain that their prayer flags had fluttered ceaselessly in the mountain breezes throughout their seven years of severe hardship. However, a Tibetan monk who survived thirty-two years in prison where most of his compatriots died, stated – as did the Dalai Lama, of course – “Our only hope is in international law”. Yet the Tibetans recognise that they have not been able to relate their struggle to the interests of other countries, other governments, in a world basically motivated by self-interest, as Sadrudin could say once he no longer represented the apolitical United Nations forum that is UNHCR. No doubt in deep discussions years later with His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the Château de Bellerive, the whole grievous topic was entered into and covered from beginning to end.

Summary of evolving problems, 1968-77

In Europe, the Cold War continued and the “Spring of Prague” was cut short in 1968 by the Soviet invasion. Tens of thousands of Czechs, who had taken advantage of a more clement mood in Prague to travel abroad for the first time since the communist takeover of their country, faced the dilemma of whether to return or to seek refugee status.

In Africa, civil war broke out when Biafra seceded from the Federation, a bitter and prolonged conflict (1967-1970). Biafra was in the news daily after both sides had refused to allow humanitarian aid in, and by mid-1968 the ICRC reported that three million children were near to death. Some of them were evacuated to Gabon and the Ivory Coast to save their lives. In a confidential meeting early on in the tragic conflict with representatives of Biafra, Sadrudin had been obliged to inform them that the Statute of his Office empowered him to assist people who were outside their country of origin, but not the internally-displaced. It was a delicate situation for all concerned and tragedy was narrowly avoided.

Between a quarter and a third of the population of Equatorial Guinea fled repression following the country’s grant of independence. Severe ethnic violence in Burundi in 1972 created 140,000 new refugees. In that same year,

President Amin of Uganda expelled 80,000 Asians, early victims of a regime which would create havoc in the country and cause many thousands of others to flee for their lives. Gross violations of human rights in Namibia by the South African administration, which refused to acknowledge the United Nations declaration that its mandate (entrusted initially to the League of Nations in 1920) was at an end, led to tens of thousands of Namibians fleeing to Angola, Botswana and Zambia. In 1974-5 intensified fighting in Angola between the Portuguese colonial forces and the liberation movements caused massive internal displacement and an exodus of 300,000 people.

In Asia, the largest exodus of the second half of the 20th century was brought about in 1971 by acute civil strife in what was then East Pakistan (Bangladesh). The Government of India estimated numbers at nearly ten million people. In the three countries of the former French Indochina, Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia, massive destruction and dislocation had caused widespread displacement, and led later to mass exodus.

Meanwhile, the September 1973 coup d'état by General Pinochet in Chile and the repression that followed put in acute danger former members and supporters of the Allende Government (numbered in hundreds of thousands) and those thousands of Latin American refugees who had found in Chile asylum from oppression. My colleague Georges Koulischer who was in charge of UNHCR's work in and for Latin America at the time has described the situations there in Chapter 8.

In Cyprus, people needed protection and assistance following the occupation of 40% of the island by Turkish forces. This, like the special programmes in Laos and Vietnam, was another instance of the Office having the flexibility – which it had yet to obtain at the time of the Nigerian Civil War – to act when people were put in a refugee-like situation.

Some of these situations will be described in this chapter and the next.

* * *

Sadrudin's work methods

While not using his title in any official correspondence or on any UN documents (a hereditary title bestowed upon the late Aga Khan by Queen Victoria), throughout his time in office Prince Sadrudin met with Heads of State on the basis of equality. In some instances, he was able to exercise

diplomacy to contain and circumscribe the flow of a number of new groups of refugees. For example he intervened secretly on behalf of Jewish minorities in North Africa, Egypt and Iraq following the 1967 “Six Day War” in the Middle East, and discreetly facilitated their orderly resettlement. His “good offices” were sought by a number of governments when their diplomatic relations were strained as a result of tensions arising from humanitarian concerns. He was called upon in 1968 to re-establish and maintain contact between Lebanon and Iran when the latter broke off relations after the Lebanese authorities refused to hand over a prominent Iranian general who was the subject of an extradition request.

Sadrudin shuttled between Baghdad and Tehran after Shatt-el-Arab and Kurdish questions had resulted in brutal uprooting of large numbers of Iraqi and Iranian nationals, particularly from Shia Holy places (1969-70). This resulted in secret meetings being held in 1971 at Sadrudin’s Geneva residence between high-level representatives of both governments.

He was a proponent of greater co-operation between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) – of which there was a rapidly-growing number – and UN agencies. He established and maintained close contacts with the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), attending and addressing the Summit Meetings of Heads of States and Governments in Accra (1965), Algiers (1968), Addis Ababa (1970), Rabat (1972) and Libreville (1977). He initiated a close working relationship between the OAU Secretariat and UNHCR, and issued a personal invitation to Diallo Telli, then Secretary-General of OAU, to attend the meeting of UNHCR’s Executive Committee. The occasion was created for Mr Telli to iron out a problem that Nigeria had in regard to ICRC’s work in Biafra during the civil war of 1967-70. Sadrudin organised and implemented repatriation by air to Nigeria of 3,711 Biafran children evacuated earlier to Gabon and Ivory Coast and brought back immediately after the ceasefire to their homes in Eastern Province (Port Harcourt). This led directly to the resumption of diplomatic relations between the three States, and proved to be a good example of how imaginative humanitarian solutions can be found through careful negotiations that lead to restoring political stability.

Sadrudin’s management style, both in Geneva headquarters and in the field, was to entrust subordinates with his full confidence, and as I heard from more and more people over subsequent years, he proved to be a great inspiration across a wide range of shared UN activities. Some of those who worked alongside him have since become figureheads in today’s world.

Consulting everyone, however junior, liable to have anything to contribute to a discussion and the resolution of a problem, he talked with representatives of authorities, with refugees and with subordinates before taking decisions. In meetings, while giving everyone the chance to speak he was brisk with the business in hand, but there could often be a sudden flash of his marvellous humour.

He denounced “Parkinson’s law” (the adage that “work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion”). In creating in 1963/64 what could only be termed a skeleton regional office for Africa, he was confident that despite all the demands that were bound to be made upon it, the handful of staff would get the work done! – whereas many years later, UNHCR’s country (“branch”) offices were so well staffed that one wondered whether everyone really had enough work. During his tenure, he resolutely opposed the proliferation of posts and screened all recruitment personally, while at the same time encouraging more recruitment from the third world as well as from the socialist countries, which were not represented when he became High Commissioner.

Former colleagues have shared with me experiences they had with Prince Sadruddin that surprised and impressed them. Georges Koulischer, a Belgian who joined UNHCR in 1960 and went on to become a senior director, tells me that his first professional contact with the prince occurred in mid-December 1965, just after the former High Commissioner, Mr Schnyder, had left.

“He was Deputy High Commissioner, just a couple of weeks before taking over as High Commissioner – but he was already in charge. My post was in Bukavu, Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo (then Zaïre), and I had travelled back to Europe for the Christmas and New Year holiday. Learning that I was in Geneva, he wanted to see me to obtain first-hand information on what was a delicate situation – that of Tutsis and moderate Hutus who were refugees from Rwanda. I thought that Prince Sadruddin, concerned with so many problems and with a great deal to do on the eve of officially taking up his appointment on 1st January, would only see me for a short time and I got ready to be very brief. However, he really wanted as complete an account as possible and kept me for almost an hour. The questions he raised indicated not just that the situation interested him, but also that he already knew a good deal about it.

“As we talked, I was impressed by his level of concern for people. He wanted to understand the daily life of the refugees in the camps, to have details of their settling in and about their food supply. He was concerned about their

chances of arriving at long-term solutions, for there was no prospect of their being able to return to Rwanda freely. And that was not all, what impressed me was his asking about the trauma they had suffered and about their present state of mind.

“As I was about to leave his office, he wanted to know what my living conditions were like in Bukavu, and what was happening with the family. I was startled to realise that he knew that I had had to leave my family in Brussels because, to use administrative jargon, my status was that of an official on a prolonged mission, I had not been transferred there. UNHCR judged at that time, as it happened, that security was such in Kivu that families ought not to be taken. Here too, I tried to be brief, but he insisted and asked who had paid for my flight to Europe. I knew that according to the rules, I wasn’t entitled to have my trip paid for by the organisation. It was simply a trip made for personal reasons to spend the end-of-year holidays with my family, and I had financed the trip myself, at a time that there were no such things as low-cost flights. The High Commissioner wondered whether it wasn’t rather irregular for a mission to take a staff member away from his family for ten months, even at Christmas. Two days later, I received advice from the administration that in accordance with instructions from the High Commissioner, a way had been found to reimburse me for the ticket.”

Georges Koulischer, for many years carrying responsibility for Latin-American refugees, both in the field and in headquarters, has generously provided for this book, in addition to the above anecdotes, an account of those years that feature in Chapter 8.

* * *

Another former colleague, George Gordon-Lennox, has supplied two or three anecdotes about Prince Sadruddin.

“One of them concerns the meeting the prince held with about thirty new staff members sitting in a circle in his office, including myself (I had been on secondment to UNHCR from the League of Red Cross Societies during the Bengali refugee crisis). He asked each, in clockwise order, to say in a few words why and how he or she joined the office. I had arrived at the last minute, having an urgent cable to draft, and therefore would have been among the last to speak. My new colleagues were all eloquent about the prestigious schools they had attended and their career expectations. What on earth could an on-

the-job trained journalist like myself, serving as an information officer in the Red Cross, add, if not that unlike anyone I had heard so far I wanted to help refugees. Fortunately I was saved by the bell from the embarrassment of making such a pretentious statement – the allotted time for the meeting had expired and two or three of us never got to speak.”⁷⁶

Sadrudin would no doubt have liked to hear what George had to say. He, at any rate, respected the Statute of his Office regarding staff, which states in Chapter III (b), “Such staff shall be chosen from persons devoted to the purposes of the Office of the High Commissioner.” The modest bi-national George, born in London and brought up in Canada, served over a period of fifteen years as the High Commissioner’s regional representative for Latin America, representative in New York and Washington, *chef de cabinet*, regional representative for the Nordic countries and finally, regional representative for Japan and Korea.

Sadrudin’s efforts were action-oriented throughout, with emphasis on actual field work. He attached particular importance to the “fire-brigade” approach in terms of crisis management and resisted the tendency to perpetuate and institutionalise refugee camps and assistance. Inter-agency co-operation was the key to this policy along with the “focal point” role of UNHCR, which set a precedent so often followed since by the UN system.

Whenever he could, the prince replied to every letter by return of post, very often by hand – and in an educated hand that spoke both of his upbringing and of his great respect for others.

As a former staff member wrote many years later, “Sadrudin moved UNHCR away from Europe to focus on the mega refugee movements of Asia and Africa, placing different kinds of demands on the organisation. The new locations were not equipped with the infrastructure or social services of a modern state. The governments would rely on UNHCR to provide direct support. Lawyers and diplomats found themselves called upon to run massive feeding operations and to determine the sites and construction of camps for hundreds of thousands of people. These staff, however, lacked the skills to carry out these tasks. And they weren’t plentiful: until quite late in Prince Sadrudin’s tenure: only eight international professional staff were assigned to the whole of sub-Saharan Africa.

“Sadrudin was an effortlessly charismatic leader. In many ways he was a

76 Personal communication. 30.9.2015

natural aristocrat, who arrived at the same kind of leadership. He was willing to take risks and make big bets in the cause of a long-term vision. He rarely deviated from the strategic direction that he had set himself.”⁷⁷

Statement of the High Commissioner to the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly (7th December 1966)

At the end of his first full year as High Commissioner, Prince Sadruddin made the following statement:

“I should like, Madame Chairman, to extend my deep and personal gratitude to all delegations for their comments on our work and for the kind words which they directed to my colleagues and myself. The comments which were made in this debate will be guidance for the future, particularly for the challenging problems which we are facing in Africa. I am most grateful for the consensus which developed in the adoption of the resolutions. I would refer to the general resolution which was adopted and which, inter alia, endorses the policy of co-operation between my Office and the development programmes and development agencies of the UN. I should like to express my gratitude and appreciation for the resolution on the Protocol; this is a major step forward in the field of international protection of refugees. It will correct what has been until now discrepancy and discrimination and will remove this difficulty which we have been facing in our work. I hope that a great number of States will adhere to the Protocol and I shall endeavour to ensure that this is done as soon as possible.

“I thank the General Assembly for the support which it has given to my Office and I thank particularly the governments which have announced their contributions to my programme, both in this debate of the Third Committee and, last week, in the Pledging Conference. I thank the governments which, for the first time, have announced a contribution to my programme and also those which have increased their contributions. The High Commissioner, Madame Chairman, can only be as strong as the General Assembly wants him to be.

“I pledge to continue to approach problems in the future as in the past in a humanitarian spirit of positive and dynamic impartiality.

“Finally, Madame Chairman, I should like to thank you for the effective

⁷⁷ Mark Malloch-Brown, *The unfinished global revolution, the pursuit of a new international politics*, 2011

*and charming manner in which you have steered the discussion on this subject throughout the debate.*⁷⁸

At the end of the first three years, the High Commissioner shared some of his thoughts with headquarters staff (15th January 1969):

“It gives me great pleasure to have this contact with you again for the first time since the meeting held three years ago when I had the privilege of taking over from Mr Schnyder. This will give us a good opportunity to review in very general terms what has been achieved during that period. It is also a special occasion for me because, as you know, the General Assembly chose to reappoint me for a new term which began on 1st January 1969.

*“When I was watching television during the tremendous Apollo experience recently and saw the world as a tiny sphere, it seemed incredible that, after so many years, it had not learned to live in peace, that men were still fighting, perpetrating injustice, committing crimes against humanity and persecuting individuals. It is, as I say, incredible that despite all the tremendous progress which has been achieved, men still resort to violence instead of to mediation and dialogue, within or outside the United Nations, and that this violence should produce refugees.”*⁷⁹

East Pakistan – Bangladesh

Sadrudin's greatest challenge came in 1971. In Pakistan, the drift to militarism had calamitous effects and resulted in civil war, the dismemberment of Pakistan as a state, war between India and Pakistan and a massive refugee exodus from East Pakistan, the likes of which the world had not seen since the 1947 partition of India. On 29th March, his representative in India, Frits Pijnacker-Hordijk, warned him of an impending refugee influx into India. Within a month, nearly a million refugees had entered India, with 100,000 people a day fleeing the military repression and crossing the border. By the end of the year, India reported a total influx estimated at ten million displaced Bengalis, and called for funding from the international community for massive relief measures.

The UN Secretary-General U Thant appointed the High Commissioner “Chief Co-ordinator of Assistance” and UNHCR became the so-called “focal

78 Quoted by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency

79 *The Times* of 6th October 1971

point” of the UN system, responsible for raising some \$200,000,000 and obtaining substantial food aid to donate to the Government of India.

Sadrudin, in the interests of resolving the very considerable problems that had arisen in relation to the mass exodus, shuttled between Dacca, Delhi and Islamabad and met with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Head of the Awami League that called for the self-determination of East Pakistan, Mrs Indira Gandhi, President of India, and General Yahya Khan, President of Pakistan. He toured the camps in East Bengal and Assam, in October reporting to his Executive Committee on the need for more significant donations. He said, *“Interest must not slacken and apathy should not set in. The recent floods have had a devastating effect on the camps, and distribution problems have added a new dimension to this tragedy. The fragile health of young and old will be further affected.”* He went on to point out that the United Nations’ role was restricted to taking action at the international level to raise funds for assistance and encourage contributions in kind. *“We have subscribed to the expressed wishes of the Government of India and left the operational responsibility to the authorities”*, he said. He paid a tribute to *“the countless Indian men and women who are joining together against frightening odds to bring succour to the refugees.”*

Sadrudin liaised with U Thant, UN Secretary-General, and in his quest for funds addressed to governments worldwide he met President Nixon in the White House office. Mr Nixon was reported as saying, “I should like to congratulate the present High Commissioner, Prince Sadrudin Aga Khan, for the resolute clarity of his report, and to express on behalf of my Government the gratitude of our nation for the vigour and capacity he has brought to the large responsibilities of his office.”⁸⁰

Subsequently, following the Delhi Peace Agreement and the independence of Bangladesh, Sadrudin was responsible for a massive airlift operation that enabled 300,000 people to be repatriated. This made it possible to implement the tripartite arrangement which governed the simultaneous return home of Pakistani prisoners-of-war from India, Bengalis from Pakistan and non-Bengalis from Bangladesh. He joined the people repatriating on many of the flights, which were chartered by his Office from a variety of carriers, including aircraft from USSR, Britain, the German Democratic Republic and Afghanistan. This was the largest humanitarian movement by air ever carried out, defying great political and logistical constraints. The *New York Times*

80 Associated Press Report

reported on 20th September 1973 under the heading *Return of Refugees begun by Pakistan*:

“The repatriation of Bengali war refugees from Bangladesh started today, in the wake of the agreement in New Delhi last month between India and Pakistan for the normalisation of relations on the subcontinent.

“Bengalis and non-Bengalis were stranded in Pakistan and Bangladesh in December, 1971 when the former eastern region of Pakistan became independent Bangladesh as a result of a twenty-three-day war between India and Pakistan. Arrangements have been made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to airlift about 500,000 refugees. On the first day today, 130 Pakistanis flew from Dacca to Lahore, in the West, while 160 Bengalis were sent from Lahore to Bangladesh in a chartered plane.

“The return of 90,000 Pakistani prisoners-of-war held in India will start on 23rd Sept. through the Wagah land route near Lahore. Officials expect that it will take up to four months to return all the prisoners.”

The India Correspondent of *The Economist* reported on 22nd September under the title “*The great migration begins*” that Pakistan and Bangladesh had made a token start that week at repatriating the hundreds of thousands of people stranded in both countries since their 1971 war. Pakistan was allowing the people Sheikh Mujib wanted most, 2,000 senior Bengali civil servants, soldiers and their families, to fly from Lahore to Dacca. The same planes would take 2,600 Pakistanis who indisputably qualified for repatriation, back from Dacca to Pakistan. These exchanges, on aircraft chartered from Afghan Airlines by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, would take 12 days. “The day before they are completed, India will dispatch two trainloads of 1,680 people, including senior prisoners-of-war as well as civilian internees and their families, from camps in Allahabad to Wagah, a border town close to Lahore. In this way the exchanges will be kept simultaneous and proportionately equal as last month’s agreement stipulated. The UN Secretary General has appealed for international help, as has the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, who will visit Dacca and Islamabad later this month.”

The Delhi agreement provided for the repatriation of all the Bengalis in Pakistan – some 150,000, according to Red Cross estimates. The repatriation exercise would in any event take many months. Shipping still had to be arranged for the bulk exchange between Pakistan and Bangladesh, and money had to be raised to finance the operation.

The *Times* of London, under the heading “*An airlift back into life for thousands*”, reported on 1st February 1974 that UNHCR’s task, nearing completion, was “the greatest airlift of its kind ever to be undertaken.” The article said, “A major contribution has been made by the Royal Air Force detachment in this difficult and complex operation. Using two Britannia transports they have flown 150 round trips between the two countries and moved 30,000 people.”

Sadrudin told a journalist, Terry Coleman of *The Guardian*, when he was still concerned as High Commissioner with the refugees of the civil war in Pakistan and of the Indo-Pakistan war, that there were those who wondered how, with his historical Muslim ties and also with his family’s close association with Pakistan, he could properly consider himself impartial. He saw the difficulty. As he delicately put it (perhaps with his beguiling smile), some of the people in charge in Pakistan were also called Khan. He held a press conference to state that he was “not pro-Pakistan or pro-India, only pro-refugee.”⁸¹

It may be interesting to quote from the description of the “Global Migration Research Paper” written by David Myard, a French law graduate with a Master’s in International Studies from the Geneva Graduate Institute. The paper was entitled *Sadrudin Aga Khan and the 1971 East Pakistani Crisis: Refugees and Mediation in light of the Records of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees*. It was published in 2010, and “analyses one of the first Third World large scale emergency situations in which the UN Refugee Agency played a significant and central role, with a direct involvement from the then High Commissioner, Prince Sadrudin Aga Khan... The Global Migration Research Paper examines the UNHCR’s perception of a conflict where refugees were particularly in peril, analyses the agency’s organisational choices for meeting progressively the highest standards of humanitarian efficiency, and describes the prince’s strategies and original methods of negotiation implemented during personal trips or international conferences in Persepolis or Islamabad. What strikes the reader most is the extreme personalisation of the prince’s ‘good offices’ attempts which came up against three difficulties. Firstly, strong concerns about the High Commissioner’s neutrality were immediately voiced by India, as his efforts were running counter to New Delhi’s plans for East Pakistan. Officially, fostering voluntary repatriation in Dacca under a

81 *The Terry Coleman interview: Prince of Peace*, *The Guardian*, 7th October 1972

regime dismissing the poll results was not acceptable to Indira Gandhi, Indian Prime Minister. Secondly, the inflexibility of the Pakistani regime ruled by Yahya Khan in the face of this major challenge to the territorial continuity of the country left the army unable to agree with the political way-outs delicately crafted by the prince. Thirdly, the latter had to play with international equilibriums, when Pakistan, India, China and the USSR were acting on the basis of flexible alliances which could vary according to circumstances.”

The researcher went on to say that the untapped archival material drew the portrait of a man, “ambitious, wilful, endearing and rallied around by many, but also solitary and whose ties with the region proved to be a double-edged sword.”

The enormous challenge that Sadrudin faced between 1971 and 1973 on the Indian subcontinent must have caused him many times to reflect on the considerable work his father had done in the initial decades of the century in relation to the well-being of all the peoples of the British Raj. Might there have been any difference in the history of the area had the Joint Memorandum referred to by his father been accepted by all sides? The Aga Khan wrote in his Memoirs that in 1934, he with the Indian delegation’s “brilliant official secretary” drafted a Joint Memorandum, which he said put before the British Government a united demand on behalf of all communities, covering practically every important political point at issue. He wrote that for the first time in the history of Indo-British relations it propounded what would have been, in effect, a major step forward – the penultimate step before Dominion status. “By it we sought to ensure continuity in the process of the further transfer of responsibility. It was signed by all the non-official Indian delegates. It was a claim for the transfer to Indian hands of practically every power. Despite all (as we thought) its merits, our Joint Memorandum was disowned by Congress*, and therefore the British Government felt compelled in their turn to reject it, except certain final sanctions which would be reserved to the British Government. Had a constitution been granted along these lines, later critical situations... and the final and total transfer of authority might all have been much less difficult.”⁸²

* Congress – the principal Indian political party, basically Hindu, then as now.

82 Aga Khan III, *The Memoirs of Aga Khan*, pages 232-233

The Asians, expelled from Uganda by President Idi Amin

Idi Amin was a Ugandan president in power for seven years, best known for his brutal regime and crimes against humanity. Once a major-general serving President Milton Obote, he organised a military takeover in 1971 while President Obote was in Singapore at the meeting of Commonwealth Heads of State.⁸³ The Asians had come to East Africa initially – as they did to Mauritius, South Africa, the West Indies and Guinea – under British auspices, and many of them were Ismailis, encouraged by their Imam to take up new lives in Africa. They had come as soldiers in Britain's Imperial Army, labourers to build the railways, artisans to maintain machines, clerks to serve in the administration and petty traders to help expand the economy. Under colonial rule, there were laws hindering Africans from entering trade and Asians from owning land. So gradually the Asians monopolised the business sector – and thus became an easy target for Amin. I well remember being surprised when in Kampala in the 1960s to see that all the visible employees of the banks were Asians. About half of the estimated 75,000 South Asians in Uganda in the early 1970s held British passports, one third were Ugandan citizens or had applications for citizenship pending, and the rest were Indian, Pakistani or Kenyan nationals. Growing African nationalism had fuelled demands for the inclusion of Africans in economic and political power structures from which they had long been excluded.

By August 1972, Amin, who was in deep trouble inside Uganda and needed a diversion, announced that the Asians were a British responsibility, and gave them three months to leave Uganda. Initially, he announced that “all Asians holding British, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladesh passports must leave”, and then “All non-citizen Asians, even those holding Kenya and Tanzania passports, must leave” and finally, “All Asians, citizens or not, must leave”.

For Sadruddin Aga Khan, the fate of these South Asians, a very high proportion of whom knew no other country than Uganda (and very many of whom were Ismailis), was a tremendous preoccupation. The Asians had been given only a few weeks in which to arrange to leave, during which time they

83 In 1972 Amin began to massacre numbers of Obote's supporters. Until his overthrow six years later, he arrested, tortured and killed a number of people that Amnesty International puts at 500,000. The Ugandan economy slipped into chaos under his terrifying rule.

were increasingly subjected to harassment. In the countryside, some of them were kidnapped and returned only if very substantial ransoms were paid, others were physically attacked, a few were killed. As they applied their minds to finding possible ways of exporting some of their capital, a new decree was to foil them: £50 per family was to be their starting capital upon leaving the country in which they had worked all their lives, and their sequestered properties, businesses, vehicles and so forth were to be awarded to Africans.

The British Government did not appear to realise at first that in promulgating the expulsion order, Amin, their formerly trustworthy officer, was in deadly earnest. But there was an initial problem about taking the 20,000 or so Asians who were technically British citizens to Britain, for there was a quota system under which fewer than 100 families could be admitted from Uganda each year. Until Amin galvanised the British High Commission by giving orders for the arbitrary arrest of white British subjects, it had not even extended its opening hours to deal with the emergency.

The Guardian of 12th October, in an article entitled “*Asians pose a dilemma for Tory leaders*”, reported that the Minister of State Mr Godber made an emergency journey to Geneva for talks. “After his consultations with the UN High Commissioner, Prince Sadrudin Aga Khan, Mr Godber should be able to put up a strong case for the Government arguing that the safety of the British Asians is now virtually assured, and that vigorous steps have been taken to see that stateless Asians, estimated to number about 10,000, are not going to be sent to Britain.”

Eventually the Asian British passport holders, who numbered over 20,000, received their entry permits to Britain and were accommodated in holding centres, where as one of them wrote, “We had a good taste of living as many refugees are forced to live”. Unforeseen difficulties arose when it was realised that in the same families, some held British passports and some were stateless! Sadrudin now made a special trip to London to plead the cause of such families in the interests, naturally, of reuniting families, and he went on to other capitals to help all the other Asians move out of Uganda with at least a modicum of dignity. In less than two weeks, some 3,600 people were flown to transit accommodation in Austria, Belgium, Italy, Malta and Spain. Permanent resettlement places were offered by Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. India and Pakistan took some 10,000 of the expellees, though many did not settle there permanently.⁸⁴

84 UNHCR, *The State of the World's Refugees, 2000, Rupture in South Asia*, p.69

Sadrudin was asked by Terry Coleman of *The Guardian* whether he ought not to condemn people who caused others to suffer – with reference to President Amin. He replied that it would be better not to offend Amin, and that one ought to be able to separate one's private view from one's official view. The journalist persisted, saying that Amin was persecuting people, and he wondered how far the United Nations these days had an obligation towards morality. Sadrudin in his rejoinder said that too many governments seemed to forget nowadays about the principles of the Charter and the Declaration of Human Rights. He enunciated his views on this theme on other occasions.⁸⁵

On the whole, that particular saga seems to have ended satisfactorily. But twenty years later, the Government of Uganda launched a campaign to get the Asians back.

* * *

In 1972, Prince Sadrudin married Mrs Catherine Aleya Sursock, mother of three sons. Princess Catherine would be at his side for the next thirty-one years, that is to say to the end of his life.

85 *The Terry Coleman Interview*

8

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (II), 1972-77

Must the concept of nationhood so often disenfranchise millions along the way?

Sadraddin Aga Khan, addressing the Third Committee
of the UN General Assembly, 14th November 1977

1972: another massive repatriation operation

It seems today that the sufferings of the peoples of South Sudan are endless, limitless. However, at one stage, very large numbers of them after years in exile were repatriated thanks to UNHCR and the operational agencies invited to take on most of the very considerable practical work involved.

Prior to 1972, the High Commissioner's Office had administered assistance to Sudanese refugees who fled the southern provinces as a result of civil war, seeking asylum in the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Uganda and Zaïre (today's Congo Democratic Republic, as it had been earlier). Then following the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement providing for the return of hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese, seventeen years of strife ended and the refugees could finally travel back to their homes. Sadraddin organised the orderly repatriation of 800,000 people from the four countries of asylum. He set up an operational base in Juba, South Sudan, from where he visited the border areas to oversee people's movement and the start of their reintegration in their war-torn areas, with the benefit of support from UNHCR. His role in bringing Christians and Muslims together and his non-political function as goodwill intermediary was recognised by the Sudan and all the adjacent countries. President Nimeiri awarded him the Order of the Star of the Nile.

Returnee programmes would from then on be an important part of the High Commissioner's mandate.

Latin America

Georges Koulischer, a Belgian colleague whose whole career was spent with UNHCR in both headquarters and a series of field assignments, has contributed details of his work to do with Latin America under Prince Sadrudin's authority, and enables us to follow what happened over years that proved to be critical for all concerned. This whole section has been kindly contributed by Georges, who by the end of his career had become a senior director.

"From 1968 to 1972, I was posted to Buenos Aires, Argentina where UNHCR had its Regional Office for Latin America. Apart from my duties, I kept abreast as far as possible of UNHCR's work in the rest of the world, and saw problems in Africa and Asia growing immeasurably. The organisation was growing not only geographically but also in its quest for durable solutions, that meant working in close co-operation with other UN organisations. In Latin America meanwhile, UNHCR was mostly concerned with European refugees, people who had left Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, and in the years after the Second World War, other East European countries. There were many unresolved problems, with many refugees unable to find work, or growing old in extremely wretched living conditions. The High Commissioner managed to fit into his programme a trip to Latin America and in 1971 he visited Brazil, Argentina and Chile. In the quest for durable solutions for the refugees, he wanted to encourage the authorities and the media to pay greater attention to a question that, while not being in the news, still caused humanitarian problems to thousands of people.

"The visit had the desired impact, and while not wishing to go into detail, I would simply like to speak of two things that happened that were symptomatic of Prince Sadrudin's culture and human warmth. While he was in Buenos Aires, a gap of a little over an hour came about unexpectedly in his programme that we suggested could be filled by visiting a special exhibition on Peru mounted in one of the big museums of the city. He welcomed the idea, and all those who were with him were really impressed by his tremendous knowledge of the various Peruvian civilisations from the 10th century B.C. onwards. We could of course have expected that he would know something of the Inca empire, but he was familiar with a very great deal more than that.

"The other thing that was really touching: he asked if, the day he was due to leave, he could visit my home on the way to the airport. He wanted to see where I lived, meet my wife again (briefly encountered once at a reception),

and see my three young children. We arranged this and he came for about half an hour, being welcomed by the whole district in fact, alerted by the sirens of the two motorcyclist outriders. And one last point I'd like to mention: the conversations he had with the two motorcyclists. They were amazed that he was keen to talk with them about their work and, having once owned a motorbike, about the technical characteristics of their mounts."

* * *

"From the beginning of 1973, I was in charge of the Latin American section at headquarters. That was the year of General Pinochet's 11th September *coup d'état*. I was on holiday in the Grisons (in the east of Switzerland) and on the 12th I received an urgent message from the High Commissioner's office saying that he wished to see me urgently, if possible the next day. I took the train and got to his office. Knowing Prince Sadruddin a little by now, particularly since his 1971 visit to Buenos Aires, I realised straight away that he intended to focus on Latin-American refugees. I thought however that after an in-depth conversation with me, he would leave me to go ahead under my own steam, with my colleagues and the two directors over us, the Director of Protection and Director of Assistance. I was wrong: in an organisation coping with urgent refugee problems in Africa and Asia, the High Commissioner considered the situation in Latin America sufficiently serious to make it part of his concern on a daily basis. When he was in Geneva, wishing to keep up and stimulate the impetus he had given it at the outset, he asked to see me virtually every day, wishing to be kept up to date and to take action as necessary.

"It is difficult today to have precise statistics of the number of Chileans who left their country during the sixteen-year military rule of General Pinochet. From the outset, hundreds took refuge in embassies that were very soon seriously overcrowded, but where they had diplomatic asylum. Thousands of others very quickly tried to escape to neighbouring countries, especially Argentina and Peru. They were generally allowed in, but only in transit – or, as in the case of Argentina, they feared to stay given the political situation in that country and in the whole region (the secret services of several countries were co-operating in the anti-guerrilla campaign that was applied even to the very many political dissidents who were not actually militant). These activities sowed disquiet among the refugees, especially when Operation *Condor* got underway in the mid-Seventies, co-ordinating the secret services of Chile,

Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Some of the refugees from these countries felt threatened and wanted to get out quickly, if possible to Europe, or to Mexico. This was the period of death squads, and in the case of Argentina, an organisation called the Triple A (Anti-communist Alliance of Argentina) because of which not only Argentinians but also refugees lived in perpetual fear.

“The situation was all the more worrying and complex because Chile, from the beginning of the 1970s when President Allende headed the government, had taken in Latin-American refugees, especially from Argentina, Uruguay and Bolivia. These refugees after the September 1973 *coup d'état* no longer felt safe in Chile. The High Commissioner's mandate covered these people, and the first concern was to ensure that they had legal protection and above all, prevent their being sent back to their countries against their will. Then we had to find ways that they could emigrate, if possible directly from Chile. Some of them, in Santiago, had found refuge in “safe havens” under UNHCR protection, with the help of the churches. The authorities had accepted this “safe havens” formula that was extremely welcome both for the refugees and for UNHCR. It created however the absolute need to find a very rapid solution. We had to have all hands on deck to register all these refugees, and to make up convincing dossiers to present to the embassies in Santiago of various potential resettlement countries.

“So we had to find resettlement countries for two distinct groups: the Chilean refugees who had left their country on their own and were temporarily in countries neighbouring Chile, and Latin-American refugees who were still in Chile. Now added to these were Chileans expelled from their own country by the authorities within the framework of legal measures taken that were contrary to Article 9 of the Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1949 [Article 9: ‘No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.’]

“Prince Sadrudin, altogether conscious of the need to take immediate action, followed the situation very closely, and, beyond the politico-military aspect that he could not do anything about, he was very concerned by the humanitarian problem that was extreme from the moment the *coup d'état* occurred – the need to find countries in which the refugees could live permanently and without any danger. From September 1973, he therefore made a series of appeals on behalf of those who were distraught and could not have found anywhere to go without international assistance.

“To put it simply, the Latin-American refugees were politically on the left and sometimes quite militant, which was something new. Western Europe lost no time in giving positive replies, and finally under the pressure of their own populations and the active diplomacy of the High Commissioner, there were many countries that took people in. But we had to go further. Prince Sadruddin realised immediately that in the current context, we could get countries of Eastern Europe to join in that hitherto had been left on one side – and who had considered UNHCR to be a Western organisation. UNHCR was therefore starting to open out basically, in line with its universal, humanitarian vocation. The High Commissioner appealed to these countries, enjoining them to take in refugees, in particular Chileans. In no time positive replies came in. So in the Iron Curtain period, countries of Eastern Europe took in Chileans and other Latin-American refugees. The High Commissioner went himself to Romania which had accepted almost a thousand. In the course of my missions to Bucharest, I was able to see them myself, several times, and establish, with the help of the prestige in which the High Commissioner was held, a very satisfactory working relationship with the authorities.

“This situation went on for several years. If at times the resettlement of refugees in Europe was a well-oiled procedure, we never lost sight of the fact that from the human angle we had to do all we could so that the generosity of countries of resettlement would not flag and to avoid letting the operation become routine. So the High Commissioner at each annual meeting of his Executive Committee spoke of the Latin-American refugees to keep up interest in them and ensure that efforts to give them new homes would not falter. In 1976, he made a new appeal to thirty-four governments, anxious for special attention to be given to the reunification of split families.

“Over and above all that, urgent situations cropped up, either for the High Commissioner’s staff or for individual refugees. On 8th October 1975 at 9 am, in their haste to be able to leave Argentina, four refugees, armed with two revolvers and two hand grenades, forcibly occupied the UNHCR Regional Office in Buenos Aires. They thought that by putting pressure on the staff, they and their families, totalling fourteen people, would get visas for a European country straight away. At the time, only very few hold-ups of this kind had been committed, so the High Commissioner immediately alerted the UN Secretary-General, who gave him effective support. The four refugees’ determination reflected their desperation. They refused to talk and behaved threateningly, so the thing was to find them one or more countries very rapidly that were willing

to take them. Our colleagues were in real danger and we had to react fast. The High Commissioner, on the basis of all the elements that he had studied carefully, agreed that there was no possibility of negotiation. To follow the situation closely, he cancelled several meetings and asked not to be disturbed unless there was some other emergency. Not only did I spend a good deal of time with him, because he wanted to know what was happening all the time to be able to react, but as on this occasion we had to work all night – and finally throughout two nights – he put his office at the disposal of the small team and had a camp bed put in there for us. We could use his direct telephone line for all the calls to be made abroad, mostly to Argentina, to potential countries of resettlement and to UNHCR offices liable to be able to help – while all the time keeping the UN Secretary-General informed so that he could as necessary take action. With regard to the team, the High Commissioner told us he was ready to receive telephone calls even at night if necessary. He also told me that I could reach him by telephone in his car if I could not reach him anywhere else – a procedure quite new to me back in 1975.

“With this unfailing support, we worked with absolute determination (I can hardly say enthusiasm in the circumstances). It was not easy, because the countries we approached were not keen to give in to blackmail. The race against the clock went on for forty-eight hours until finally, Algeria, with the support of the UN Secretary-General, agreed to take the whole group and Argentina gave them exit permits. Our colleagues were freed at last. Meanwhile, Prince Sadruddin had called his representative in Buenos Aires, who was one of the hostages, to express his very great concern and his determination to resolve the crisis rapidly. He gave him his personal telephone number. Afterwards, he called to congratulate him and his colleagues, and to say how he had admired their courage.

“That wasn’t the only occasion that emergency action was needed. It is important to know that sometimes, one has to try to save a refugee who is under arrest or in immediate danger, to locate a refugee who has disappeared, or to do something about some other situation that cannot be left as it is. The atmosphere in Latin America was such at that time that we had to face up to arbitrary arrests, forced returns to countries of origin, tortures, kidnappings or assassinations by groups or unidentified killers. In any case, rumours could create panic among the refugees. Some even resorted to hunger strikes, in the hope of accelerating procedures. And we knew that the High Commissioner paid tremendous attention to individual cases, sometimes submitted to him by diplomats working in Geneva. One day, an urgent case cropped up at La

Paz. The High Commissioner wanted me to go with him immediately to the Permanent Representative of Bolivia to the United Nations Office in Geneva. He asked if we could go in my car, his not being available just then when it could have been needed. And so we went off, he as my passenger in the bright yellow VW Beetle that I had then. On the way there, we talked about the details of the situation we were concerned about. I knew from experience that he would remember everything, and be ready to speak of the main points of the case himself. The Permanent Representative listened carefully. He promised to do everything in his power to elucidate and to resolve the case, and keep us informed. I knew from experience that such a reply was not simply a diplomatic one, the High Commissioner being so persuasive and tenacious. And the case was resolved. On the way back, Prince Sadruddin was extremely friendly, to the point that he asked me why my car was of such a special colour. When I told him that it was my children who had chosen the colour, he asked me a whole lot of questions about my family.

"I remember having taken part soon after this in a luncheon at his home, the Château de Bellerive, along with some thirty guests, mainly from the Geneva diplomatic corps, and a few UNHCR colleagues. The conversation revolved around numerous refugee situations that were mobilising, or had mobilised, UNHCR, such as the boat people, very much in the news at that time, or the exodus of 10,000,000 refugees to India during the war of independence of Bangladesh in 1971. Several of the situations in Africa were also discussed. At one point, the High Commissioner wanted to turn the conversation to Latin-American refugees, stimulating discussion and comments that were interesting in themselves, and were certainly useful in not letting support for these groups flag. It helped a good deal in my work. On another occasion, he had a film on Chilean refugees made by UNHCR's information service projected in his home. In a word, the Latin-American refugees owed a great deal to his own efforts. They were aware of this from the start. Among the symbols of their gratitude that were received was a sculpture of Christ on the cross presented to the prince in a small ceremony by a Brazilian sculptor resettled in Switzerland with UNHCR assistance.

"I conclude by saying that the High Commissioner looked after Latin-American refugees right through to the end of his mandate in 1977, without flagging, for he understood that the situation remained urgent. He wanted to make sure that the operation did not subside into routine. The protection of individual human rights was vital to him. The number of Chilean and other

Latin-American refugees who were protected, assisted and resettled through UNHCR must have been about 10,000⁸⁶, far from the numbers of so many other situations in the world into which the prince “plunged”. I would like to add that frequently, Prince Sadruddin paid tributes to his staff in the field who unceasingly, and sometimes day and night, worked to save the refugees and arrange for them to be presented to the embassies of countries that could receive them. The High Commissioner never wished to take any credit, that he always said was all for his staff.”

Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia (Indochina), 1974 onwards

The tragic history of Indochina in the decades that preceded the independence of all three countries, particularly in relation to the role of the United States in support of the government of South Vietnam, may still remain in many memories. In any case, the heavy bombing of all three countries and the strafing with napalm and other chemicals of much of Vietnam, which caused massive displacement of populations along with almost irreparable damage to the land – and to individuals – were the subjects of sensational reports in even the most serious newspapers and television newsreels. All three countries of what had been called Indochina by the French colonial powers had already suffered immeasurably during the Second World War from the Japanese occupation. Then the involvement of the United States from the Kennedy years onwards with finally no fewer than 543,000 troops being engaged on land, sea and air in the hope of stopping the Viet Cong advance on the capital of South Vietnam, Saigon, caused unimaginable destruction and dislocation. It was not until 1973 that the United States began to withdraw its massive troop contingents. And by then, the world had been shocked to learn of the horrific volume of the US B52 bombings that represented the heaviest aerial bombardment in history, according to numbers of commentators on that very tragic period.

Sadruddin visited both Laos and Vietnam in 1974, and he would soon set

86 Note by author: It is difficult to obtain the statistics of the Chilean diaspora. Many tens of thousands of Chileans were taken in by a wide variety of countries, with or without direct UNHCR involvement. France and Sweden reportedly both accepted fifteen thousand or more, and as a resettlement officer, I was involved in 1978 with an NGO in Mendoza, at the foot of the Andes, in facilitating the departure of several hundred Chileans, many of them still traumatised by the coup d'état and its aftermath, to Canada, Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

up offices in the region. Being asked by the UN General Assembly to help people who wanted to return to their home villages after being uprooted for several years represented a totally new departure from the already fast-developing work of his Office. He would be establishing "Special Operations" in all three countries, if he received the green light from the respective authorities.

There were still two Vietnams (North and South), and UNHCR offices were set up in both Saigon and Hanoi, under the overall supervision of a Regional Representative in a new office in Vientiane, capital of Laos. Negotiations with Phnom Penh to work with the displaced in Cambodia were at an initial stage⁸⁷ which, in view of subsequent events, were not destined to come to anything in any foreseeable future. In Laos, following the signing of the Vientiane Peace Agreement by the former Vientiane Government and the revolutionary forces of the north, the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat), a Provisional Government of National Unity was set up, led by Prince Souvanna Phouma as Prime Minister, while his half-brother Prince Souphanouvong headed the National Consultative Political Council. Hitherto, the two princes had been opposed to each other, Souvanna Phouma always representing the Vientiane Government (having been Prime Minister several times previously) and Souphanouvong representing the Lao Patriotic Front (of which the Pathet Lao was the fighting force).

The High Commissioner's team in the new Regional Office for Indochina, based in Vientiane, the colourful capital of Laos on the Mekong, was headed by Jacques Cuénod, formerly Regional Representative in the first regional office in Africa. His deputy, Darryl Han, a very able Burmese (a nephew of U Thant)⁸⁸, a graduate of Asian politics with ten years' experience with UNHCR, would be based in Hanoi. A Vietnamese officer, Nguyen Tang Canh, was recruited to cover the work in South Vietnam. Two programme officers to cover the programme in Laos, in close coordination with the mixed

87 A US newspaper, Lansdale, PA. *North Penn Reporter*, reported on 19th January 1971: "A program to aid Vietnamese families uprooted when the Indochina war spilled over into Cambodia is being quietly carried out by a Muslim prince who has made a career of helping the homeless. Launched in response to appeals from the governments of South Vietnam and Cambodia, the undertaking is the latest phase of a global aid program conducted by Prince Sadrudin Aga Khan, thirty-seven-year-old U.N. High Commissioner for refugees."

88 Darryl and I found that we had attended adjacent schools in Solihull, Warwickshire, UK: he Eversfield primary school, I Solihull High School for Girls. On the way to my bus, I may have passed the little Burmese pupil dressed in a burgundy blazer and grey shorts. Darryl particularly loved Marmite, and was thrilled to find it at my flat in Vientiane, where he, like other members of the burgeoning team, often needed to spend a night.

mobile units of the Government's Mixed Commission, were an Englishman, Martin Barber, recruited from a Vientiane pagoda in his final year of doctoral anthropological research, and a French national born in Laos, Marie-Claire Leykyhuong. I joined them as finance and administrative officer. When I was briefed in UNHCR headquarters, Prince Sadrudin's assistant, Zia Rizvi, told me that the prince had said that if he could have been a delegate of the High Commissioner, his preference would have been to work in Indochina.

In Laos, the Mixed Commission's mobile units were determining which of the displaced wished to return to their villages in the north. Those who did were transported by air and given initial assistance to settle. The essential food items made available were of course essentially rice, which had to be dropped in strong canvas bags from DC3s flying between the high mountains, "kickers" literally kicking the bags out of the open doorway of the fuselage as the aircraft began to gain height, hoping that the rice would land where the villagers had marked the place with a chalk cross. By the beginning of April 1975, several hundred people were being taken daily to the Plain of Jars⁸⁹, from whence they were moved to their ancestral homes. Planes of the Royal Lao Air Force, the Australian Air Force, as well as aircraft from the USSR and Royal Air Lao took part in the airlift. UNHCR was airlifting not only people but a good deal of personal property, including poultry, in baskets, bicycles and sewing machines.

This was satisfactory. However April 1975 turned out to be a really terrifying month in Cambodia, with the communist Khmer Rouge taking over the capital Phnom Penh on the 17th and driving out all the inhabitants at gunpoint, including the hospital patients and staff. It would be weeks before the outside world heard of any of the horrific events inside the country, and that was thanks to the reports of expatriates, including Cambodians holding French passports, who had been dramatically expelled by the particularly tough soldiery. Cambodia would be sealed off from the outside world for over three years, and it was only after Vietnam invaded the country in 1978 that the full horror of the Khmer Rouge regime would confront the world.

Then on 30th April, South Vietnam's capital Saigon fell to the Viet Cong soldiery, causing widespread panic, and virtually before the eyes of the world there was a stampede of men and women desperate to get out of the country

89 The Plain of Jars is a megalithic archaeological landscape in Laos. It consists of thousands of stone jars scattered around the upland valleys and the lower foothills of the central plain of the Xieng Khouang plateau, Xieng Khouang. Wikipedia

by any means. Many thousands of people reached US vessels that willingly took them on board, others somehow managed to get onto the roof of the US Embassy and to clamber onto helicopters as they lifted into the air! Headlines worldwide spoke of the drama. The island of Guam was the first destination of many of these people, who, if they changed their minds about having left Vietnam, would find that there was no way back.

Within weeks, an exodus would begin from Laos too. There was a tense weekend of student demonstrations over the first weekend in May, prior to which large numbers of expatriates, including all the missionaries of the Christian & Missionary Alliance who had been there for decades, left at short notice – and would find that they would not be allowed back. On 23rd May, the *Far Eastern Economic Review* published a two-page article headed “*Laos: the silent surrender*”, which began, “Vientiane: The once-powerful rightist faction in Laos can look to the failure of their own political machinations when searching for reasons why they were driven from the ruling coalition and why the country went under the effective control of the Pathet Lao.”

Many factors, both military and monetary, brought about a panic situation in which wealthy Laotians and many right-wing army officers and politicians fled abroad, along with Vietnamese and Chinese businessmen. “The Pathet Lao marched down Route 7 without a fight and reached Ban Hin Heup on the same day that demonstrations took place in the capital, Vientiane.”

The crisis prompted the Prime Minister to give the Defence portfolio to the Pathet Lao Deputy Minister of Defence, which constituted a bending of the Vientiane Agreement of the previous year and entrusted the Royal Army to Pathet Lao control. The majority of Europeans and Americans who had not left a week or two earlier found themselves leaving. By June, the Pathet Lao was consolidating its power in the country, demoting or removing high-ranking civil servants and senior officers in the armed forces and running seminars to spread Pathet Lao ideas. The United States agreed to withdraw all its AID workers (who numbered several thousand), leaving a reduced embassy as the only American presence. Tens of thousands of Hmong hill tribes people left Laos, following their leader, General Vang Pao who had worked for the Americans – but they were naturally unable to follow him all the way to the USA – at least not for a very long time indeed.

Despite all the disruption, the High Commissioner visited Vientiane and had discussions with the Lao authorities at both national and local levels. We Regional Office staff were delighted to spend time with him and his

wife, though one evening Sadruddin went down with an attack of malaria. The three principal UNHCR officers accompanied the party when Prince Sadruddin and Princess Catherine were invited to the Plain of Jars to see both the relocation operation for displaced people, and the famous Jars. Sadruddin had meetings with the Prime Minister and other representatives of authority, but did not meet King Sisavang Vattana, who was being kept under house arrest in Luang Prabang after being forced to abdicate. Until the communist takeover in 1975, this beautiful town was the royal capital and seat of government of the Kingdom of Laos. The old town centre with its very beautiful pagodas is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In Vietnam, the small office in Hanoi, in the Hotel Thong Nyat, the only place for expatriates to live and work (along with the occasional rat), now represented the only UN presence in the country, but it had an important role. Prince Sadruddin became the first UN official to go to Ho Chi Minh Ville, the former Saigon, after the reunification of Vietnam, and to travel down the celebrated Route No.1 to view damage done by the bombing. In the course of his two visits to Vietnam in 1975, assuming in addition to his normal role that of representative of the United Nations Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, he was instrumental in facilitating delicate contacts between the United States and the Vietnamese authorities to solve the problem of repatriating the remains of US servicemen killed in Vietnam. He organised the visit of a congressional delegation that went to Hanoi to hold discussions on the Missing in Action. He also negotiated the first orderly departures of stranded foreigners in Saigon/Ho Chi Minh Ville, enabling them to leave on UNHCR aircraft long before normal air traffic resumed in the region.⁹⁰

Major exodus from all three countries, from 1975 until well into the 1980s – and even beyond

Sadruddin was to leave UNHCR in December 1977. He would put in place initial measures to cope with what contrary to anyone's expectations was to become a tremendous exodus from the three countries of the former Indochina. This meant opening branch offices all over South East Asia, so in addition to the existing ones in Hanoi, Vientiane, northern Thailand

90 UNHCR, *The State of the World's Refugees 2000: Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action*, The UN Refugee Agency, www.unhcr.org.

and Bangkok, there was now a UNHCR presence in Hong Kong, Djakarta, Manila, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Macau, as well as in or near some of the “boat people” camps. Tokyo would come later.

In May 1980, as the headquarters officer then dealing with the resettlement of Indochinese and of necessity keeping a very close watch on the whole situation, I was asked to give a lecture at the University of Fribourg, and I take the liberty of quoting one or two excerpts from it.

“The political changes in Cambodia and Vietnam in April 1975 and in Laos in May of the same year led to numbers of people leaving and seeking asylum in countries of the region – at first in Thailand, where tens of thousands of Hmong hill peoples, Thai Dam, other minority groups and lowland Lao arrived from across the Mekong and were housed in camps set up by the Ministry of the Interior with UNHCR support, and where Cambodians fleeing the Khmer Rouge crossed into the south-east of the country to be housed in two new camps under the same auspices. Then little by little, an exodus from Vietnam by boat began – into southern Thailand, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Philippines, Indonesia and indeed as far away as Brunei, Japan, Korea and northern Australia.”

The students learned that by the end of 1976 about 116,000 people had left their countries, the following year just under 47,000 people fled, but in 1978 (by which time Sadruddin had left, and the High Commissioner was now a Mr Poul Hartling from Denmark), numbers rose perceptibly with 150,500 arrivals. By the end of that year, though large numbers had been able to leave for a new life in other countries, there were still over 203,000 Indochinese in camps all over South East Asia. Just over 135,000 were people who had crossed the Mekong into Thailand while some 68,000 were ‘boat people’ – Vietnamese who had taken the risk to flee across the South China Sea in fishing boats, and tragically, in some cases they were young children whose parents imagined that by sending them off, they would stand the chance of a better life in America. Numbers then escalated dramatically: by the end of 1979, well over a quarter of a million people – 270,040 – had been registered in the twelve month period, roughly four fifths of them boat arrivals.

“The refugees arriving in various countries of first asylum came, often in a state of extreme exhaustion, to camps which in many cases were overcrowded, onto beaches and onto remote islands, some of them uninhabited, where their lives were further endangered by lack of food and water following harrowing

journeys by sea. It became common knowledge after a time that pirates visited the refugee boats, looting, raping and sometimes even killing those on board. Some boats had visits from pirates several times, and were left drifting without food and water. Fortunately for many, merchant shipping saw them in distress and rescued them, caring for them until they reached port. Many others are presumed drowned...”⁹¹

Officially, the South East Asian countries where Vietnamese “boat people” arrived adopted a restrictive policy of not allowing the boats to land (except for the purpose of providing repairs, fuel and provisions), unless resettlement guarantees could be given. The pressure on the international community to resolve this critical situation may be imagined.

On 22nd June 1979, three former High Commissioners made a Declaration to the Press, in which they said,

“As former High Commissioners for Refugees and as human beings, we are deeply shocked by the tragedy which has been unfolding in South East Asia.

“The mounting numbers of displaced men, women and children, the cruel circumstances surrounding their exile and the forced return which they have been subjected to or threatened by, represent so many violations of the most elementary principles of international humanitarian law and compassion.

“We call upon the authorities of the countries of origin or habitual residence of these unfortunate groups to allow them to live in peace and, should they have to leave, to organise their departure in such a way as to minimise the suffering caused by their uprooting.

“We urge the countries of first asylum to refrain from sending back refugees who after their harrowing exodus still fear persecution or death in their own countries or drowning on the high seas. The generosity of the governments in the region has already been severely taxed and they have shown much patience and understanding in the past. But time is essential to permit the international community to meet the present crisis.

“We appeal to governments and the peoples of the countries of resettlement everywhere to co-operate with international organisations and the Red Cross so as to seek out and implement lasting solutions to the plight of so many innocent victims.

“Complacency at this time would serve to perpetuate injustice and intensify intolerable suffering.

91 Willday, Diana: *Exodus and resettlement of Indochinese refugees and displaced persons*, Lecture at the University of Fribourg, 2nd May 1980.

“It would represent yet another brutal blow to human rights.”

Auguste Lindt,

High Commissioner for Refugees, 1957-1960

Felix Schnyder

High Commissioner for Refugees, 1961-1965

Sadrudin Aga Khan

High Commissioner for Refugees, 1966-1977

I quote this Declaration in its entirety, realising how apt it is in today's mass exodus situation.

To bring this account to an end, I record that UNHCR reported in 2000 that in nearly a quarter of a century of displacement within and from Indochina, more than 3,000,000 people fled their countries, of whom some 2,500,000 found new homes elsewhere and 500,000 returned. Resettlement countries made extraordinary commitments, while fortunately, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam all eventually accepted repatriation and reintegration programmes. On the negative side, however, UNHCR spoke of “the countless people who drowned at sea, or who lost their lives or suffered in other ways from pirate attacks, rape, shelling, pushbacks and long-term detention in inhumane conditions.” UNHCR reported at the same time that a 1994 assessment had noted a “disenchantment with resettlement”, which would have its effect in later years.⁹²

The High Commissioner's address to his staff

Prince Sadrudin shared his thoughts with the headquarters staff each year on the Office's work and preoccupations, the text of his address being subsequently forwarded to field offices. He gave such a comprehensive view of every challenge to the Office and to every aspect of the functioning of the organisation, couching every page in his inimitable, masterly style, that it will certainly be of interest to some readers. The High Commissioner's address of January 1975 is given as Annex II.

* * *

92 UNHCR, op.cit.

Operations Room

During his twelve years as UN High Commissioner, Sadruddin Aga Khan had to move the Office more than once: first from the original office accommodation at “Door 20” of the Palais des Nations to the splendid new “E building” at the Palais. Because of the rapid expansion of UNHCR, it may have seemed that no sooner had everyone settled down into their new offices than there had to be another move. The second move was into the Centre William Rappard on the lakeside, where many of the offices overlooked a beautiful park. The building was shared with GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade).

Sadruddin had always wanted an Operations Room, but there had never been a suitable room near enough his office to create one. Now at last, he found the opportunity presented itself, even though he knew (and I knew) that he would be leaving at the end of the year. I was notified while still in Zaïre that I was to become Operations Room officer, which meant setting up something in line with what I could find out about operations rooms while on leave in England. British Petroleum was particularly helpful with the necessary advice. It was an honour to work for the necessary two to three weeks needed to set it up, just across the corridor from the High Commissioner. I was told that while he was still there, Sadruddin made good use of the data on the twenty four magnetic boards and the range of Operational Navigation Charts covering Africa and Asia that enabled refugee influxes to be pinpointed. He wished me to attend meetings held there, again a privilege that I can still savour in retrospect.

Whether Prince Sadruddin’s successor, Mr Poul Hartling, a former Prime Minister of Denmark, used the Operations Room much (or whether it was even kept up to date) I may never know, and subsequently UNHCR had to move yet again, as it needed more space (as did GATT), and finally came into a building of its own.

9

Resignation

He has been the only UN official who has carried out his task like a Head of State

Tribune de Genève, 9th November 1977

On 8th November 1977, Sadruddin, in an address to “All UNHCR staff members, Headquarters and Field Offices” in an Interoffice Memorandum No.45/77 said:

“This is to inform all my colleagues that I have decided to leave my post at the end of this year. The Secretary-General was advised of my decision last spring. Had this been generally known before now, it would have imposed many constraints on the daily work of the Office and we might all have suffered from what is known as a “lame duck” administration – with serious side-effects on the refugees who remain the raison d’être of UNHCR.

“It is for this very reason that I have chosen to step down before completing my present term, since it was understood, both inside and outside our organisation, that I would on no account accept to serve beyond 1978.

“UNHCR is well equipped to ensure a smooth transition and I trust that you will discharge your important duties with particular dedication and skill in the coming weeks. You have my esteem and my gratitude. I hope and believe that the Office will continue to be what many recognise as the most effective body in the UN system.”

Sadruddin had wanted his staff to hear of his forthcoming departure before there was news of it in the media.

A month later, the UN General Assembly adopted unanimously the following resolution:

32/69 Expression of appreciation to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees⁹³

The General Assembly,

Noting with deep regret that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will shortly be relinquishing his duties,

Recognising the progress achieved under his guidance in promoting humanitarian solutions to the problems of refugees and displaced persons in various parts of the world,

Considering his unrelenting efforts to alleviate human suffering through the special humanitarian tasks entrusted to him in addition to the original functions of his Office,

1. *Expresses its sincere appreciation and thanks* to Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan for the effective and dedicated manner in which he has performed his functions as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;
2. *Extends* its good wishes to him for success in his future undertakings.

98th plenary meeting
8 December 1977

Meanwhile, the Deputy High Commissioner Charles Mace, at the request of the High Commissioner, circulated to all the Geneva and field office staff an extract from the closing statement that the prince made at the General Assembly (Third Committee) on 17th November 1977.⁹⁴ It is a lengthy extract, but it would be a pity to paraphrase Sadruddin's words, revealing as they are of his generous spirit and of his willingness to continue to serve the United Nations.

"With reference to Resolution L.29, Madame Chairman, I am deeply grateful of course for the expression of confidence and appreciation in the way in which I discharged my responsibilities. May I say though that UNHCR, during the time that I was privileged to be High Commissioner, has always been very much of a collegial office. Decisions were taken always in consultation with my staff, with my colleagues, at many levels. And with colleagues in the field as well. And

93 Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 45 (A/32/45)

94 UNHCR/IOM/BOM/52/77

therefore I would, with your permission, Madame Chairman, take it that this Resolution L.29 addresses itself not only to the High Commissioner, but indeed also, most importantly, to the splendid staff of UNHCR, who served me with great efficiency and loyalty, but who above all dedicated itself to refugees. This applies not only to my colleagues at headquarters in Geneva, to those who sit behind me here and who have contributed so much in the Third Committee and outside to our successful efforts, but indeed also to all the colleagues in the field whose duty it is to protect and assist refugees in sometimes very trying circumstances. This is where the job is done quite frequently, in the field, in hardship posts, in difficult assignments, and the credit which is contained in L.29 certainly addresses itself also to the field staff. May I, with your permission Madame Chairman, therefore associate myself with the Third Committee and express my appreciation, together with yours, to all my colleagues. Indeed, if the Organization continues to be what many of the distinguished speakers here referred to as one of the most effective instruments of humanitarian action in the United Nations, it is because of my colleagues, and because they have never accepted in a humanitarian office such as ours, to become a bureaucratised administration. We should not be a bureaucratised administration when dealing with humanitarian problems. (...)

“As you know, Madame Chairman, my links with the United Nations have now lasted for some seventeen years, ever since World Refugee Year in 1959/60. These links I am sure will not be broken. I hope that I shall have the privilege to serve the United Nations in the future. But I am bound to say, Madame Chairman and distinguished delegates, that I shall always remain personally committed to the cause of refugees, and the uprooted who are the innocent victims of man’s inability to avert conflicts, violence and injustice, man’s inability to implement Article I of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which is very short, and which may perhaps be quoted, especially in the light of the debate we just had. It states that ‘all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.’ With this in mind, Madame Chairman, and in closing, may I also be permitted to say that just as I shall remember the refugees, I shall also always keep a very soft spot indeed in my heart for the Third Committee. Thank you.”

Our High Commissioner was not going to leave his staff without saying goodbye to each in person. We all received a gracious invitation from “The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and Princess Sadrudin Aga Khan” to the Château de Bellerive on 14th December 1977 from 18h30 to 20h30.

The card was accompanied by a map indicating how to reach their home.

When it came to the last day in the office, we all gathered in the large GATT entrance hall, and were highly entertained by the following ballad, subsequently circulated to all staff at headquarters with the approval of its author, Alan Simmance.

THE BALLAD OF THE PARTING PRINCE

It was May '77 at half-past eleven when Sadrudin Aga Khan
Got out of the chair in his tenth floor lair,
looked in the glass and said 'Darn!'
"For fifteen long years, or so it appears,
I have wandered near and far
of my own volition as High Commission of UNHCR.
Now the time has come" (and his heart grew numb
As he leapt from his lonely lair,
went out of the doors and down ten floors
to breathe the springtime air).
"Though it may not please all the refugees,
To look for pastures new,
let the ship sail on, even though I'm gone,
under the same old crew.
My loss will be startling but still there's Hartling
to steer the sinking ship
But even a Dane can be driven insane
if he starts to relax his grip.
He should never go golfing with Ole Volving,
play poker with Charlie Mace,
Or be seen on the telly with Amin and Kelly
if he wants to avoid disgrace.
For, although I'm a prince, it has made me wince
to think of my years at the helm,
and I frequently grieve in the Château Bellerive
at the thought of my erstwhile realm.
Though I've tried with persistence to render assistance,
and attend to external affairs,
I must now seek protection against re-election,

relinquish my burdens and cares.
 I don't want to be mean", said Prince Sadruddin,
 "But the time has come to depart,
 to send Waldheim a cable while I am still able
 to make a decisive new start.
 Although I'll miss Koulischer, it would be foolisher
 of me to try to remain.
 It's not that I want to steer clear of Zia
 And I know that I shouldn't complain.
 But why should I pander to long memoranda
 And files for the rest of my life?
 I'll become a consultant" – his voice grew exultant –
 "and spend some more time with my wife."
 So he sent off a cable, "Dear Kurt, be alert
 That I'm off at the end of the year.
 And since I'm retiring, contenders aspiring
 Can now make their interest clear."
 With this last verbal sally, the prince left the Palais
 And strode to the edge of the lake.
 He jumped in his boat (which was barely afloat)
 And said "Could I have made a mistake?"
 Too late! For his cable arrived on the table
 of Waldheim who quailed at the news
 that the prince should resign on the telegraph line,
 And he cancelled his next pleasure cruise.
 So soon every door on the thirty-eighth floor
 was quaking and shaking with shock,
 that the summons he feared had at long last appeared
 and the time had arrived to take stock.
 A saddened acceptance was all he could send
 For the era of Aga had come to an end!

Prince Sadruddin laughed without the least restraint, quite as amused as everyone else was and quite possibly more than anyone. I imagine that the humour really corresponded to his own!

A serious moment came when the prince made his parting remarks to us all, and what I managed to get down on my notepad was this:

“What I think you need more than anything else is some sense of humanity, of compassion, some feeling for one’s fellow men, some kind of reaction against racism – whatever kind of racism – some kind of in-built opposition to discrimination, to autocracy, to dictatorship, to any kind of injustice, and if you have that, you can help refugees. And I do not think it is something that is limited only to the professionals on the staff. It is something everybody should have – all the people who work in the general services, who keep the show running. Everybody should have this feeling, and I think this is what makes or should make UNHCR what it is.”

Some time later, everyone received a copy of the prince’s thanks for his parting gift, written in his own neat hand on Bellerive notepaper:

My dear Colleagues,

Mr Mace presented me with the handsome souvenirs which we got a foretaste of during the reception which brought us together when I left the office.

I was most impressed by the attractive plaque with the engraved inscription on the silver scroll which you chose to give me on the occasion of my departure from UNHCR.

Asprey’s in London did a splendid job. Few UN texts have received such a special treatment as that which you selected from the General Assembly’s resolution last fall when I took leave of the 3rd Committee! All of you have my deepest gratitude for this exceptional gift.

I was equally touched by the attractive leather-bound volume which contains the many signatures of all the staff members from both headquarters and the field offices. It will serve as a permanent reminder of the very personal association which I was privileged to enjoy with so many during the years spent together, both in Geneva and on mission.

With renewed thanks and warmest thoughts,

Yours,

Sadrudin Aga Khan

There were many tributes in the media to Prince Sadruddin's service to UNHCR. For example, in the Swiss magazine *Bilan*, we read this in 1991:⁹⁵

"Twelve years throughout which he gave this organisation a lustre that it hadn't had before. Created to solve the problem of refugees in Europe after the Second World War, UNHCR had only a few dozen employees at the beginning of the 1960s. Combining diplomacy of "good offices" and fund-raising campaigns, adroitly handling circumstances and conflicts – the Six Day war (1967), Biafra (1967-1970), Bangladesh and Uganda (1972), Chile (1973), Vietnam (1970-1975) – he developed the activities of UNHCR in every part of the world.

"Fourteen years after his departure, those who remained in UNHCR still felt some nostalgia for that period. His royal style, his aristocratic bearing, left a good many memories. 'He was always impeccably courteous, impeccably polite', said one of his former subordinates."

Boredom? Declining enthusiasm? queried his interviewer. Sadruddin said, "*I felt the need to do something else. I don't think one should hang on to one's position at all costs*".

To me and no doubt to many others, he had said: "*I don't want to remain 'Mr. Refugee' for ever!*"

Of course the media featured Prince Sadruddin's departure in some of their headlines, particularly the Swiss press and television news. The *Tribune de Genève*, on its front page, said that despite his departure at the year-end, Prince Sadruddin would doubtless carry out missions, particularly in the humanitarian field, for the United Nations. Indeed, the Secretary-General of the United Nations had indicated, in accepting Sadruddin's resignation, that he would wish to call upon him in the future as a special consultant. The newspapers praised Sadruddin's effectiveness during his twelve years as High Commissioner, laying stress on the deep concern he had felt, and had shown, in the way he had discharged his very demanding task. The British *Guardian* said of him, "He was highly effective, as an administrator and above all as an advocate, able to cajole, shame and persuade governments to provide tolerable funding as crisis after crisis created more and more refugees."⁹⁶ Opposing efforts to expand bureaucracy beyond what was strictly needed (but not surprisingly, he needed some fifty field offices by the time he left the Office), he managed to keep the Office innovative, action-oriented

95 Guy Mettan, *Bilan* 2/91

96 *The Guardian*, 9th November 1977 © Guardian News & Media Ltd 2016

and field-based, true to its Mandate. He strove as High Commissioner to demonstrate the important role that humanitarian actions could play in reducing international tensions, paving the way for peace.

Asked by an *Observer* journalist why he had resigned, the prince said, “No one should hold a UN job for life. People become stale, lose sight of the forest, can’t deliver their best. It was time to review my life.” How he had kept going for so long was the second question, to which he replied, “Exercise, avoiding cocktail parties (a special hate, these, especially official ones) – and meditation.”⁹⁷

The same journalist wrote, “On his birthday, on 13th January (ed. It was actually 17th January), Sadrudin Aga Khan will still be only forty-five. Slim as a youth, overweight as a young man, he keeps trim nowadays with skiing and sailing. His English is accentless; while we were talking the telephone rang; he spoke in what to my inexperienced ear was flawless French. The manner is deeply courteous, very faintly aloof. ‘He is a man with a large private space around him,’ an aide says.

“People I spoke to about him were embarrassingly unanimous in their praise – the British Foreign Office, his staff, old friends and acquaintances, even – and this really was something – senior officials in other agencies: infighting within the UN family is notorious.”

When one works for years in an organisation like UNHCR, one rubs shoulders with people at every level who have been recruited from literally dozens of countries, and, whether in Geneva or in the field, one meets countless people who are (or have been) refugees, or who represent their governments, or who are working in the same field as staff of other intergovernmental agencies or of non-governmental agencies. For years after the prince had left UNHCR, his name would come up in conversation, and I was always happy to hear that everyone whose opinion I valued testified to the fact that the prince had effectively lifted the organisation onto another plane.

Sadrudin, no doubt ready for a well-earned rest, was now reported to be taking forty guests on a cruise down the Senegal River. With his wife Princess Catherine, his nephew Karim (the Aga Khan) and his wife Sally, Merle Oberon and her husband and others, they were said to be expecting to make several surprise stops along the river, including watching camel races.⁹⁸

In no time at all, Sadrudin was asked by the UN Secretary-General to

97 John Silverlight, *A man for all nations*, *The Observer Review*, 1st January 1978

98 Nigel Dempster, *The Daily Mail*

undertake the first of a number of difficult and sometimes highly sensitive tasks: namely to assist in negotiations in Beirut for a ceasefire to enable relief to be channelled to the civilian populations currently held in intolerable living conditions – under severe artillery fire and without food or water. He played a key role in the successful ceasefire negotiations that paved the way for the Beit-el-din Conference of Arab foreign ministers. Subsequently, on behalf of the Secretary-General he helped in preparing for the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development, held in Vienna in 1979, and the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy, held in Nairobi in August 1981.⁹⁹ Then he was appointed Special Rapporteur to the United Nations Human Rights Commission on the question of human rights and mass exodus.

Some time later, a journalist would write, “Sadrudin Aga Khan accumulates impossible missions.” And throughout the years, a torrent of invitations to speak on a wide variety of topics would come through his door, most of which it would seem that he managed to accept.

99 Retrieved on <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/41/a41r213.htm>

10

The Bellerive Foundation and the Groupe de Bellerive, 1977–2003

I know of no one in the world community today who has provided more consistent and more effective leadership in respect of the issues which are shaping our common future than Prince Sadrudin

Maurice Strong

Introduction to the Foundation

Sadrudin's decision to set up his own foundation was born of his lifelong interest in ecological issues and an ardent wish to promote the conservation of the Earth's natural resources, contributing to the protection of all forms of life. Shortly before he left his post as UN High Commissioner for Refugees, he took steps to set up "La Fondation de Bellerive" (as constituted in French in Geneva), The Bellerive Foundation as it came to be known worldwide. It became the base for the launch of some truly impressive activities of a very diverse nature.

The prince spoke out untiringly about threats to our environment (including of course the nuclear threat). He quoted his friend Denis de Rougemont as having said, "The decadence of a society begins when man wonders, 'What will happen?' instead of wondering, 'what can I do?'"¹⁰⁰ For example in one of two speeches that he delivered at a European Parliament Symposium of 26 & 27 September 1996, he said:

"The loss of biological diversity is acute. It's happening every day, with consequences that are unknown and affect directly the livelihoods of rich and poor alike. Unlike minor pollutions, the loss of species diversity and its genetic information

100 *The Environment: the Future of Our Planet in Dizzy Excess* – Rencontres de la Rotonde, Pully, Switzerland, 26 March 2001

cannot be retrieved or repaired. We are told that 25% of all species may disappear from the planet in the next fifty years – the space of two generations. Unspoiled nature is constantly on the decrease, while the need for it grows ever greater.”¹⁰¹

The aims of the foundation, as stated in the notarial instrument establishing it, and duly translated into English, were:

“To promote, support and develop the protection of sites and of buildings which should be preserved, of fauna and flora and more generally of a balanced and harmonious environment;

To study and propose solutions to the problem of energy resources, of their economic viability and of their utilisation in a manner which respects the environment;

To stimulate by appropriate means interest, particularly among young people, in ecological problems, to contribute to education in this field and, in general, to allow ecological and health questions to be debated in a measured and balanced way;

To contribute to the development of a moral and humane ethic in keeping with rational behaviour by mankind towards the animal kingdom, particularly in matters of husbandry, vivisection and slaughter.”

On setting up the Bellerive Foundation, Sadruddin initiated a wide range of activities the most notable of which to begin with was the creation with Denis de Rougemont of the “Groupe de Bellerive”, then, seconded by his wife, he set in motion initiatives grouped under the headings Animal Welfare, Rural Technology and Alp Action. Later, he and Princess Catherine would set up Earth Focus, the thrust and activities of which were part of the overall Bellerive Foundation programme.

Sadruddin recruited some very able graduates, building up a team based at his office in the old town of Geneva. Among them two were British men: Michael Keating, for whom the appointment as Executive Assistant was the start of a brilliant international career that would soon take him to

101 Symposium on Trade, Environment and Animal Welfare, The European Parliament, Brussels, 26-27 September 1996

Afghanistan for the first time¹⁰², and Barry Gilbert-Miguet, who would work for the prince from 1981 until the end of Sadruddin's life – by far the longest period that anyone had been involved in the prince's work.

The Bellerive Foundation – Fondation de Bellerive website, updated regularly year by year for the following twenty-five years, would provide a succinct summary of its aims and activities:

Private foundation that promotes conservation of the Earth's natural resources and protection of all life forms and the environment.

Operates Bellerive Rural Technology Programme which promotes tree conservation in developing countries. Encourages production for fuelwood through tree-planting activities, reduction of fuelwood consumption through dissemination of fuel-saving domestic and institutional cooking systems, and education on tree and fuelwood conservation through children's programs and women's groups.

Sponsors Alp Action, a conservation program designed to protect the environment in and around the Alps Mountain Range. Maintains Groupe de Bellerive, a panel of eminent individuals who seek to encourage public debate on the implications of scientific and technological advancements and their effect on peace and the environment.

Conducts Bellerive Animal Welfare Programme, which promotes conservation of species and humane treatment of animals.

Sponsors periodic international colloquia.

Publications: Bellerive Foundation Newsletter, quarterly. Also publishes Modern Stoves for All, Stoves to Save our Forests, Nuclear Energy and Society, For Science without Violence and other books.

102 Michael Keating, currently Associate Director of Research Partnerships at Chatham House, London and Associate Fellow of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, has served *inter alia* as UN Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan, UN Resident Co-ordinator and UN Development Programme representative in Malawi, Director of Socio-Economic and Humanitarian Affairs in Gaza and Jerusalem and Senior Advisor to the Administrator of the UN Development Programme in New York. He is the author and co-author of a wide range of journals and publications on international affairs and development issues, notably on Africa, Afghanistan and the Middle East.

After ten years, as reported in the Foundation's first Newsletter of March 1988, there was a staff of five in Geneva and forty-seven in Kenya. It is not an easy task to encapsulate in only a few dozen pages the remarkable, wide-ranging work that the Foundation covered over its twenty-five-year existence.

* * *

The Groupe de Bellerive

The Groupe de Bellerive, chaired by the prince, brought together distinguished personalities from all over the world dedicated, *inter alia*, to finding alternatives to nuclear arms proliferation and the dangers of the nuclear arms race. The founder members included Jacques Freymond, former Honorary Director of the Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva; Professor Lew Kowarski, formerly of CERN; Niall MacDermot, former Secretary-General of the International Commission of Jurists; the philosopher Denis de Rougemont; Paul Sieghart, a former trustee of the European Human Rights Foundation; Pastor Visser't Hooft, former Honorary President of the World Council of Churches; and Professor Victor F. Weisskopf of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The distinguished body met for the first time in October 1977, having as their initial focus questions on nuclear energy, the plutonium fuel cycle and the consequences of these upon society. Special emphasis was placed on the dangers of proliferation and the nuclear arms build-up.

As a more constructive alternative to the confrontation and polarisation that has often characterised the nuclear energy issue, the Groupe de Bellerive advocated the establishment of "Councils of Reflection and Evaluation", with wide-ranging public participation, to examine the advantages and liabilities of different fuel cycles and commercial fast-breeder reactors. In order to illustrate the value of rational dialogue on energy choice, which so clearly affects the future of mankind, the group quite rapidly organised two international colloquia devoted to "Energy and Society". The second colloquium was held at UNESCO, Paris, in September 1981, under the patronage of the French Academy of Science.

Naturally, Sadrudin was frequently asked to agree to interviews. In 1984, he took part in a Swiss radio programme called "PROFIL" run by a well-known broadcaster, Jacques Bofford. The dialogue covered many topics, and towards the end a question was raised about the Groupe de Bellerive:

“Why did you create this group, what were your aims at the start, and how have things gone since?”

“Well, *at the beginning*,” Sadruddin replied, “*we met because we were concerned by polarisation, the lack of dialogue, violence, that seem to affect the nuclear question more and more. There were demonstrations on nuclear sites. Geneva was affected inevitably by these problems. We discussed the issues, in fact we are still discussing them. In Creys-Malville¹⁰³ there are the French sub-generators, very near Geneva, and it seemed to us that actually all that was very dangerous. First of all, the absence of dialogue, the fact that people were not listening to the others’ viewpoints, people were trying to “excommunicate” one another, and the fact that this could in time affect democratic institutions, because that opened onto a kind of militarisation of the nuclear programme, more and more systematically controlled. And finally we decided to keep above the fray, and encourage a real dialogue on these problems between the partisans and the opponents of nuclear power. So that was the original raison d’être of the group.*

“*But we didn’t want to concentrate only on the nuclear problem, because there were other problems of science and society that affected us too, and we talked about the problem of European security, by organising a colloquium that recently had a considerable impact. It was important to ensure that there would be European security against nuclear arms or conventional arms, and it so happened, by the way, that this meeting was held immediately after the START negotiations here in Geneva on the reduction of nuclear arms between the Russians and the Americans had been broken off. So that meeting had a diplomatic dimension, in fact.*

“*We can also focus on other problems tomorrow, for example the problem of information technology, the problem of genetic engineering and so forth, all the problems of science and society, above all those where, thanks to scientific research, such extraordinary discoveries are made of which we only discover the consequences for society very much too late. We see this happening every day.*” The prince said that it seemed to him that in certain cases, for example in relation to the nuclear area, it was necessary to create independent think-tanks, independent of the authorities that were actively involved, and independent of the scientists and their ambitions. He spoke of scientific

103 Superphénix (English: Superphoenix) or SPX was a nuclear power station on the river Rhône at Creys-Malville in France, close to the border with Switzerland. A fast breeder reactor, it produced electricity from 1986 until it halted electricity production in 1996 and was closed as a commercial plant in 1997 (Wikipedia).

emulation that meant that one could always improve on what other researchers were doing and, in the end, the researchers had no time to become aware of the consequences on society of their technological development. And that was the role of the Groupe de Bellerive. *“To inform people, so as to let public opinion choose the right way forward in full knowledge of the facts, to enable public opinion to get, if you like, independent information which is not slanted, that doesn’t come from people who are involved in the question one way or another.”* So the Groupe keeps going, and I think it has had a snowball effect to a degree, in the sense that other groups in other countries have been created, and have followed the example of Bellerive.”

No fewer than six major conferences and colloquia on nuclear issues were organised by Bellerive, as chapter 12 does its best to illustrate.

* * *

Rural technology

From their introduction in March 1988, the Bellerive Foundation quarterly newsletters featured initiatives taken by the foundation’s president over the first ten years. Over those years, the Bellerive Foundation had developed and distributed technology designed to improve renewable energy sources in developing countries, particularly in poor rural areas. Sadruddin travelled frequently to the Middle East, Asia and Africa. He opened a Bellerive office in Nairobi, and appointed field staff who would promote the “Cooking to Conserve” programme and disseminate hundreds of stoves.

Concerned about “the disappearing forest” in so many parts of the world, in particular in Africa and in third world countries on other continents, concerned too about the heavy loads of wood that African women were obliged to carry over long distances so as to have fuel for cooking purposes, Sadruddin engaged consultants in the early 1980s to design stoves that would save fuel and costs. He had been approached by a Mr Ivor Davis, who sponsored a home for handicapped children at Dagoretti, on the outskirts of Nairobi, who told him that with daily catering conducted on open fires or crude charcoal braziers, cooks had to work in a smoky, unhygienic kitchen, while the scarcity and rising cost of fuel meant that the home actually could not afford to provide hot meals for the sick children every day.

There followed eight years of designing, testing and disseminating various stoves. They were being made with locally-available materials using a locally-trained work force and local financial backing. The cost of the stoves could be recovered within a year of their installation by every institution that invested in them. The Bellerive stove was thus a catalyst for job creation, skills provision, financial savings for families and institutions, environmental conservation, and a healthier life for cooks. The models featured brick insulation and thermodynamic fireboxes, galvanised sheet casings and chimneys, and mild steel door assemblies. They were supplied with a stainless steel pot and lid. Savings of up to 90% in fuel consumption were recorded by some users, and the Kenyan Ministry of Energy and Rural Development showed more and more interest.

The prince wrote in newsletter N° 1, *"It gives me great pleasure to see the publication of this first edition of the quarterly Bellerive Newsletter. It represents another milestone in the progress of the foundation and through it we will be able to keep you and all our supporters around the world informed of our activities."*

Talking to *The UNESCO COURIER* about the Bellerive Foundation and what had been achieved over the first fifteen years, Sadruddin said, *"I have always been in favour of individual initiatives. I also take a very close interest in the environment, animals, plants, disappearing species, etc. And so I set up the Bellerive Foundation, which takes its name from that of the Geneva commune where I live. It is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) which finances a certain number of studies and activities in collaboration with international institutions, British and Scandinavian bilateral aid organisations, and other NGOs such as the World Wide Fund for Nature."*

The prince spoke of his foundation's concern about deforestation and an earlier close involvement with UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, in that area of work. But wanting above all to be present in the field and to do things at the local level, given that rural populations in the third world suffered from a very serious firewood shortage, Bellerive, with the help of Swiss specialists, had developed cooking stoves that use very little fuel, and use renewable energy sources such as methane and biogas. He described the process and said that demand for the stoves had outstripped supply. *"We are also interested in the risks from nuclear energy. We are a many-sided group whose members include scientists, churchmen, university teachers and senior international civil servants. We organise conferences and inform the public*

about the possible different options in this field. We are also helping to strengthen the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Finally, we are helping to defend certain threatened species such as the elephant, which has almost been exterminated by ivory poaching.”

The Kenyan project based in Ruiru reflected in microcosm the Bellerive development philosophy, as Marc Sursock¹⁰⁴ wrote in that first newsletter. Barry Gilbert-Miguet wrote in the September 1988 Newsletter that as the result of the above, Bellerive was now disseminating across Kenya its institutional stoves in three sizes – fifty, 100 and 200 litres. The stoves were being sold as part of a package which included site inspection, installation, training and maintenance. Provision was even made for an annual service agreement, under which Bellerive guaranteed at least two extra follow-up visits per year by trained personnel, to service the stoves, check the chimneys and re-train staff as necessary. The success of the new stoves had been instantaneous, and soon attracted the interest of other institutions anxious to benefit from the considerable economies made possible by the Bellerive system. Before long, an *ad hoc* production system began to evolve from the foundation’s vocational training centre at Ruiru, and the President of Kenya took a personal interest in the new stoves, ordering the installation of the Bellerive system in several schools operating under his patronage.

The stoves programme was for years accompanied by tree-planting, much to the approval of the Director of the Kenyan National Environmental Secretariat, Mr Ole Nasieku, who assured the foundation of his ministry’s support and assistance for the continuation of its conservation work. In this connection, Bellerive was working with DANIDA, the international aid organisation founded in Denmark, in establishing a wood-fuel conservation project. In January 1988, Sadruddin visited the new Mwatata Training Centre, where new Bellerive kitchens had been installed, and the DANIDA/Forest Department community tree nursery.

A headline in that first Bellerive Foundation Newsletter had been “*Robin Hood legend inspires a North-South conservation effort*”. Barry Gilbert-Miguet tells us how in March 1987, at the start of the European Year of the Environment, the Bellerive Foundation was invited to take part in a highly original tree-planting scheme. It was unique in that it brought together conservation organisations, industry, the media and schoolchildren on two continents. Its focal point was a thirty-hectare site in Robin Hood country,

104 One of Sadruddin’s three stepsons, active in this work

where David Bellamy, a world-famous environmentalist and founding director of the Conservation Foundation UK, initiated the planting, with enthusiastic support from the British Forestry Commission and Nature Conservancy Council, of a new oak forest in the form of a map of Great Britain.¹⁰⁵ Each tree was dedicated to a primary school in Britain. The schools were contacted and invited to celebrate this event by collecting used aluminium drink cans for recycling, it having been decided to use the proceeds for a parallel project, which the Bellerive Foundation was invited to plan, to plant trees in a developing country – Kenya.

Barry writes, “Each school received a collection pack containing storage bags, a special magnet to distinguish aluminium cans, and educational materials regarding recycling, conservation, and the environment. Prizes were offered for the schools collecting the greatest number of cans per pupil. Amusingly, a school consisting of only two pupils and one teacher on the remote island of Graemsay in the Orkneys pulled off a remarkable ‘David and Goliath’ act by beating over 4,000 primary schools nationwide to win the first prize. In total, around 1,750,000 million used aluminium cans were collected with a total value of £8,652. At a ceremony in London, the president of the Aluminium Federation, Mr Alan Aylesbury, presented a cheque for this amount to the Bellerive Foundation.”

The “Can-paign” financed tree planting in settlement areas of Kenya where the depletion of forest and vegetation cover, accelerated by inappropriate agricultural activities, had resulted in the development of a number of alarming environmental and social conditions. These included severe fuelwood scarcity, lack of shade and fruit-bearing trees, browse plants for livestock, and soil erosion. The Sherwood Project attracted considerable media interest, and the follow-up saw promising signs of renewal of such projects, as well as the unique involvement of school children in Britain (collecting funds) and Kenya (planting trees).

Writing about the potential for substantial economy of the new stoves, Barry Gilbert-Miguet indicated that “50 to 70% of all wood consumed on Earth is used for everyday cooking purposes. Clearly the potential for economies is enormous. The technologies involved are relatively simple and the expense modest compared with the projected global costs of large-scale environmental degradation.” He pointed out that simple cooking systems were

105 The David Bellamy Awards Programme is a competition designed to encourage schools to be aware of, and act positively towards, environmental cleanliness

capable of cutting domestic firewood consumption by up to 75%, so if such models could be promoted on a large scale throughout Africa, the savings would be truly spectacular. In fact, it had been calculated that for the price of one dam project in Africa, it would be possible to build about five million fuel-saving stoves. Together, these stoves could save five times the energy that a dam would be capable of producing. In Zimbabwe, the wood energy used was equivalent to the output generated by six Kariba hydroelectric power stations. Users in Kenya reported that they now needed to spend less on fuel per month than they spent previously per day. These efficient models, if promoted throughout a much wider area, would have a significant impact on efforts to arrest the vicious cycle of deforestation, erosion and desertification before the spectre of drought, famine and wide-scale suffering could strike.

Thanks to the generosity of the United Nations Trust Fund for New and Renewable Sources of Energy, ten institutions in Kenya were equipped with Bellerive cooking systems. The UK Overseas Development Administration gave a major co-financing grant for Bellerive's fuel conservation programme in three districts of Kenya. From 31st May 1990, Bellerive was registered in Tanzania and expected to extend the fuelwood conservation programme to that country in close co-operation with government and other agencies. Meanwhile, the dissemination of stoves in Kenya reached the figure of 2,500, serving 400 institutions and 1,300 families, benefiting 120,000 people. "Cooking to Conserve" had become a common phrase in the primary schools of Kenya. Two-day training workshops for teachers were taking place, run both by Kenyan staff of Bellerive foundation and by government education officials.

* * *

Animal Welfare

Prince Sadruddin and Princess Catherine abhorred cruelty to animals, and they took on a wide range of campaigns aimed at sensitising the public to the unnecessary and often intense suffering of animals in relation to the fur trade, the use of animals in circuses and the abuse of animals in many other contexts. They worked in co-operation with other groups or associations, usually succeeding in obtaining substantial media coverage. When in 1977 Franz Weber, a Swiss environmentalist and animal welfare activist, launched

his campaign to stop the massacre on Canadian shores of newly-born seals that were being killed for their fine white fur, Sadruddin joined him, giving him his full support. Planning to take film crews to the Canadian coastal areas where the young seals were being clubbed to death and realising that they needed to enlist the help of international media, they invited Brigitte Bardot to accompany them. At that point, “BB” was leaving behind her film career to devote her life to animal protection, but she was still so adulated a figure worldwide that as soon as she joined the campaign, it achieved tremendous publicity and the success it sought. A Canadian law was passed finally in 1983 forbidding the massacre of cubs under twenty days old.

Mrs Judit Weber speaks of the close co-operation that her husband and Prince Sadruddin enjoyed for years, saying, “They had an identity of ideas and ideals”.¹⁰⁶ The Franz Weber Foundation continues to affirm, as Sadruddin never tired of saying, that animals as an integral part of creation have every right to live and develop without interference, and that man has no right to disregard their dignity. Sadruddin would have been delighted to know that the Franz Weber Foundation is currently achieving a degree of success in Spain and one or two Latin-American countries in relation to stopping the medieval and cruel custom of bullfighting. Until such time as these *corrida* become a thing of the past, the Franz Weber foundation is concerned to get attendance restricted to adults.

Sadruddin was a trustee and for many years from 1986 Vice-President of the World Wildlife Fund for Nature, WWF. Travelling to Africa in relation to the protection of animals so long seen as targets for the guns of the idle rich and the booty of poachers, Sadruddin said, “*The elephant is a symbol. It is the largest of all land species and one of the most intelligent of all animals. If the African elephant were to disappear from its natural habitat, what hope can there be for the future of any animal, and for man himself?*”¹⁰⁷ In the Bellerive Foundation Newsletter of December 1990, he wrote:

“The African elephant is enjoying a reprieve from the relentless poaching of the last decade. The ivory trade bans resulting from the decision made at CITES¹⁰⁸ just over a year ago have caused ivory prices to plunge and markets to dwindle. Bellerive’s launch of a travelling exhibition on elephants for school children at

106 Personal communication, 12 October 2015

107 *Profil*, RTS Radio Télévision Suisse / Journaliste: Jacques Bofford, March 1984

108 CITES: Convention on International Trade in Endangered species of World Fauna & Flora (entered into force on 1 July 1975)

Geneva's Natural History Museum maintained the momentum begun at our "Save the Elephant" campaign during the CITES Conference last year."

Sadrudin noted that the concerns of Bellerive Animal Welfare had captivated public attention throughout 1990 with extensive media coverage, both independent of and linked to their own initiatives. *"My wife's and my appearance on Brigitte Bardot's "SOS Animaux" on French TV highlights our ongoing concern to protect fur-bearing animals. Plummeting fur sales worldwide reflect the extent to which attitudes have been enlightened, although much remains to be done to address attitudes of the Asian market."*

In London in October 1990, Bellerive launched the book that it had sponsored, *"The Rose-Tinted menagerie"*, on the abuse of animals in captivity – in dolphinarium, zoos, and circuses. Written by the consultant to Bellerive Animal Welfare, William Johnson, it exposed the cruelty and deprivation lurking behind the glitter of dolphin shows and circuses. The author had spent five years painstakingly piecing together a catalogue of barbarity liable to sicken millions of people who for years had enjoyed the performances of captive animals, without imagining the cost they bore. The book was hailed as 'An outstanding investigation...' (Naomi Lewis, Books of the Year, *The Observer*) and 'A ground-breaking work... of great importance...' (Tom Regan, an American philosopher who specialises in animal rights theory).

Only Sadrudin could find the form of words that goes straight to the heart! *"Wanton jugglers of life, smooth dissemblers of cruelty, how else can one view the owners and promoters of modern circuses and dolphinarium after reading "The Rose Tinted Menagerie"? " In the Preface, Sadrudin indicated how *The Rose-Tinted Menagerie* put the exploitation of animals in circuses and oceanaria into the much broader context of global environmental destruction and humankind's ailing relationship with the planet. "For those who have always felt an instinctive revulsion for the travelling menagerie, I'm pleased to say that this book is not merely content with recounting in abstract the suffering that these animals must endure in order to provide their human audience with a short-lived thrill. Here, we also see the animals as individuals, and, in graphic detail, the shadowy enterprises, dealers and showmen who profit from their exploitation."*

"A pair of baby elephants straining feverishly at the heavy chains which shackle them to the ground in a circus tent; ice-skating polar bears that must live most of their lives confined to boxes no more than a metre square; a giant panda – that most famous endangered species of all – trained to blow a trumpet

and ride a motorbike. Haunting images such as these abound in William Johnson's book, *The Rose-Tinted Menagerie*. As he so lucidly reveals, the true nature of those unfortunate creatures that must snarl, dance or mimic their human masters under the Big Top is as mocked today as it was when the circus first sprang to life in the amphitheatres of ancient Rome.

"Epitomised by that endless tale of misfortune that lies behind the clown-like smile of the captive dolphin, we see how illusion has been crafted meticulously in order to convince the public that the performing circus animal is happy and content in its deprived surroundings. That deprivation, as William Johnson points out, is far more fundamental than is first suggested by the bare, cramped and squalid pools and cages to be seen in virtually every menagerie and oceanarium. The species they contain have been estranged from the myriad influences which shaped their natures and existence in the wild."¹⁰⁹

Sadrudin would have been relieved to learn that the Swiss circus, Knie, has at last decided to discontinue having elephants as part of the programme. For over a century Knie had used them for a variety of stunts, making them stand on their hind legs on small stools, as if to beg, or with their forelegs on the backs of the elephants in front. Knie sometimes had zebras in the ring at the same time. Franco Knie told the *Illustré*¹¹⁰ "Back then, people wanted spectacular shows". The Franz Weber Foundation, working with the animal protection organisation LIBERA, reports in its latest paper that the Catalan parliament has passed a law making it illegal to have wild animals in circuses. The law will take effect in two years' time, giving circuses the time to find acceptable solutions for the animals,¹¹¹ such as the elephants, rhinoceros, zebra, lions, tigers, giraffes and bears that we know have been used in Switzerland, and quite possibly in Spain too.

Speaking of tigers, The Bellerive Foundation got involved in 1989 in efforts to free a tiger that was trapped in appalling conditions in a Spanish night club. As Barry Gilbert-Miguet wrote in the Bellerive Foundation Newsletter of October 1989, "We took up the case because the story of Sanny symbolises just how much animal abuse is totally and utterly unnecessary. Already her plight has won the hearts of millions of readers of the British newspaper *The Mail on Sunday*, which first alerted Bellerive to the situation. Sanny is an

¹⁰⁹ Found on <http://www.iridescent-publishing.com>

¹¹⁰ *Illustré* 34/15 of 19 August 2015

¹¹¹ Journal Franz Weber, July-September 2015

Indian tiger aged about four years. All her life has been spent in captivity. Three times a week she was the star attraction of a magic act in which, to the strains of thumping disco music, she was made to ‘disappear’. Guests paid up to £25 for the privilege of watching this ‘entertainment’. The animal was kept in a dingy cage next to the club, her movements restricted to three paces forward and three back, in temperatures that often soared to 90°F. She was allowed no exercise and was fed only on pieces of left-over chicken. Her claws had been cruelly wrenched out. Thanks to *The Mail on Sunday* raising awareness, and the concerted efforts of people who included “the Friends of Bellerive”, there was a happy ending, but it took a long time, and the public of every country needs to be aware of the cost of “entertainment” that relies on humiliating and damaging animals.”

Virginia McKenna and her husband Bill Travers, who played the parts of Joy and George Adamson in the 1966 film *Born Free* which told the story of the Adamsons returning Elsa the lioness to the wild, were greatly affected by the plight of wild animals kept in zoos. Subsequently they established the Born Free Foundation, undertaking animal welfare, conservation and public awareness campaigns to prevent animal abuse, and to protect threatened species in the wild. Prince Sadruddin and his wife, working in parallel, knew the couple well. Virginia McKenna and Bill Travers also set up the Zoo Check Charitable Trust, since run by their son Will, and wrote *Beyond the Bars – the Zoo dilemma*, of which the Preface was written by Sadruddin. This British-based organisation does splendid work monitoring the conditions for wildlife in zoos – not an easy task in view of the limitations imposed on almost all the animals, birds and reptiles in this form of captivity, and looks for ways to conserve endangered species.

Sadruddin took part in an influential TV programme in Britain called *The Cook Report*, devoted to exposure of the ivory trade. Apparently the impact of the programme, featuring a film that followed the tracks of the illegal ivory trade from Africa to Hong Kong, was such that the man shown up as one of the ringleaders gave up and left for Canada. As Will Travers wrote in a guest column of the Bellerive Foundation *Newsletter*, “the contribution over the years of organisations like Zoo Check in stimulating public awareness on the plight of the elephant has been exemplary.” William Johnson had actually come across elephants so cruelly injured during “training” that they could no longer use their trunks and had to kneel to eat hay from the ground like horses and cows.

Marine animals

Sadrudin was seriously concerned by the multiple abuses of oceanic animals, dolphins, whales and seals. The Bellerive Foundation made lobbying efforts for years to the International Whaling Commission and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES). In July 1990 in Geneva, Bellerive ran a symposium on Whales and Dolphins in Captivity that gave rise to the creation of an international network of organisations pressing for the release of marine animals in captivity. With media involvement, public pressure mounted to save dolphins brought to Britain years earlier to perform in pools, and a rescue mission, entitled “Into the Blue” was mounted by Bellerive, the World Society for the Protection of Animals, Zoo Check and British Divers Marine Life Rescue.

As the Bellerive website explained, for dolphins incarcerated in bare concrete pools around the world, the turquoise blue of the Caribbean must have seemed like a distant poignant dream. Yet in 1991, three former captives of the oceanarium industry once again became accustomed to the myriad influences of home – tides and currents, sea-grass and coral, iridescent fish and sun-dappled reflections. Dolphins rarely survive long in captivity – on average only just over five years, compared to a life expectancy in the wild of thirty years. The rigorous transportation under sedation, training regimes, solitary confinement, captivity-related disease and sensory deprivation in a bare concrete pool can be responsible for their deaths occurring within a quarter of the time that they should be allowed to live – if not much sooner.

The “Into the Blue” operation enabled three dolphins that had been known to English visitors for some time, performing tricks in exchange for food in oceanarias in southern England, to be taken to the Caribbean ocean waters after a period of rehabilitation in a lagoon. These three marine animals, hitherto assumed to be dumb, were now heard to call out to one another, and to behave in other ways that had been long forestalled by their fate, leaping high out of the sea in joy, catching their own food and – it was believed – joining shoals of wild dolphins. Bellerive’s efforts to protect dolphins were the symbolic tip of a wider campaign to promote long-term sustainable use of the oceans, and prevent their becoming marine deserts through over-fishing. Already many species had disappeared from the oceans, and the knock-on-effects on other species in the food chain, including man, were only now beginning to be fully appreciated. Particular emphasis was given to raising

awareness in young people, through such initiatives as the book *Let's save Moby Dick* and educational programmes.

Sadrudin said, “*in setting dolphins and whales free from their imprisonment and deprivation, we are not merely saving a few individual animals here and there: we are instilling in millions of people around the world a respect for nature that is vital for the Earth to survive.*”

* * *

In 1990, Bellerive became seriously concerned on hearing reports that a marine circus in the south of France, Antibes Marineland, was about to capture monk seals off the coast of Mauritania. Monk seals, their numbers diminishing in their natural habitat, having been poorly dealt with by man for many generations, were now the subject of an intense international campaign mounted to thwart the capture plan – which it did successfully. Throughout it all, the prince maintained a great interest in unfolding events, frequently calling from his UN office to see what was happening, and in March 1992, he made acquaintance with the Mediterranean monk seal. The occasion was the release of an orphaned pup on the Aegean island of Alonissos. Accompanied by Princess Catherine, the Greek Environment Minister and many journalists, the prince by making that visit helped draw worldwide attention to the plight of the species. Observers said that the prince was visibly touched by the bewildered monk seal pup snuffling at his fingers in the Steni Vala rescue station, and later on in Athens he brought his diplomatic skills to bear, championing the monk seal cause in meetings with ministers, the prime minister and even the president of the republic. He spearheaded efforts to establish an Athens-based foundation for the monk seal, encouraging wealthy ship-owners and other industrialists to commit themselves to saving Europe's most endangered marine mammal.¹¹²

In an editorial to the newspaper *The Monachus Guardian*, Sadrudin wrote:

A Little Imagination

“The question is, can anything be done? Over the years, I have discussed monk seal conservation with numerous people, from government ministers to businessmen and scientists, from conservation activists to school children. Ironically, it is often the young who have the clearest idea of what needs to be

112 *The Monachus Guardian*, Obituary, June 2003

done. It is the young who are impatient for answers, intolerant of delay. Where others find themselves wallowing in bureaucratic quicksand, the young often see common sense solutions and cannot understand why establishment figures are reluctant to seize the initiative. Some might call this naïveté, but one wonders whether this is just the cynic's way of justifying inaction."

Earth focus

Earth Focus started in the mid-1990s as an environmental newsletter produced by students and teachers at the International School of Geneva, in partnership with the Bellerive Foundation and the Gordon & Breach Publishing Group. Its aim was to communicate ideas, points of view and news from young people, schools and environmental/human rights organisations. Its co-editors were David Batten and Barry Gilbert-Miguet. Then in 2005, the Earth Focus Foundation was created and has inspiring aims – but this was two years after the prince had left us all, so it has no place in this biography.

Sadrudin had great interest in young people. He often welcomed them at his home and met with them in many contexts. He must have made many young people smile in one or two of his introductory remarks at a graduation ceremony at Geneva's International School. He said for example, "When my friend Spyro Latsis mentioned this ceremony and I accepted your Director General's invitation to be with you today, I did not realise at the time what I have come to discover since: it is infinitely more challenging to speak at the graduation day of the Ecole Internationale than at the UN Security Council. Why? Because you see things as they are, you are not swayed by "diplomatic" UN-ese. You are a pragmatic, critical audience – this is a quality one expects from those of your age. I know how pointed your questions can be for having taken them frequently at Bellerive during the visits which you and others have made to discuss the work of my foundation. Thank you for your support. We share our love of nature, mountains and the sea and our mutual concern for endangered species, not only elephants and whales or other marine mammals..."

Alp Action features in a separate chapter (chapter 11), because of the considerable volume of activities that succeeded its 1990 launch at the Davos World Economic Forum.

After Sadrudin's death, the Bellerive Foundation merged with the Aga

Khan Foundation to form the Prince Sadruddin Fund for the Environment. Although not existing in name any more, the legacy of Bellerive Foundation will live on through the activities of the fund, of which Prince Hussain Aga Khan, younger son of Prince Karim Aga Khan, assumed the responsibility.

11

Alp Action

Until he extends the circle of his compassion to all living things, man will not himself find peace.

Albert Schweitzer, quoted by Sadruddin Aga Khan

There are few losses more profound than a forest laid waste and vanished¹¹³

Sadruddin Aga Khan

We can realise quite readily that Sadruddin's happy boyhood visits with his mother to the mountains of Haute Savoie, France, and the years living with his parents in the Bernese Oberland, Switzerland, made a lasting impression on his whole being. He had come to love the mountains, to be able to name every alpine plant, animal and bird, and as the years passed to feel at home every time he was back in the heights. He continued to love mountain sports, skiing, hiking and rock-climbing, while starting to voice more and more frequently his concern about the health of the Alps. After creating the Bellerive Foundation in 1977, the prince gave a great deal of thought to finding ways to save the mountain chain from further damage and, as he said, "reconcile man and nature".

At a meeting in 1989 when Sadruddin spoke to a mixed audience in Geneva, he acknowledged that following the United Nations conference in Stockholm of 1972¹¹⁴ there had been a greater recognition of ecological problems, including those affecting the mountains in industrialised countries. Nevertheless, in many mountain ranges, he said, the situation continued to

113 Article in the *International Herald Tribune* of 19th July 2000 entitled "Time to save the forests", timed to coincide with the G9 Summit in Okinawa, Japan

114 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, 5–16th June 1972

worsen, and perhaps the Alps were the worst example of all. He affirmed that whereas at least there was a broad consensus that there were major problems of deforestation, erosion, pollution, climate change, community decline, agricultural depression and both man-made and natural disasters, the solutions proposed did not really go far enough.

In the Alps the clock could not be turned back, Sadruddin said, and he suggested that much more dialogue was needed between all the interested parties that did not always see eye to eye – the tourist promoters, local communities, conservationists, scientists and the concerned governments. *“The consequences of Alpine degradation affect all of Europe, particularly through the hydrological system, since the great rivers such as the Rhine, the Rhone, the Po and even the Danube rise in these mountains. Exchange of information and the experience gained from research as well as action may hold the key to success. I sense that communication in a broad sense is a major missing piece and the reason why success has proved so elusive in the past. If different interested parties – Government, Industry, communities, business and NGO’s – could have a full and frank dialogue, conflicts and delays may be avoided, and if a responsible code of ethics towards the mountains could be fostered and implemented, then care and conservation might evolve without the need for draconian legislation and protection.”*

The prince foresaw that through the Bellerive Foundation he could assist, essentially as a catalyst for communication, raising funds and promoting public interest and, if necessary, providing a temporary umbrella for some of the initial activities needed. He voiced ten priority points for action:

- 1. An urgent review of current knowledge and future scenarios in key areas, for example forests, water, agriculture, tourism, community development, etc.*
- 2. The preparation of an Alpine conservation strategy, including a code of ethics.*
- 3. The preparation of a master plan for implementing degrees of protection for ecologically sensitive areas.*
- 4. The support of existing preparations for an Alpine convention rationalising existing legislation and exploring new legal instruments.*

5. *The establishment of a network of scientific monitoring centres with a common data base and connected by on-line computers.*
6. *The promotion of printed and audio-visual materials for educational and public information purposes.*
7. *The convening of regular conferences assessing the state of the Alps, organised by a focal institution and network.*
8. *The promotion of more effective local community management, including the provision of independent technical advice on the environmental and economic implications of development activities.*
9. *The encouragement of the financial community to contribute to conservation.*
10. *The creation of a fund to support an action group to animate these activities.*¹¹⁵

* * *

World Economic Forum (WEF) and the launch of Alp Action

In February 1990 at the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Sadruddin launched Alp Action, the Bellerive Foundation conservation programme designed to protect the environment in and around the Alps.

The World Economic Forum is “the International Institution for Public-Private Co-operation to shape the global, regional, national and industry agendas.”¹¹⁶ Founded in 1971 by a Swiss, Dr Klaus Schwab, Executive Chairman, with its headquarters in the Canton of Geneva and with offices today in New York, Beijing and Tokyo, it employs more than 500 people. It is now well known globally as the independent international organisation committed to improving the state of the world by engaging all sectors, including business, politics, and academia at top levels. Of course it has really become *the* annual summit of top

115 *Saving the Alps, Towards Alpine Action*, meeting of leaders from international organisations, governments, industry, tourism and NGOs with scientists, media and students in Geneva, 28th February 1989

116 WEF website

people, bringing them to Davos from all over the world for four days. What people have to say at Davos is generally well reported in the media.

Sadrudin knew Dr Schwab well and regularly attended the WEF annual meetings. Invited to take the chair in 1990, he opened the four-day annual symposium with an address entitled "The New Direction for Global Leadership". At the appropriate juncture during the four days, he presented Alp Action to the almost 1,000 top business and financial leaders from around the world who were present. He outlined the problems and said that he intended to find corporate sponsors for programmes ranging from collecting scientific data on Alpine birds to evaluating the predicted effects of global warming on the Alpine forests, lakes and rivers. He explained how the 1,000-kilometre mountain range, traversing seven European countries, was threatened by almost every environmental problem imaginable. *"Slowly but surely the mountains are being eroded and in some places reduced to deserts. I blame tourism for this explosion of chaotic development of the mountains. There are too many ski lifts, too many hotels, too many chalets, and too many cars,"* he said. *"Fortunately, the Canadian Rockies have avoided the same malaise. They have been protected from over-development by Canada's national parks system."*

"The Bellerive Foundation calculates that there are 40,000 ski runs throughout the seven Alpine countries, carrying 1,500,000 passengers to summits each hour during the peak season. Countless roads and highways carry more traffic than in any other mountain system in the world, and exhaust fumes are killing natural wildlife and vegetation. So much depends on the Alps – tourism, resorts, sporting equipment and other industries," the prince said. *"But if we don't have sustainable tourism, we'll all pay a very high price in terms of the environment. But chain saws, bulldozers and cranes are clearing away more natural habitat and farmland at Albertville, France, site of the 1992 Winter Olympics. And the little protective legislation that exists is too often inappropriate, ineffective and ignored."* Sadrudin was pessimistic about persuading seven national governments to work in concert to enact tougher laws. His plan was to link the private sector with environmentalists.

"The time has come," he said, *"to put an end to the business community being constantly attacked by environmentalists without being able to do something. The private sector has the means, the expertise and the goodwill to be associated with projects,"* and he said that his contacts with both business leaders and

environmentalists “*would provide links to make a small dent and reverse this trend in the Alps.*” He had already found several sponsors, including a Swiss chocolate manufacturer and various European banks.¹¹⁷

Sadrudin spoke of the increasing awareness in industry of the fact that the natural resources of the world cannot be used carelessly without serious consequences. He believed in harnessing the goodwill to be found amongst industrialists to the cause of ecology. Some of the imaginative activities carried out with Alp Action soon after its launch cannot be better illustrated than in his own words, spoken in an address, “The Roof of Europe”, at a colloquium entitled “The Discovery of the Alps” in Zurich, 1-2 November 1990.

“The thirteen Alp Action projects launched this year, thanks to the support of Alp Action’s sponsors, include

- *A major tree-planting programme covering six Alpine countries,*
- *The preservation of an Alpine lake,*
- *An educational campaign to protect six threatened species,*
- *The conservation of a unique 17th century mountain cultural heritage in Italy’s Abruzes region,*
- *The analysis of the impact of technical infrastructure on Alpine regions,*
- *A scientific study of climate change in the mountains,*
- *An international media awareness programme to encourage quality journalism on the Alpine environment.*

“The Alp Action ‘Green Roof for Europe’ tree-planting campaign, sponsored by a leader in the food sector, will be launched officially at the Davos World Economic Forum’s meeting in February. Through media, marketing, and direct-mail strategies, the campaign will reach into millions of homes throughout Europe and result in the planting of hundreds of thousands of trees. In return for the purchase of a given quantity of food products, or simply upon written request, a tree will be planted for each consumer. In addition, the consumer will receive a certificate, signed by me, establishing his or her contribution to preserving Alpine forests. The benefits of the programme are both ecological and educational.

117 **Presentation of ALP ACTION at World Economic Forum:** Excerpts reproduced from Bellerive Foundation Newsletter, December 1990

“The ALP ACTION – SOCIETE DE BANQUES SUISSE “Red Alert in Alpine Regions” is an exciting awareness campaign targeted at young students, tourists and resident communities. Six endangered species of plants and animals from various altitude zones represent the widespread threat to interdependent life forms in Alpine regions. Attractive posters will portray them: the Bearded Vulture, the Alpine Ibex, the Apollo Butterfly, the Alpine Salamander, the Black Vanilla Orchid, and the Trumpet Gentian. Six in-depth profiles, prepared by specialists, summarise population, distribution, and other concerns. Practical steps are outlined which ensure the survival of these species in their habitats. To conserve species, it is essential to protect their habitats.

“1991 will celebrate the 700th anniversary of the Swiss Confederation. ‘The Swiss enjoy a privileged relationship with their mountains. Mountains have shaped their identity. The rocks, valleys and forests have influenced the ways of the people and given natural form to the Confederation. The Alps have been, and remain, the source of material and spiritual wealth.’ So writes Jean Louis Delachaux, Director of Crédit Suisse, Geneva, sponsor of an Alp Action project to save a rare species of bat in the Fribourg Pre-Alps.

“To mark the 700th Anniversary of the Swiss Confederation, the 1991 World Economic Forum in Davos will focus on the seven European Alpine countries on 2nd February. The special ALP ACTION programme will include a plenary session for European leaders, ‘The Custodians of the Alps’, on the future of the Alpine environment. The session will be followed by a lunch and a widely covered Awards Ceremony, chaired by Professor Klaus Schwab, Chairman and Founder of the World Economic Forum. The Alp Action Awards will be presented by personalities including H.H. Prince Hans Adam II von Liechtenstein. In this way, the 1990-91 projects and all major Alp Action sponsors will be commended for their contributions to the preservation of the Alpine environment. Created to recognise excellence in the fields of written press, television, and press photography, the first REUTERS – ALP ACTION Media Awards will be presented by Reuters.”¹¹⁸

Sadrudin announced that concern about the state of the Alps claimed the cover of *Newsweek* over a few months following Bellerive Foundation’s launch of Alp Action. He said, *“Deforestation is not a problem exclusive to Africa or the jungles of Brazil or Borneo. We cannot help developing countries to manage*

118 Latsis Colloquium, “Die Entdeckung der Alpen / La découverte des Alpes”, Zurich, 1-2 November 1990

their environments unless we show ourselves in the developed countries to be better stewards. Alp Action has succeeded in initiating a number of projects, made more sustainable through the involvement of the private sector.”

Those businesses that simply wished to improve their public image by contributing funds but did not really respect the environment were not encouraged to join the effort. But many others had come to realise that the pollution and exploitation of our planet had gone too far, and were prepared, or even keen, to contribute to protecting the environment now. Within a year of the launch of Alp Action in February 1990, some twenty projects supported by about twenty sponsors were implemented. The prince, who a few months earlier had referred to thirteen of them, now in a newsletter wrote *inter alia* of the freeing of two bearded vultures, the restoration of a 13th century tower and that of a traditional mountain farmhouse, the tree-planting referred to earlier, and information campaigns by Swiss banks. “*This is the philosophy of Alp Action: to inform public opinion and with the help of the media to get the message across. There was plentiful media coverage of most of these projects. The bearded vulture used to be eliminated systematically because people feared it, believing it was capable of carrying off sheep and even infants. This very large bird with a three-metre wingspan can swoop down from a height and remove the remains, including the bones, of animals that have had fatal falls or have died of old age.*”

Sadrudin gave a high priority to raising more awareness about the Alps. At the 1991 WEF Forum, the Gulf Conflict was in its third week, and was never far from anyone’s mind, as the prince wrote three months later: “*We shared more than anxiety. The discussions carried an intense urgency. More than ever before, the vital links between political, economic, and environmental security were clearly apparent.*” The article, Sadrudin’s editorial in the Bellerive Foundation Newsletter of May 1991, had begun “*Black snow has fallen in the Himalayas for the first time ever. We no longer need satellite proof that our Earth is small and interconnected, that devastation wrought in one place is not self-contained. This is grim evidence that even the earth’s highest, most pristine peaks are not too high to be immune to ecological devastation far away below.*” His reference to black snow was in relation to the burning Kuwaiti oil wells that President Hussain had ordered the army to set on fire before the Iraqi retreat.

The French paper *Point de Vue – France* published in October 1991 a two-page article entitled “*Sadrudin Aga Khan, prince en mission*” in which it described Sadrudin’s diplomatic activities and his work with Alp Action. It reported the

“spectacular sale of jewels that had belonged to his father, Aga Khan III and mother, the Begum Andrée. A diamond of over thirty-three carats, a necklace of nineteen emeralds, a tiara and several other items were bought in Geneva for eighteen and a half million francs! Added to this the sale of a magnificent vintage Ferrari, it gave the prince substantial means for his Bellerive Foundation and for the other foundation that came from it, Alp Action. Last year, the foundation put over 8,000,000 francs into saving rare birds, developing lakes in the high Alps, planting thousands of trees. It helped create a reserve at the southern end of Lake Annecy. The prince came to inaugurate this sanctuary of reeds and wild grasses where ducks, bunting, beavers and reed warblers can build their nests in peace.”¹¹⁹ There was a good deal of media coverage of the inauguration of this new nature reserve, even from national newspapers, and the prince declared that he hoped to return many times in the future to an area with which he had become familiar as a small boy.

Tirelessly the prince spoke and wrote of the problems and the possible solutions. In a two-page article in *Aménagement et Nature* in autumn 1991, he wrote, *“In February next year, the Winter Olympic Games will be held for the tenth time in the Alps. By their scale, by the impressive infrastructure that they need, the Games, more than any other international sporting event, have a terrible impact on the equilibrium of the whole area. The development of large-scale road and hotel facilities, and the intensive use of these subsequently, have a long-term impact on the economy and social organisation of the area: especially the cancellation of agricultural activities in favour of tourism, winter tourism in particular.”*

“Sixty-seven years after Chamonix, there are now 405,000 km of roads and railways in the Alps – ten times the circumference of the globe. The mountain road system, the most heavily used in the world, takes 20% of road traffic and 15% of rail traffic of the whole of Western Europe, bringing about huge rates of pollution and acid rain, the main cause of the death of the forests.”

*“Since the 1960s, tourism has really exploded with the proliferation of hotels, restaurants, apartments, car parks and water treatment facilities basically used for only a few months a year – and the tourists! Every hour a million and a half skiers can reach the summits.”*¹²⁰

People visiting the Alps because they love nature understand that mountains need to have areas free from too much interference, and Sadrudin pointed

119 Point de Vue – France, Sadrudin Aga Khan, prince en mission, 31st October 1991

120 Sadrudin Aga Khan, « Réflexion », *Aménagement et Nature*, Automne 1991

out that there were many activities that do not require motor transport: hikers can reach the summits after spending a night in a mountain hut, the lakes are accessible by mountain bike and there is then canoeing, sailing, wind-surfing, cross-country skiing, rafting, fishing, photography – “green tourism”, in fact.

In November 1991, a book was launched that received Transatlantic press coverage: *Mountain World in Danger: Climate change in the forests and mountains of Europe*. Two scientists, Sten Nilsson and David Pitt, warned of the likely disappearance of snow and ice, affirming that within a hundred years, the Alps could look like the Atlas range of North Africa. Working in close cooperation with concerned parties, not least, of course, Alp Action, they published a series of warnings and recommendations, for example, “Heads of State and of industry should be made aware of their responsibilities. Mountain dwellers should be prepared for the inevitable increase in storms, fires, earth slides and avalanches.” It was essential, they wrote, to upgrade and preserve agriculture, protect the forests and avoid further increases in road traffic. With global warming, trees could be planted at higher altitudes. Green tourism was the best way forward, and more areas should be declared nature parks.¹²¹

In a long article in *FEMINA* magazine in early 1992, the prince talked about many aspects of the Alps that were of real concern to him:

“I think that we don’t realise their value, particularly how they impact on the environment of the planet in general. When we give real thought to the problem of the damage caused to the environment, we don’t so much think of the mountains. We forget that they are the water tower of all the valleys and plains that depend on them for irrigation and agriculture, not to mention, of course, the need for water of people and of industry.

“And it is the mountains that are a determining factor on our climate. When they are affected by road traffic, pollution, acid rain, global warming, deforestation, etc., all the surrounding regions suffer as a result. Let’s not forget that the mountains, and the Alps in particular, have always inspired poets, writers and artists. The symbolism – to climb mountains to reach their summit, to touch the sky – speaks for itself: men have always tended to look upwards. Or shall we say, they should look upwards! It’s for all these reasons that I love to be here.

“But the mountains are threatened by pollution in all its forms. The Alps stretch across seven very industrialised countries, there is intense road traffic and an ever-increasing number of heavy trucks – a number likely to become

121 *Mountain World in Danger: Climate change in the forests and mountains of Europe*. Sten Nilsson and David Pitt, 1991

even higher with the advent of the European Economic Area ; there are more and more tunnels, more and more roads...

"There's also the problem of global warming, which explains the lower levels of snow over the last few years, and we get into a vicious circle: in order to survive, the winter sports resorts call on snow cannons that consume an enormous quantity of water (fifty litres per second), which dries up the mountain streams and has disastrous effects on ground water. The simple fact of building large resorts in the heights means getting water up to them, pumping it to keep these resorts going: which is an enormous waste of energy!

"Another assault on the mountains – and not the least – is building ski runs, which means cutting down a huge number of trees, and this leads to erosion and avalanches. You should see what these areas look like in the summer. The humus is badly affected, and once again, the use of artificial snow completely changes the cycle of the fauna and flora. Underneath that snow, with the disruption of the cycle, plants reach maturity later, and large numbers of insects and even birds are affected, not to mention all the life that goes on under the layer of humus. It's a serious problem that's difficult to define, because it has so many implications. There could be the start of a solution once people begin to understand that they're in the process of killing the goose that lays the golden egg, and will start thinking.

"Actually, the tourists are beginning to be weary of seeing towns in the mountains! They go on holiday to see something really different, they want a change, to breathe pure air, and enjoy something different from what they have got in the towns where they spend the rest of the year. Now that the difference is no longer what it was, people will start wondering if it's worth going to the mountains. When we see the success of what we call "green tourism", the number of people who want to enjoy nature, away from where you have to search for a parking space, away from traffic jams and pollution, and those too who dream of spending holidays in more traditional chalets that provide a more harmonious setting, this proves that people are now tending to think differently, and I remain very optimistic. But we need governments to follow, and in general they are rather slow to take any initiatives, they're more inclined to follow public opinion than to move ahead of it."¹²²

As *The Guardian* reported, "The people at Alp Action do not take the strident line. They recognise, in the words of a recent survey they commissioned from L'Institut Ecoplan, that 'tourism has undeniably given our Alpine region

122 Olivier Binst, FEMINA, Lausanne, *Défenseur des Droits de l'homme, le prince Sadruddin Aga Khan* *l'est aussi de la nature, Le Prince Écolo*, 12th January 1992, ©FEMINA 1992

the dynamism necessary for economic survival' and that 'ski-lifts have played a leading role in this expansion.' Acutely aware of the diseased state of the mountain environment – the 50,000,000 vehicles a year crossing the Alps, the acid rain, dying forests, disappearing wildlife, erosion, river pollution and scarring of the landscape – they do not urge tourists to go away, but prefer positive action: fundraising for a portfolio of green projects."¹²³

Asked by another journalist whether he thought more sponsors would eventually come forward to help finance these kinds of measures, Sadruddin replied, "Yes, I'm sure they will. Since we launched Alp Action last year at the World Economic Forum, we have managed to finance twenty big projects, some of them for up to a million francs. These have been for the restoration of churches and mountain chalets – so it's very encouraging. The French Alps are not forgotten, nor is the public information resulting from media coverage of these activities that gradually will become better and better known. So it's good for the environment and good for the public image of private enterprise." The prince spoke of the importance of enlarging and consolidating nature reserves and parks. With the competition that had come about between man and other residents of the natural world, it was important to respect the habitat of others, and it was hoped that news of Alp Action's efforts "would spread like wildfire" and encourage others to follow suit.¹²⁴

Some of the 140 projects from 1990 onwards

Alp Action's first Swiss sponsor was the Jacobs Suchard group, contributing just under 1,000,000 Swiss francs to purchase and replant trees as part of a very large programme to plant 200,000 of them (later, 500,000), and to reintroduce the bearded vulture, absent from Switzerland since 1926. For his part, the prince saw to it that there would be good media coverage, and in effect, *Newsweek* brought out the first of several special editions on Alp Action and its sponsorships. Amongst others, the Swiss magazine *Bilan*, *Reuters* and many regional papers also gave a very good measure of coverage.

The bearded vulture lives in many mountain areas of the world, though its numbers are tending to diminish year by year. By the end of the 1990s, however, thanks to Alp Action fifteen of them had been introduced to the

¹²³ Adam Ruck, *The Guardian*, 19th October 1991

¹²⁴ Patrice Dujon-Neumann, *Le Messenger*, 18 octobre 1991

Alps at places 200 kilometres apart, and there had already been two births. Sadruddin hoped that the population of these birds hitherto absent from the Alpine areas for so long would reach 100 by 2010. It had not, but nineteen new couples were introduced in 2010 to boost the numbers that had been increasing gradually thanks to Alp Action's initiative with its sponsors.

Le Dauphiné Libéré even began its article about tree planting in Chamrousse, Haute Savoie, with "This story begins like a real fairy story... Once upon a time, there was a prince, Sadruddin Aga Khan, president of the foundation Alp Action, who really loved nature, and who wanted to save the most beautiful forests of the Alps..." and it went on to report that 1,000 trees were being planted at Chamrousse, where in 1968, downhill ski events had been held as part of the Grenoble Winter Olympics where once fine Cembro pines had stood. The commune had feared that this particular pine that can live for hundreds of years could disappear for ever, with skiers who practise "hors piste" damaging and even decapitating young plants – and with a new ski run being prepared on another slope for the forthcoming Albertville Winter Olympics. So with the support of the Rhône-Alpes Federation for the Protection of Nature, they had put in an application to Alp Action, which was accepted, and young people were now taking part in the planting.¹²⁵ Suchard's support as Alp Action's partner for the purchasing and planting of the 200,000 trees in Austria, France, Italy, Switzerland and Liechtenstein to protect mountain villages and preserve the environment, came to be widely reported as the programme progressed. In fact, by the end of the 1990s, 500,000 trees had been planted. All those forested areas were then damaged drastically by the December 1999 storm called Lothar that uprooted many trees. But the tree-planting was resumed to counteract that damage.

One of the most unusual initiatives was the provision of land to enable rare and threatened butterflies to prosper. An article dated November 1992 reported that over the thirty years that had elapsed since the early 1960s, modern agricultural methods had done more damage to hundreds of species of butterflies than had been caused in all past centuries. Of 3,700 species of butterfly found in Europe, 3,600 were found in Switzerland, but in such minute numbers that naturalists found that only one percent of those seen at the beginning of the 20th century remained, 95% of them liable to be eliminated as a result of pesticides and chemical fertilisers. Alp Action, the Ligue Vaudoise pour la Protection de la Nature (LVPN) and Clarins, the

125 Nicole Cabret, *Le Monde Rhone-Alpes*, 23 novembre 1991, and René Blachon, *Le Dauphiné Libéré*.

French luxury cosmetics company which manufactures prestige skincare, makeup and fragrance products based exclusively on plants, got together to find a solution. Javed Ahmad, Executive Director of Alp Action, was able to inform the media that an area had been found which was unique in the whole of French-speaking Switzerland, as containing still the meadow grasses and flowers that have been destroyed elsewhere – and therefore corresponded to the needs of the butterflies. A second area of “virgin field” was subsequently located in Germany, the Colline de Judenberg, Bavaria opposite Neuschwanstein Castle. In it were found – and now would continue to be found – very many rare orchids, birds and butterflies.¹²⁶

Clarins participated also in a project to oversee the protection of the marshes called “Les Marais de la Cluse d’Annecy” at the southern end of Lake Annecy, near the first project in which Alp Action was involved. There were other exciting projects well worth mentioning. One (quaintly described as “reconciling the wolf with the lamb”) was the encouragement of the use of sheepdogs to protect the large numbers of sheep in the French and Swiss Alps. Traditionally dogs used to accompany the flocks, then over many years, with the reduction in the numbers of predators, shepherds had gradually managed without dogs. More recently, however, with the reintroduction of bears into the Pyrenees and the migration of wolves from the Italian Alps into France and Switzerland, breeds such as the Pyrenean Mountain Dog are increasingly being looked upon as providing the best protection, living from birth among the sheep and spending their lives with them.

There was investment in two national parks, the Parc National du Mercantour, near the Mediterranean in the southern Alps of France, and the Parc Naturel Alpi Marittime in Italy; investment also, with the International Corporate Fund for the Environment (now the Global Environment Fund), in the Abbaye St.Jean-Baptiste, Müstair, Grisons, a 1,200-year-old abbey said to have been founded by Charlemagne, and declared by UNESCO in 1983 to be a World Heritage site. This ancient abbey has frescoes of the Carolingian Renaissance, said to be the most impressive in the world.

Another initiative one might never have imagined Sadruddin taking was to encourage “ecological marketing”, giving Alp Action support to such products as PANTHÈNE “PUMP & SPRAY”, said to spare our planet the greenhouse effect that comes partly from gas. Pump & Spray technology

126 *Le Messager des Alpes*, Aigle, *Echo de la Montagne*, Aigle and *Le Dauphiné Libéré*, 30.10.1992 and 1.11.1992

received first prize in the Packaging and Environment category of the European Innovator 1991 Award of the Institute of Packaging, UK.¹²⁷

In the nature reserve of Les Grangettes, at the point where the Rhone River joins Lake Geneva (le Lac Léman in French), a critically small colony of terns had Alp Action and the Ligue Suisse pour la Protection de la Nature (LSPN) prepare for it a floating platform of 200 m² covered with pebbles and gravel on which to nest. The “sterne pierregarin” (a bird that has the word “stone” in its name and which is sometimes called “sea swallow” or “hirondelle de mer”) is a handsome white fellow with an orange beak and orange feet that travels each year to West Africa. For many years, this bird was absent from les Grangettes because its nesting area of pebbles had vanished. Then a couple arrived and nested on a raft covered with pebbles, founding the new little colony. Les Grangettes is a nature paradise for many species of birds.¹²⁸

Alp Action, in close co-operation with Swiss Alpine bakers and other partners, was responsible for creating a 650-kilometre long path, the “Sentier cultural des Alpes”: starting at the eastern end of Lake Geneva (le Lac Léman) and ending at Müstair, in the beautiful Grisons canton in eastern Switzerland. It takes walkers over thirteen mountain passes and through eight cantons. As one of many projects that Sadrudin was anxious to create for tourism of a kind that respects nature while helping mountain dwellers make a living without having to move away, the path introduces walkers to areas where mountain villages are scattered across natural landscapes that can be breathtaking. The bonus is the availability in every village of particularly delicious bread!

There were without any doubt very many instances featuring Sadrudin’s timely response to a need, for example when there was a conflict of interest between mountain farmers in the canton of Vaud, who were planning to modernise their methods of working, and LVPN. Thirty thousand francs were needed to engage an agronomist to define what modern means could be used (with or without pesticides and mineral fertilisers) that would be in conformity with nature. The LVPN officer, Philippe Morier-Genoud, said, “It’s a story of a thousand and one nights, in which a prince throws a charm over an Alpine region for which he has particular fondness.”

127 *Entreprise romande*, Genève, 20 décembre 1991. *Protection de la Nature LSPN*, February 1993: *Collaboration Alp Action /LSPN*

128 Taken from a variety of press articles

Alp Action contributed to the cost of training young men in the Swiss traditional Alpine art of roofing chalets with shingles (hand-made wooden tiles). It was Sadruddin's pleasure to spend an afternoon or two with the young men, observing their work. Alp Action set up a scheme through which children and teenagers recovering from leukaemia and cancer could spend a week in the mountains, being taught mountain climbing, Nordic skiing, dog-sleigh handling and other sports. The idea had come from a woman doctor who had fulfilled her lifetime ambition to climb Everest. She realised that many children afflicted with serious illness also had their "Everest" ambition. A number of French hospitals participated in this special project called "*A chacun son Everest*".

Ten years later

There was both good and bad news. The bad news was that as Sadruddin pointed out, "*At the height of the winter season a million and a half skiers are whisked away every hour on ski lifts ever higher and faster. Isolation and inaccessibility is no longer a barrier against intrusive high technology and the new thrill-seeking cults like canyoning, bungy jumping and skiing off-piste even on the remotest glacier where the object is the sensational without considering dangers to life or the environment. The Alps may soon be reduced to an adventure playground. Already there are estimated to be as many as 800,000 participants in extreme water sports like canyoning and rafting, or on 3,000,000 mountain bikes as well as the 12,000,000 more contemplative types in 1,600 mountain huts at high altitude run by the Alpine clubs. Of course there is a place for pleasure in the Alpine scheme of things, but is it the bottom line? The Alps are too precious to be toyed around with.*"

The good news, at the end of ten years in which Alp Action and its distinguished partners had pioneered the idea of sustainable and soft tourism, is that Sadruddin said that he was delighted to see, even from such august bodies as the European Commission, more and more manuals advising people how to be environmentally friendly. Alp Action had launched 140 projects in the six Alpine countries to reintroduce species, protect habitats, plant trees, restore Alpine pastures and monuments, sustain mountain products, and create paths to discover Alpine life and landscapes. The prince paid tribute to the generous and far-sighted support

of its partners, including forty corporations, as well as governments, NGOs and the media.

“For more than ten years the challenging mission of Alp Action has been to preserve one of the biggest natural regions in Europe whilst maintaining economic viability, cultural integrity and recreational possibilities. Parks and protected areas are at the centre of this activity. 1,500,000 visitors come every year to Gran Paradiso in Italy, a million to Berchtesgarden in Germany or to Vanoise and Ecrins in France, 700,000 to Adamello Brenta in Italy. If protected areas cover something like 10% of the total area of the Alps, in less than 1% of the Alpine space are humans totally excluded. And only in protected areas can the fauna and flora flourish. A much more extensive system of protection is needed even covering the whole mountain chain. Something is being done. We applaud the efforts of Natura 2000 and trans-boundary enterprises like Mercantour and Alpi Marittime in the Midi.”

The prince pointed out that while the last areas of virgin wilderness needed to be protected, it was vital to respond to the needs of the local communities, and a middle way was needed between underdevelopment and over-development, through reinforcing local and regional identity. The extensive, organic nature of the traditional Alpine economy based on close harmony with nature and tried and tested *savoir faire* was a tourist asset to be given every kind of support.¹²⁹

After Prince Sadruddin died, Alp Action was merged with the Aga Khan Foundation as the Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan Fund for the Environment.

¹²⁹ *Sustainable tourism in the mountains*, 2000 speech by Prince Sadruddin found on http://www.mountain-portal.co.uk/text/Sadruddin_speech.html

12

Colloquia on Nuclear Issues

*Nuclear proliferation is mad; it's suicidal; but it's possible*¹³⁰

Everybody is the terrorist's victim. A back-pack bomb is already in service.

Sadrudin Aga Khan, 27th June 1985

The “Cold War”, the term applied to the stand-off between the two global superpowers after the Second World War, saw an escalation in the production and storage of nuclear weapons such that there appeared to be a real risk of a Third World War, in which there would probably be no survivors. “The US-Soviet struggle seemed interminable, as ever more destructive atomic arsenals were built up.”¹³¹

Sadrudin said one day to Robert Kroon, the prominent Dutch journalist, “*We are in a critical period of history, but I simply cannot believe that the superpowers are driving towards a Third World War. It's impossible. It could be the end of humanity, with the overkill potential of modern arsenals. It is the responsibility of the superpowers to prevent a war by default. You cannot go beyond a certain limit in brinkmanship.*” He was so seriously concerned about the very real danger of nuclear war that over a period of eleven years, he and the Groupe de Bellerive organised an impressive series of six colloquia or conferences on nuclear issues.¹³² A particularly important one held in Geneva from 27 to 29 June 1985 preceded by two months the Third Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, to be held also in Geneva, and we shall focus on that one shortly.

130 Quoted by Michael Davie, *Notebook*, *The Observer*, 27th January 1985 © Guardian News & Media Ltd 2016

131 *The end of the Cold War 1985-91*, Prof Robert Service, 2015

132 Sadrudin surely financed most costs of all these meetings, including the travel and expenses of many or most of the distinguished participants.

Sadrudin organised the first of these top-level conferences in Geneva in February 1979, with a focus on nuclear energy, the plutonium fuel cycle and their consequences upon society. Participants, including many international experts, numbered several hundred, as they would at all the later colloquia. It was described by the editor of the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* as “the turning point in the recognition of the profound changes a nuclear world poses for society.” A full report of the conference was published by *Pergamon Press*.

Next, in April 1981, a declaration from the Groupe de Bellerive was addressed to the heads of Government of the six states known to possess nuclear explosive devices, as well as to the headquarters of NATO, the Warsaw Pact and OPEC. The document warned of the dangers inherent in a philosophy which makes the use of nuclear weapons in certain circumstances “acceptable”, and which believes that nuclear wars can be “limited”, can be survived and can even be won. The declaration stressed the inherent folly of such concepts in the horrific context of nuclear conflict, and observed that the notion of “survival” would be rendered virtually meaningless by such exchanges. It also provided an in-depth analysis of the threats to our planet’s life support systems and to the orderly structures of peaceful societies.

The Groupe de Bellerive consistently advocated the establishment of “Councils of Reflection and Evaluation” to examine the advantages and disadvantages of different energy options, and to study potential alternatives to commercial fast breeder reactors. The second international conference was set up in September 1981 to illustrate the value of rational debate on energy choices. The meeting took place under the patronage of the French Academy of Sciences, and was attended by forty guest speakers and over 300 participants.

The debates, between scientists, engineers, jurists and political scientists of international repute, centred on the inventory of exploitable energy resources, the French electro nuclear programme, medium and long-term energy scenarios, technical and biological risks, socio-political implications and the decision-making process, particularly in France and Europe. It was recognised that there was often no common language between the heads of national industries, the scientists and the public at large, and furthermore that the correlation between nuclear energy and the proliferation of atomic weapons did not facilitate a truly open exchange of information. However, in the subsequent report published by *Pergamon Press*, those difficulties were stated to have been overcome.

European security: nuclear or conventional defence?

A meeting in December 1983, drawing together a remarkable forum of highly-qualified scientists, diplomats, members of the armed forces, churchmen and other experts from East and West, formed the first public debate on the implications of the ever-increasing arms race between the nuclear powers.

The clear conclusion of the debates was that any kind of exchange of nuclear weapons, anywhere in the world, at any time, and however “limited”, was totally unacceptable, since it was certain to escalate and bring about the destruction of all human civilisation. As a result, the participants strongly recommended a revival of the nuclear arms dialogue: “So long as the opponents can talk to each other there is less risk that they will seek to annihilate each other.” However, a policy of “minimum deterrence” could safely reduce the existing nuclear arsenals to a small fraction of those that threatened our existence. Again, *Pergamon Press* published a full report of the conference.

* * *

Michael Davie of *The Observer* met Sadruddin in London in January 1985, and after referring to the issues that concerned the prince, he wrote:

“He is trying to prod the international community into taking steps to prevent the world from blowing itself up. Next September, the countries that signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (1968) are to meet in Geneva. They will review the progress made by the existing nuclear powers towards meeting their obligations under Article VI of the treaty, which requires all parties to ‘pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date’. Five years ago, the non-nuclear powers told the nuclear powers that they were dissatisfied with progress, which was nil, and good faith, also nil, over stopping the arms race.

“Prince Sadruddin’s idea is to hold in June a ‘dry run’ for the September conference. He wants to highlight and crystallise the issues, drum up public interest, raise the stakes, and put pressure on the superpowers. He intends to assemble, at his own expense, 500 to 600 people, including Richard Perle¹³³,

133 In the same article, Michael Davie wrote « Sadruddin breakfasted next morning with Richard Perle, the Pentagon hardliner known as the ‘Prince of Darkness’, recently credited by *The Washington Post* with having had more influence on US policy towards Russia in the past four years than any other administration official.

the Russians (he was recently in Moscow), the Chinese, representatives from the embassies and non-governmental organisations in Geneva, and third world people who *want* the third world to have its own nuclear bombs. A nuclear weapon is a Frankenstein's monster you cannot control."

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Nuclear War, Nuclear Proliferation and their consequences

The June 1985 colloquium, held just two months before the Third Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), brought together thirty-one eminent speakers, 384 other participants including eighty-four representatives of Permanent Missions to the United Nations, twelve members of the Groupe de Bellerive and 116 media participants. The many distinguished speakers included The Hon George Bush, Vice-President of the United States; Richard Perle of the US Department of Defense; Professor Anatoly Gromyko of the Soviet Academy of Sciences; HE Qian Jiadong, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, the late Olof Palme, Prime Minister of Sweden; Dr David Owen, Leader of the British Social Democratic Party; HRH Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan; and Dr Hans Blix, Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The very considerable work of the colloquium was recorded in a book of the same name, published the following year by the Oxford University Press¹³⁴. Here it is possible only to reflect a limited number of the major contributions made in the first two sessions alone.

Opening Statement – Prince Sadruddin:

The prince said that the meeting was taking place "*under two shadows and before an opportunity*." One shadow, he said, was the fortieth anniversary of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945, and he continued, "*As we listen to the discussion in the next few days, I think we may at times wonder whether the human imagination has yet taken in the full enormity of what we have done. We are all hostages now.*" Then referring to the second

134 *Nuclear War, Nuclear Proliferation and Their Consequences*, Edited by Sadruddin Aga Khan, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1986

shadow, he spoke of what he called “the onslaught” of international terrorism. Protective walls had been breached, terrorism had carried its war into our lives with the simplest of weapons – the hand gun and plastic explosives. So there was no longer a case for complacency as far as nuclear questions are concerned, the danger was very real.

But he went on: *“I mentioned also an opportunity. This is the September Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. With new weapons being deployed, it may seem to be a frail reed to hold up against the forward rush of the arms race. But I believe pessimism about the NPT Treaty is misplaced because of what it might achieve. The challenge for us is whether, in the cause of a common humanity, we can bind together a common strategy, not of fine words but of practical actions that might edge us towards that corner that must one day be turned if the nuclear arms race is ever to know limits, let alone an end.”* The prince pointed out that the whole of mankind now shared a common danger because of the global consequences of a nuclear winter. He warned that today’s nuclear arsenal had a destructive power a million times greater than that of the bomb which destroyed Hiroshima. And he continued with warnings as to what could happen in an insecure world if the spread of nuclear materials were to continue. Therefore it was important for the opportunity to be grasped of this non-partisan forum to find answers to the questions that arose, such as on what terms everyone could accept a strengthened non-proliferation regime. *“We can only move back from the nuclear precipice if strengthened safeguards on the transfer of nuclear materials and know-how are matched by much more vigorous political action. It is only then that the deathly nuclear shadow of military confrontation can be dispelled,”* the prince said.

Welcoming speech and messages

Mr Jaques Vernet, President of the Council of State of the Republic and Canton of Geneva, in welcoming the delegates, observed that the sort of problem they had come to consider could be tackled only in a profound spirit of humility. The objectives were “to fight to preserve man’s life and its quality. Peace is more at risk than ever and tension is stronger than heretofore... no doubt precisely due to the fact that the solutions put forward have always aimed at the other party, and their advocates have tended to give lessons rather than offer contributions, giving priority to their own interests.”

Mr Pierre Aubert, Federal Councillor and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, sent a message in which he said, *inter alia*, "Your speakers testify to the high standing on the international scene enjoyed by the Groupe de Bellerive and its President, Prince Sadrudin Aga Khan. As we see it, the obligation of States not possessing nuclear weapons to remain without them implies a corresponding obligation on the so-called nuclear States to work towards halting the arms race and taking effective measures towards nuclear disarmament." He was reflecting the view that many others would state. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Pérez de Cuéllar, sent a message in which he said that he was "particularly gratified that Prince Sadrudin Aga Khan and the Groupe de Bellerive have decided to devote a Conference to these extraordinarily important subjects. Unless the nuclear arms race between the major powers is brought to an end and the further proliferation of military nuclear capacity is deterred, the terrible possibility of mass destruction will increase yet further and fear will become the norm of human existence." He went on to say that at least, the treaty had played a most constructive role in restraining the horizontal spread of nuclear weapons, for gradually it had been realised that the possession of nuclear weapons by States not having them, far from enhancing their security, could well put it at greater risk. However, while the nuclear-weapon States Party to the Treaty had agreed to pursue in good faith negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament, many non-nuclear States felt strongly that they had not done enough to honour their undertaking.

Pope John Paul II expressed in a message the hope that "your assembly will make an effective contribution towards encouraging those responsible to review the causes of the present situation and to draw up a new philosophy of international relations", that a new impetus would be given to the disarmament negotiations and that progress would be made, especially with a view to decreasing the number of weapons stockpiled. The Secretary-General of the World Council of Churches in a message stated, "The concept of deterrence, whose credibility depends on the possible use of nuclear weapons, is to be rejected as morally unacceptable and as incapable of safeguarding peace and security in the long term. The production and deployment of nuclear weapons, as well as their use, constitute a crime against humanity. The possibility of stationing weapons of both defensive and offensive nature in space could have an impact as serious in its consequences as was the development of nuclear weapons decades ago." The Orthodox Patriarchate message stated, "We must act together, those of all religions, so that the scandal of man destroying man is brought to an end."

Dr Armand Hammer, of Occidental Petroleum, regretting that he could not be present because of a scheduled meeting in China with Vice-Chairman Deng Xiaoping, spoke of the importance to the entire world of this high-level dialogue on the most crucial issue now facing mankind – the threat of nuclear war. He thought that the discussions, involving some of the most committed and knowledgeable leaders of our time, would represent the widest possible viewpoints on the issue of East-West relations and help to highlight the reasons why no progress was being made at the arms negotiations now taking place in Geneva.

Keynote Address – The Hon Olof Palme, Prime Minister of Sweden¹³⁵

The threat of proliferation

Mr Palme said that it was a great honour for him to have been invited to this Colloquium, and to have the privilege of delivering the keynote speech. The programme for these three days was truly impressive, and he wished to congratulate Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan on his success in assembling all these eminent persons who would give enlightenment during the Colloquium. He was confident that all the work on this project by Prince Sadruddin, and by the Groupe de Bellerive, would be worth the effort because there was no more vital issue to be discussed today in the international community – or anywhere, for that matter – than the threat of nuclear proliferation and the inherent dangers of an atomic war.

“To put it very simply”, he said, “we are today in a unique situation in the history of mankind. Today’s weapons and today’s warfare are such that we can kill not only ourselves and all others living on this planet. We can also take the lives of animals and plants, we can destroy cities and villages, we can ruin everything which has been built up through generation after generation. And above all: we can destroy the future of our whole civilisation, everything that would come after us.”

Mr Palme spoke of the threat of nuclear-weapon proliferation, of the untold suffering and destruction caused by the 140 wars fought since the

135 Just eight months later, Olof Palme was killed by a single bullet as he walked home from the cinema with his wife.

Second World War with conventional weapons, and of the likely military uselessness of nuclear weapons: "They are in a real sense useless, since their use would mean annihilation of the user. Such weapons are no longer merely a question of a number of aircraft or silos on Soviet and US territories loaded with intercontinental ballistic missiles. The risk of nuclear confrontation has come much closer, not least here in Europe. This is where new intermediate-range missiles are being deployed just now, and this is where one finds thousands of small battlefield nuclear weapons along the border between East and West. 'Small' is a terrible word because each of them has a power much stronger than the Hiroshima bomb."

Mr Palme referred to the 50,000 nuclear weapons in existence, all equipped with terrifying accuracy. The question, he said, is: for what purpose could a nuclear-weapon State use all this sophisticated machinery? One actual use could be to start a large-scale nuclear attack. This would most certainly destroy the enemy, he went on, but it would with almost equal certainty also destroy the attacker.

If nuclear weapons have served the purpose of preventing there being war in Europe for forty years, even their role as deterrents is far from proven, the deterrence doctrine has been linked to an arms build-up of enormous proportions, a continuous and unbridled arms race which has produced ever more sophisticated and accurate weapons.

"The idea of deterrence", Mr Palme continued, "is to induce fear in the opponent, to make him afraid, unpredictable, uncertain of the next step. But to induce fear is also to encourage distrust, making it difficult for any political system to conduct rational, reasoned and sound policies." Then turning to the risk of what he called nuclear terrorism, Mr Palme said, "Terrorists, now as in the past, show an utter contempt for human life and human values. In pursuing their goals, they are using fanatic (*sic*) methods which are totally inconsistent with all basic rules of a civilised society. Many believe that it has now become quite possible for a terrorist group to acquire a nuclear device. This development increases the risk that we might enter an era of nuclear terrorism."

He then pointed to the imbalance between what the non-nuclear weapon States had accomplished – not stepping over the nuclear threshold, while some 130 States had become signatories to the NPT – and the undertakings in the Treaty of the nuclear-weapon States with respect to vertical proliferation. "This Treaty, solemnly signed and ratified by the

United States, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom, talks literally – in its preamble – about the cessation of the manufacture of nuclear weapons, about the liquidation of all their existing stockpiles, and about the elimination from national arsenals of nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery. Article VI of the Treaty, as you all know, spells out the undertaking in detail: ‘to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.’ This,” said Mr. Palme, “is very clear language. Still, it does not seem to have been quite understood.” In his opinion it was the nuclear-weapon States themselves that had the key to progress in the work to prevent both horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear arms.

Mr Palme pointed out that it is simply not acceptable for the future of our civilisation to lie in the hands of only one or two States, i.e. nuclear-weapon States. “We, the non-nuclears, must also have a say. We must have the right to demand that nuclear weapons are never used, that the nuclear arms race comes to a halt, and that a process of genuine disarmament is started.” The failure of the superpowers to comply with their Treaty obligations could well endanger the future of the non-proliferation regime itself. The uncontrolled expansion of the nuclear arsenals, in contrast to the restraint with respect to horizontal proliferation, was putting severe strain on the NPT, he said.

The Swedish Prime Minister went on, “What I have said now has perhaps been harsh and somewhat unfair. But I believe that there is a serious lack of leadership in the world of today. Smaller and medium-sized nations cannot provide the leadership. But they can at least, in all humility, point out the absurdities and raise voices of sanity, they can act together and thus take a joint responsibility for our joint future.” He believed that the opportunities were larger now than ever before. But these threats had been created by man and could also be eliminated by man. And behind and beyond these threats, he said, lay the new, great opportunities. Never before had such vast resources been available for creating a liveable world for all. “I am certain that the people of this world want their political leaders to work together to use these immense possibilities instead of destroying them. It can be done, if the call is strong enough – a task as a common responsibility for all nations and all peoples.”

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and its Future

Chairman, Mr Niall MacDermot, Secretary-General, International Commission of Jurists

The NPT: The First Fifteen Years and the Current Crisis (Article VI)

H.E. Qian Jiadong, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the Conference on Disarmament, observed that the whole purpose of nuclear non-proliferation, to avert the danger of a nuclear war and to safeguard the security of peoples, should consist of three objectives: 1) to prevent the emergence of new nuclear-weapon States, 2) to achieve arms control and disarmament wherein the two major nuclear-weapon States should without delay halt their nuclear arms race and take the lead in drastically reducing their nuclear arsenals – leading ultimately to the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons throughout the world, and 3) to encourage and promote peaceful nuclear co-operation among all States.

“Of the three objectives, it goes without saying that the second is of particular importance, as it is none other than the ever-escalating nuclear arms race between the two superpowers that is right now threatening international security and world peace. China is not a party to the NPT, but its stance on the question of non-proliferation is clear-cut and above-board. China has consistently worked for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of all nuclear weapons.” The ambassador noted that the NPT, far from being fair and equitable, demanded much more of the non-nuclear-weapon States Parties than of the nuclear-weapon ones.

The ambassador quoted Dr Hans Blix, Director-General of the IAEA, as saying, “So far, the world has been relatively successful in preventing horizontal proliferation while vertical proliferation – that is to say, the further piling-up of more nuclear warheads in nuclear-weapon States – has continued.” He said that in the five years following the Second Review Conference on the NPT, the world had witnessed the most massive arms build-up, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and what was more, in their quest for military superiority, the superpowers were even extending the arms race to outer space. Consequently, mankind was faced with an ever more serious threat of a nuclear holocaust. He went on to say, “It is also precisely in the hope of serving the cause of peace and in the expectation that concrete steps will be taken by the superpowers to reduce their nuclear arsenals that

most of the non-nuclear-weapon countries have joined the NPT. Unless something is done to halt and reverse vertical nuclear proliferation, any talk of non-proliferation will undoubtedly be of little significance.”

The ambassador referred to the fact that it was the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, and to the preamble of the UN Charter spelling out clearly the aim of the world organisation “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.” He said that the very first resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly was directed at the threat of a nuclear war. “The goal is still far from being attained. The danger of war still exists. At this very important juncture, it is of particular significance for Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan and the Groupe de Bellerive to convene this Colloquium to discuss a subject which is so vital to the destiny of mankind.”

H.E. Mohamed I. Shaker, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United Nations, New York, speaking in particular of Article VIII-3, pointed out that principles adopted by the General Assembly in 1965 should be the basis for assessing the implementation of these provisions of the NPT. These were that the Treaty should embody an acceptable balance of mutual responsibilities and obligations of the nuclear and non-nuclear Powers, and should be a step towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament and, more particularly, nuclear disarmament.

The ambassador remarked that the non-nuclear-weapon States Party to the Treaty would wish to see some substantive progress on nuclear disarmament to justify their continued affiliation with the Treaty. Their approach focusing on nuclear disarmament converged with the spirit and letter of Article VI of the NPT. Future arms control and disarmament agreements should be related to non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and more particularly vertical non-proliferation. He referred to the “meagre results” over the fifteen years. Non-nuclear-weapon States’ real objective was a comprehensive test ban.

The ambassador went on to speak of the achievements in the field of disarmament between the first and second NPT Review Conferences (1975-80), the 1976 PNE Agreement and the 1979 SALT II¹³⁶ Agreements, that had not however been ratified. He said that the Group of 77 was critical of the failure of the nuclear-weapon States to live up to their obligations under Article VI of the NPT. “In terms of their qualitative aspects, SALT II, as its predecessor SALT I, continues to transform the arms race into

136 The second agreement on strategic arms limitations (SALT II)

a qualitative renewed nuclear arms race”, he said, giving some details, and went on, “in the aftermath of the failure of the 1980 NPT Review Conference, the early 1980s experienced a series of serious setbacks in the field of arms control and disarmament”, illustrating his statement with examples. Owing to the intricacies of the issues involved, the current arms control negotiations between the two superpowers were not expected to yield concrete and positive results in the near future. A comprehensive test ban generated a consensus as the most urgent and appropriate measure that should materialise, but the political will to go ahead with one was still lacking. Certain tests in the three environments, the atmosphere, outer space and under water, were thought capable of being carried out without being detected but “were considered, if they ever took place, to be too insignificant to have any effect on the military balance between the two superpowers. (However) a comprehensive test ban is essential for the viability of NPT. Most of the parties have joined the NPT because they believe that the Treaty is good for their security, which may be best attained through real nuclear disarmament. There is no minimum to be achieved in the field of disarmament. The objective is general and complete disarmament. The nuclear-weapon States Party to the NPT should not go to the Third NPT Review Conference next September with empty hands. They should go there with some concrete and credible achievements and promise at the same time to do more.”

H.E. Jayantha Dhanapala, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Democratic Social Republic of Sri Lanka, was one of at least two speakers to quote the statement of the Secretary-General of the United Nations at the thirty-ninth General Assembly:

“As Secretary-General of this organisation, with no allegiance except to the common interest, I feel the question may justifiably be put to the leading nuclear-weapon Powers by what right do they decide the fate of all humanity? From Scandinavia to Latin America, from Europe and Africa to the Far East, the destiny of every man and woman is affected by their actions. No one can expect to escape from the catastrophic consequences of a nuclear war on the fragile structure of our planet. The responsibility assumed by the great Powers is now no longer to their populations alone: it is to every country and every people, to all of us.”

The ambassador pointed out the great importance of the coming Third Review Conference. It “follows upon the failure of the Second Review Conference to agree on a Final Declaration representing a consensus view on the implementation of the NPT. Secondly, it takes place at a time when the vertical proliferation of nuclear armaments is at unprecedented levels and no disarmament agreements have been reached for several years. Finally, it is the penultimate Review Conference before the expiry of the present Treaty and we must think ahead to 1995.” He traced in some detail the history of the NPT since its inception, recording the fact that the stationing of nuclear weapons on the territory of non-nuclear-weapon States was being questioned as conduct inconsistent with obligations under Articles of the Treaty.

Significantly, the speaker remarked, “The non-nuclear-weapon States have stated repeatedly that the NPT was not intended to confer legitimacy on the possession of nuclear weapons by some countries or to perpetuate this monopoly. It sought rather to halt proliferation both horizontally and vertically. The years since 1980 have witnessed a deterioration in the situation and the Third Review Conference will doubtless see a sharp criticism of the nuclear-weapon States for the escalation of the arms race involving the realm of outer space as well.” He pointed out that armaments expenditure was running at \$1,000 billion per annum, that there were now an estimated 50,000 nuclear warheads poised to destroy human lives and that every year nuclear tests were conducted (forty-three by the USA and the USSR in 1984 alone) in order to refine these weapons of mass destruction. “Five nuclear-weapon Powers may be more than enough but there are still five too many”, he said. “We desperately need a New International Security Order with general and complete disarmament... since our very existence hinges on it. A greatly strengthened Non-Proliferation Treaty with a truly equitable balance of duties and obligations is an important element in this.”

Article III and Technology and Safeguards

The Role of the IAEA and the Existing NPT Regime

Dr Hans Blix, Director General, International Atomic Energy Agency

Early in his remarks, Dr Blix said, “Our starting point is the awareness that the existence of five nuclear-weapon States and the continuing

escalation of the nuclear arms race has already placed humanity in jeopardy. Tangible steps towards nuclear disarmament, to begin with a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, would considerably improve the atmosphere in which the discussion of horizontal proliferation takes place. There is something paradoxical about nuclear-weapon States desperately urging non-nuclear-weapon States not to do what they, themselves, find it indispensable to do: namely to continue developing nuclear weapons.” He outlined the role of the IAEA and the transfer of technology, then like other speakers he referred to the NPT’s three basic goals. States *outside* the Treaty had, he said, voiced criticism of Articles of the NPT on the basis of their being discriminatory in the sense that all restraints and controls were being applied to non-nuclear-weapon States and not to nuclear-weapon States. The objective of NPT to encourage nuclear disarmament had certainly not been fulfilled. However, Dr Blix said that outside the requirements of the Treaty, the three nuclear-weapon States depositories and France had now made voluntary offers to accept IAEA safeguards on their peaceful nuclear facilities. “Under these agreements safeguards are already being implemented in the United States, the United Kingdom and France; the first inspection in the Soviet Union is planned for this summer. The importance of these offers is not immediately in the field of non-proliferation. They do, however, give us the first experience of verification activities in nuclear-weapon States and may help pave the way for the verification which will be required in more far-reaching arms control and disarmament agreements.”

The Foundations for a Strengthened Non-Proliferation Regime,
Professor Joseph Rotblat, Professor Emeritus of Physics, University of London

Professor Rotblat began his address by referring to agreements negotiated over the previous few decades on vertical proliferation, e.g. the Partial Test Ban Treaty, ABM, SALT I, SALT II (adhered to so far although not formally ratified), and saying that despite these treaties the arms race continued unabated, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Since the fission bomb of 1945, at least five quantum jumps could be identified, he said: the H-bomb, ICMB, MIRV, GLCM (ground-launched Cruise missiles) and SDI (popularly called ‘Star Wars’).

He said: "On the other hand, in regard to horizontal proliferation there has been only one treaty, the NPT, and this has stood firm ever since it came into force in 1970. There has been no addition to the number of nuclear-weapon States since 1964. Not one of the 125 non-nuclear-weapon States Party to the Treaty has violated it. Even the forty-two States that refused to join the NPT have not violated the main terms of the Treaty overtly... Notwithstanding the demonstrated stability of the NPT regime, there are strong fears that it may break down. Indeed, the moment of that breakdown has been pinpointed with great precision: September 1985, at the Third NPT Review Conference." Should this materialise, he said, the consequences could be disastrous; it would certainly make a dangerous situation even more perilous.

Professor Rotblat went on to make a critical evaluation of the performance of the NPT regime, beginning with a severe censure of the nuclear-weapon members of the Treaty for their violation, both in letter and in spirit, of their undertakings. "Article I of the Treaty obliges nuclear-weapon States not to transfer nuclear weapons, or the control over such weapons, directly or indirectly to other States. Yet, this is what has been practised for a long time by NATO." He said that the most recent example was the placing by the USA of Pershing II missiles in the Federal Republic of Germany and Cruise missiles in Belgium and Italy, and there was no doubt that these countries would have at least indirect control over nuclear weapons, in violation of the terms of the Treaty. This criticism applied also to the stationing of Cruise missiles in the United Kingdom, since Article I referred 'to any recipient whatsoever'. The Soviet Union had recently stationed some of its SS-20 launchers in Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic, he said, going on to add that the history of the nuclear arms race over the previous fifteen years threw very serious doubt on the good faith as well as on the capability of the superpowers to fulfil their obligations.

They were, he said, "caught in the action-reaction syndrome. Because of this, even during the 'on-periods' of negotiations on arms control, very little progress had been achieved and – as was pointed out – the very few measures agreed to were dwarfed by the qualitative and quantitative intensification of the arms race." There was increasing concern in the Third World about the lack of progress towards nuclear disarmament, it now being recognised that a nuclear war could affect everybody, and the tropical zones could be hit hardest because their agriculture was much more vulnerable to a drop in temperatures. There could now be stronger

pressure on the nuclear-weapon States to take significant steps to reduce the danger of a nuclear war.

Professor Rotblat went on to signal the comparative loss of attractiveness of nuclear power for energy purposes, given both the accidents and the upsurge of public opinion against nuclear energy, and he put forward the argument that the self-interest of a State dictates the renunciation of nuclear weapons. "The nuclear-weapon States, far from being privileged, are in fact victims of their own folly, they become entangled in a web of their own making from which they are unable to extricate themselves. They deserve pity rather than envy. All the same, since the consequences of that folly may gravely affect all other nations, these nations have the right to demand that the nuclear-weapon States take steps to reduce the danger, as stipulated in Article VI." This demand, Professor Rotblat said, should concentrate on the first of two steps: one was a comprehensive test ban; the second was for France and the United Kingdom to give up their independent deterrents, and he expanded on this theme, suggesting that at the Review Conference, strong pressure should be exerted on those two countries.

Cutting off Nuclear Weapons at the Source

Dr Frank von Hippel, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and Center for Energy and Environmental Studies, Princeton University

Dr von Hippel observed that dealing with the problem of proliferation required a two-sided approach: political and technical. "On the political side, we are not going to stop proliferation as long as the superpowers continue fantasising that nuclear weapons are potentially usable militarily. The problem is that the superpowers *do not* believe that nuclear weapons are illegitimate. Indeed, each has pursued these weapons in part for very good reasons: the US to use as a threat to keep the Soviet Union from invading Western Europe, the Soviet Union to make US nuclear weapons unusable. These reasons still prevail and they drive the nuclear arms race." He asserted that the problem of the nuclear arms race could not be separated from the problem of war, which had created the need for the balance of terror in the first place. Getting out of this situation would require more than nuclear arms control. It would require the reduction of the enormous confrontation of non-nuclear forces in Europe and an end to military intervention in the Third World.

The speaker went on to address questions of “a cut-off of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons by the superpowers, the problem of nuclear fuel reprocessing, the plutonium breeder reaction – a fading dream, and the commercialization of plutonium as a nuclear fuel – a growing danger. He brought his address to an end by making “a modest proposal”, in which he suggested “a package deal” in which the two “foolish activities” – the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, and the separation of plutonium from spent nuclear power reactor fuel, would be brought to an end. “Here”, he said, “is a way to throttle the production of more nuclear weapons – *at the source*.”

Article IV and the Energy Needs of Developing Countries

Energy in Developing Countries and the Role of Nuclear Energy

Professor José Goldemberg, President, Energy Company of the State of Sao Paulo (CESP), Brazil, S.A., former President of the Association of Scientists of Brazil

Professor Goldemberg began by indicating that the role of nuclear energy in developing countries was likely to be reduced in the near future, and that was probably also true of most of the developed countries. As a consequence, less emphasis on nuclear energy would in itself take care of a good many problems which arose from the mixing of civilian and non-civilian users of nuclear energy. He spoke of energy consumption, which in the United States is one hundred times higher per person than in a country like Bangladesh. “In a more reasonable energy future, which is the one I and my colleagues have been working on – which makes use of energy conservation opportunities and new efficient technologies – the amount of oil would be reduced, natural gas would grow, coal would be reduced a little bit, biomass would grow a lot and nuclear energy will remain approximately the same as it is today. What I think this leads to is that the energy future of developing countries has better options than a massive reliance on the use of nuclear energy and these options are preferred for a number of reasons, among them a reduction of the danger of mixing weapons and civilian nuclear programs.”

Professor Goldemberg called for a halt in the promotion of nuclear power in the developing countries, “made unashamedly by big companies

in the developing countries” and recommended that all the international organisations, the International Agency for Atomic Energy and others, should refrain from promoting nuclear energy without a thorough study of other existing options.

After the debate that followed those speakers the next session began:

II. The Spread of Nuclear Weapons Among Nations: Militarisation or Development

Chairman: Mr Jacques Freymond

The Link Between Horizontal and Vertical Proliferation

The Nuclear Arms Race and the Danger of its Spreading to New Countries.

Professor Anatoly A. Gromyko, Director of the Institute of African Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Member of the Soviet Scientists' Committee for Peace against the Nuclear Threat

The theme Professor Gromyko addressed was “a sober approach to nuclear weapons is needed.” He warned that there was actually nothing particularly incredible in fantastic scenarios invented by scientific fiction writers and film producers. He said that the sophisticated nuclear-weapons systems, the product of research done by physicists, mathematicians and experts in chemical and mechanical sciences, had long since got out of their control and now had a life of their own. Frequently the very characteristics sought by the military, e.g. increasingly self-contained operation and comparatively simple handling and maintenance of such weapons, not only contributed to lowering the ‘nuclear threshold’ but were also conducive to the spread of their production far beyond the countries where those systems were first developed. “Moreover,” he said, “now that increased numbers of specialists in industrialised countries are acquiring computer skills, it is already not too difficult to find people for handling such systems. As for Cruise missiles, neutron weapons or ‘backpack’ nuclear mines, they might appear to be specially designed for adventurers of all kinds, from ordinary gangsters to paranoid dictators.”

The speaker went on to say that the 20th century had brought about not only supreme achievements but the ever-present threat of mankind

perishing under an avalanche of nuclear weapons, leading to the key question of whether man is ethically and morally capable of dealing with the increasing dangers resulting from his creativity. A Russian scientist had, he said, already raised this question in the 1920s, having seen that a nuclear era was bound to come about. Professor Gromyko quoted conclusions of a commission led by Olof Palme¹³⁷: “In the modern age, security cannot be obtained unilaterally. Economically, politically, culturally and – most importantly – militarily, we live in an increasingly interdependent world. The security of one nation cannot be bought at the expense of others. We face common dangers and thus must also promote our security in common.” Albert Einstein was quoted (not for the first time at this colloquium) as speaking of the necessity of a new manner of human thinking, since the atomic bomb had changed the world radically, and people were in a new situation to which their thinking must conform. The “nuclear race” was vivid proof that attempts to ensure security through military superiority were futile, and the philosophy of nuclear deterrence was absolutely unusable in practical politics. Yet it would seem that a considerable portion of the United States’ political and military élites believed that a nuclear war could be won, according to two writers mentioned by the speaker.¹³⁸

Professor Gromyko added that with nuclear weapons having become a subject of interdisciplinary analysis not just by physicists and mathematicians but also by meteorologists, ecologists, biologists, physicians, economists and sociologists, “it can be safely said that never before have nuclear weapons been presented to mankind so starkly with their potential to destroy the human race.” He described the dreadful sequels of a major nuclear disaster, and spoke of the unfortunate actions by nuclear States to deploy outside their own territory weapons of mass destruction and systems for their delivery as another serious blow to the non-proliferation regime. It looked as if few areas of the world were still really safe, with the United States preventing the establishment of nuclear-free zones.

The speaker went on to refer to the destabilising effect of the “Star Wars”, and said that the policies of confrontation and the growing danger

137 *Common Security: A Blueprint for Survival*, Report of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues under the chairmanship of Olof Palme. UN General Assembly document A/CN.10/38, p.41

138 Kennedy E.M., Hatfield M.O., *Stoppt die Atom-Rüstung*, Hamburg, April 1982

of nuclear war overshadowed other global problems and sometimes impeded the realisation of their urgency. The Reagan Administration was known to be planning to spend hundreds of billions of dollars on space militarisation projects. “Figuratively speaking,” he said, “in addition to the nuclear time bomb two other bombs have been placed under our common home, the Earth – the growing gap between the North and the South, the developed capitalist States and the developing countries, and the increasingly precarious ecological balance.” Continuing to express concern about the failure to place the achievements of scientific and technological progress at the service of peaceful causes and projects, he referred to the energy aspect, for, he said, socio-economic and technological backwardness could not be overcome without finding reliable sources of energy. He touched on the basic feasibility seen by Russian scientists of energy production in space, given the immense energy of the Sun so far largely unused by man. However, “the arms race, above all the nuclear arms race, could become – to use a figure of speech – the last link in the socio-economic and ecological chain thrown around mankind’s neck, that would strangle it to death. In the final analysis, it is driving the whole of mankind into a death trap.”

Professor Gromyko spoke of the Soviet Union’s proposal of a concrete programme of action for freezing nuclear armaments. “All nuclear States should renounce first use of nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union has already assumed such an obligation. The vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons can and must be stopped. The fate of mankind and of each individual hinges on its solution.”

The other sessions were:

III. Global Effects of a Nuclear War

IV. The Nuclear Arms Race and Arms Control

V. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and its Future

Unfortunately, space in this book does not allow of a summary of those three sessions, or of other speakers’ contributions and the debates recorded in the official transcription of the Colloquium, of which the preface includes elements from Prince Sadruddin’s masterly Closing Statement. The Colloquium and the NPT Review Conference had had several important themes in common. There had been a consensus on the importance of keeping the NPT as a

vehicle for bringing about global nuclear disarmament. Non-nuclear weapon States (NNWS) had placed greater emphasis on the need for the superpowers to fulfil their obligations under Article VI of the Treaty. The Groupe de Bellerive Colloquium asserted that a comprehensive test ban treaty would be the best possible step towards total nuclear disarmament. NNWS now attached more importance to the regional dimension of the nuclear debate, and discussions had taken place about nuclear-weapon-free zones needing to be created. There had now been less emphasis on the part of NNSW in regard to developing nuclear power for peaceful uses.

The Preface went on: *“It can only be hoped that these strong currents among politicians, diplomats, scientists and thinkers can, in harness with growing popular exasperation throughout the world at the madness of the arms race, influence the world’s sovereign governments and particularly the superpowers into initiating a real and long-lasting reduction and control of nuclear weapons.”*

The colloquium was acknowledged by participants and the media as one of the most significant events in the nuclear calendar. It played a crucial part in focusing attention upon the issues subsequently raised at the Third Review Conference and contributed directly towards continued international support for the Treaty.

Everything started to change that year, with Mikhail Gorbachëv, as the new leader of the Soviet Union, preaching *perestroika* and *glasnost*. He and President Ronald Reagan met in Geneva in November. The atmosphere in the city was electric, naturally! The summit was a first important step towards agreement on a new treaty that came to be signed two years later between the United States and the Soviet Union: it catered for the gradual elimination by both sides of their intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles (the INF Treaty¹⁰). The thawing of Cold War tensions was relatively rapid and by 1991, the Cold War was a thing of the past.

Robert Service, in his book *“The end of the Cold War, 1985-91”* writes about “how Gorbachëv pulled the world back from the brink of nuclear annihilation”. This Oxford University history professor, drawing on new archival research, has described the astonishing relationship between Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachëv who, with their aides George Schultz and Eduard Shevardnadze, co-operated against the odds and engineered the nuclear arms treaties that marked the end of the Cold War.

Five years later

The Groupe de Bellerive's sixth International Colloquium held in Geneva in June 1990 addressed the subject *"Non-Proliferation in a Disarming World: Prospects for the 1990s"*, and at the end of that year Sadruddin wrote this brief résumé in the Bellerive Foundation Newsletter:

"Extraordinary shifts in the world order provided a hopeful context for the Groupe de Bellerive's sixth International Colloquium, 'Non-Proliferation in a Disarming World: Prospects for the 1990s', held in Geneva in June. Paradoxically, the fact that reducing nuclear weapons had become more possible made doing so less urgent. Speakers at the colloquium stressed that we not lose the opportunity to further the cause of peace as we approached the Fourth Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. But regional differences were reheating up as the Cold War cooled down. So, many emphasised also the ominous risks of 'horizontal proliferation' of all types of weapons – nuclear, chemical, biological – in an increasingly 'multipolar world'.

"Less than two months later, the proceedings of our colloquium newly published, the phrase 'in a disarming world' rang ironically. The Gulf Crisis had erupted, and the region, like a powerful magnet, was rapidly drawing a multinational force into a new confrontation. The sobering speeches of those colloquium participants who warned of regional tensions had proved prophetic. No longer strident but wise, their insistence that policies to contain the spread of all weapons must be sought.

"By the time this newsletter is published, the tense situation may well have changed again. But what will not have changed is the necessity that we look seriously at what so many cynically have called the crux of the crisis: oil, and our dependence on it for energy. At issue is our whole attitude toward natural resources, our energy needs, and the health of our planet, so overburdened by our escalating demands. International security is not merely political. Without greater environmental security, all the rest scarcely matters.

"Political change in Eastern Europe has allowed shocking ecological revelations. Catastrophic levels of pollution and acknowledgement of numerous "unsafe" nuclear power reactors that are "not marginally off, but incredibly far off" accepted standards are reportedly pushing environmental concerns to the top of priority lists. Environmental issues once considered fringe have become mainstream topics of conversation and front page newspaper and magazine cover stories."

The proceedings of that sixth colloquium were published by the Bellerive Foundation: *“Non-proliferation in a disarming world, prospects for the 1990s”*, edited by Sadruddin Aga Khan.

The young man of 16 nearing the end of his secondary schooling in Lausanne, who in September 1949 had the same shock as millions of others on hearing that the USSR also had nuclear power, later did his utmost to warn the world of the dangers that the nuclear age had brought to the world.

Note: The 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty required the United States and the Soviet Union to eliminate and permanently forswear all of their nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and Cruise missiles with ranges of 500 to 5,500 kilometres.

13

Special Rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Commission, 1981

*The fight for human freedom is indeed the supreme issue of the future,
as it has always been.*

Jan Smuts¹³⁹

In 1981, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, in its Resolution 29 (XXXVII), resolved to appoint a Special Rapporteur to examine the relationship between gross violations of human rights and mass exodus, inviting Prince Sadruddin to take on the task. The prince accepted, and I was honoured to be his editorial assistant for a period of several months.

In conveying his Study on massive exodus and human rights to the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights, Ambassador Carlos Callero Rodrigues, Prince Sadruddin pointed out that this colossal and increasingly complex problem was becoming a tragically permanent feature of our times, and remarked that it was bound to become more serious with time unless imaginative and concrete measures were taken urgently to contain or avert situations of mass exodus. He said that in going over the whole ground, one found ample proof that mass exodus springs from a juxtaposition of varied circumstances rarely, if ever, capable of being defined uniquely within the framework of human rights.

Sadruddin added in his letter to the ambassador,

“If the present Study serves only to increase the awareness of the problem by governments and the general public, and provides an incentive for the matter to be further analysed, it will not have been in vain. It is, however, my considered opinion that if we are to succeed in future to spare future generations the spectre

139 Quoted in F.S. Northedge, *The League of Nations, its life and times*

of millions of uprooted people, more is required than reports and resolutions, however pertinent and useful they may be.”

Today we see the mass exodus of millions that the prince feared we would, indeed a “spectre”, to use his word. Nothing like it has been seen since the Second World War – people struggling to leave Africa, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan and several other countries, and above all now, Syria – a country that seems to be bleeding to death.

At the time of writing, the number of refugees and asylum seekers in the world is put at 60 million, with 57% of the number stated to be in Asia, the Middle East and Africa, while Turkey is currently sheltering 1.6 million (principally from Syria), Pakistan 1.5 million (from Afghanistan) and Lebanon 1.2 million – 25% of its population, the highest percentage in relation to its population anywhere. The number of people fleeing their countries *per day* was put a few days ago at 42,500. Kenya has received 350,000 people who have fled Somalia, and this very day (2nd September, 2015) a ship arrived in Greece with 4,300 people on board from Syria.¹⁴⁰ I will revert to these tragic situations in chapter 15.

Document E/CN.4/1503 of ECOSOC’s Commission on Human Rights, 31st December 1981

At the outset, Prince Sadruddin, as he started to carry out widespread consultations, decided to undertake an overview of the decade of the 1970s, and wished to illustrate many of his findings with four case studies. When the paper was presented, the delegations of countries featured in the case studies, doubtless feeling singled out for comment and perhaps criticism, immediately raised objections, as a result of which the politically unacceptable annex with the case studies had to be removed.

Introductory statements

Essential parts of the introductory paragraphs are worth quoting here, and as these are Prince Sadruddin’s own words, they are quoted in italics.

140 Facts and figures given on Swiss television news, coming from UNHCR and other sources between 22nd August and 2nd September 2015

"The phenomenon of mass movements of people is not new. From earliest times men have been fleeing one another's intolerance or migrating in search of land and livelihood. For the last several years, however, the number and magnitude of flows of refugees and displaced persons have been such as to cause increasing concern within the international community. By the beginning of the 1980s, numbers exceeded ten million, with the exodus from certain countries reaching haemorrhage proportions. At the same time, increasingly large migratory movements within countries and regions have begun to pose economic and social problems not hitherto experienced on quite the same scale.

"In the last thirty-five years, with the emergence from colonialism of about a hundred new States, often after a considerable struggle and with an inheritance of artificial national boundaries, fragile national unity, underdeveloped economies, too few cadres and boundless logistical problems, the world has seen an unprecedented proliferation of tensions and conflicts. New ideologies misunderstood by and unacceptable to portions of the population, blatant racial discrimination, civil wars, the terror tactics of more than one dictator, foreign invasion or acute economic hardship have caused millions to decide that any life outside their own country must be more bearable than the present one."

The prince spoke of the three ways which until then had enabled most refugee situations to be resolved, namely voluntary repatriation, local settlement and resettlement in third countries. However,

"While circumstances in the home country remain substantially the same and as long as there is no dialogue between the governments most directly concerned, there is no hope of paving the way to a voluntary return. Where the refugees are numbered in hundreds of thousands – or even millions – and land and other resources are scarce, programmes of local integration are practically unthinkable. As for resettlement in third countries, the Indochinese diaspora brought home to over twenty countries which had offered special quotas at the height of the crisis in South East Asia in 1979 the difficulty of integrating refugees from an entirely different ethnic and cultural background. Few have found it possible to renew their generous offers of places at anything like the same level – if at all.

"As for economic migrants... they are no longer in demand on the same scale as before. Yet millions still strive to reach more affluent countries in the hope of finding work and a better life."

Human rights

The prince observed that in recent decades, the use and abuse of the concept of human rights had become more widespread than ever before. The energetic analyses of non-governmental organisations such as the ICRC and Amnesty International, as they strove to have individuals rather than States as subjects of international law, were bringing to the attention of the public some of the worst human rights abuses. And at the same time, States were making a strong case to safeguard their sovereign prerogatives.

“Since the individual is the ultimate beneficiary in any system of international law and practice, the need to respect human rights is all the more important. These rights, as embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, constitute a set of guidelines, a code of conduct, of how, in an ideal society, the nation-state should deal with the individual. The former may not abuse the latter. The rule of law should reign supreme and impartial courts must enforce this even against governments. The State is called upon to respect the privacy of the individual – including his freedom of thought, religious practice and opinion. The economic and social progress of man is also guaranteed in some detail. He has the right to private property, employment, social security, education, medical attention, food, housing and even clothing. In the world of the Eighties, it holds out promises which are utopian. If these should be rights, how many governments are in a position to ensure that their citizens can enjoy them?”

However, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was used as a basic text against which the Special Rapporteur’s study of mass exodus was carried out. After 1948, as this noble declaration of intent needed to be translated into more concrete terms leading to tangible action, the United Nations General Assembly carried forward the work with the result that two important Covenants came into being: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Optional Protocol. *“The purpose was to enable States to voluntarily obligate themselves to observe new rules of international law. These Covenants were followed by the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which the General Assembly adopted unanimously in 1963, and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination adopted by the General Assembly in 1965. The number of accessions to these Covenants has been increasing steadily, and mechanisms for monitoring and implementation have been devised.”*

But unfortunately the majority of the countries from which a mass exodus occurred during the 1970s had not yet acceded to those Covenants, and it was more than likely that they did not have the means to respect the rights laid down in the Universal Declaration. Mass exodus could be caused by factors affecting any of the various spheres of human life that are enshrined therein. Sadruddin quoted President Félix Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast as having said, "What's the use of talking about equality among citizens and fundamental freedoms to those who have only the freedom to die of hunger?" In all the situations of mass exodus during the 1970s, there had been violations of the spirit, and more often than not of the letter, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its Preamble. *"Local conditions, a state of internal or external conflict, the authority of dictatorial or despotic regimes and resulting arbitrary rule by decree had prevented individuals or groups from getting a fair hearing or seeking redress. Worse, the law was often misused to dispossess and/or expel communities, to institutionalise racial or economic discrimination and to make it impossible for parts of the population to continue to live in their country of habitual residence. The only recourse was to leave and seek opportunities elsewhere."*

The prince raised the question whether exodus would have reached the proportions it had if Member States, who pledged themselves in the Declaration's Preamble "to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms", had adhered to their noble statement of intent. Taking the Articles of the Declaration one by one, he indicated how abuses had led to exodus. He wrote, *"The Declaration's Articles 3, 4 and 5 (the right to life, liberty and security of person, no one shall be held in slavery or servitude, no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment) had clearly not been respected in many instances. A large number of exiles would have lost 'life, liberty and security' had they not left their countries. Slavery and torture had been institutionalised by certain regimes."* The Articles dealing with the individual before the law (6-11) had to be viewed in the context of the particular situations prevailing in many of the countries from which mass movement had been forthcoming. *"Sadly, most of the provisions are rather academic in times of conflict. More importantly, they appear to have been conceived for a society in which the legislature is truly independent. This is a 'never-never land' for most of the victims of man's inhumanity to man. How can we expect a reduction in the number of asylum seekers if present practices are allowed to continue?"*

Article 13 states that everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state; and has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country. *“Both paragraphs of this Article are seriously eroded, in that most totalitarian regimes reserve the right to oversee and regulate movement of their nationals both within and outside their borders. The very fact that a person has moved without obtaining the necessary permit or visa is a punishable act.”*

Article 14: “Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.” *“The most relevant Article in terms of mass exodus... in view of the illustration it provides of the dichotomy between the sovereign prerogatives of States and the rights of man as the ultimate beneficiary of any social contract.”*

Article 15: (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality. (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality. *“Some governments have found it convenient to make it difficult for certain communities to prove their nationality so as to expel them as non-citizens or stateless persons. This has forced the international community to organise evacuation and resettlement at very short notice and under duress.”*

Speaking of Articles 20 and 21, giving everyone “the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association” and “the right to take part in the government of his country (...) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government...” the prince wrote:

“Democracy is in short supply in many parts of the world, and the majority are ruled without ‘taking part in the government of their country directly or through freely chosen representatives’. The will of the people is too seldom the basis of the authority of government.” Genuine elections by universal and equal suffrage and free voting procedures *“are part of a vocabulary which seems to be understood by a very small proportion of nations. All mass exodus which took place during the decade under review poured forth from regions where the prevailing situation prevented individual citizens from exercising their political rights. It should be noted, however, that this constraint is not, in itself, the essential cause for large movements of population. Indeed, some countries seem to have succeeded in compensating the absence of democracy by ensuring that their peoples have access to material well-being. This, coupled with restrictions on freedom of movement, appears to have stemmed the flow of what is still limited one-way traffic from some countries.”*

The prince quoted Articles 22 to 28 in full, making the observation that *“economic, social and cultural rights set out in Articles 22-28 can hardly be considered a legitimate yardstick in the countries where the scourge of under-development makes it difficult for many to survive or where antiquated structures, illiteracy, unemployment and the absence of a money economy totally prevent comparison with the industrialised world’s concept of standards of living. In this sense, the provisions of such Articles have not been violated, per se, in some States for the simple reason that a comparable situation never existed in the first place. In some instances, however, departures were precipitated because whole sectors of the population or particular ethnic groups were denied work or the ability to pursue their former economic activity or education. There has been conflict between the desire of certain nationalities absorbed within nation-states to retain at least part of their cultural heritage (including their own language), and the policy of the central authorities to phase out (or stamp out) the distinct linguistic and cultural patterns of a homogenous national population. Such conflict between centralisation and regionalism has sometimes been violent enough to lead to an exodus of quite considerable proportions. The millions of men, women and children who elected to uproot themselves had little to say in the matter. Their sacrifice may remain the best indictment of a system which other men have imposed or failed to prevent.”*

Multiple complex problems

In the third and final chapter of his report, Sadruddin wrote of the multiplicity and complexity of exodus problems, saying that people usually flee as a result of a combination of factors rather than a single one. He referred to wars and insurrections, the breakdown of law and order, oppression and anarchy, persecution and the denial of opportunities for normal social and economic development. *“People could feel alienated, believing that their country could not provide them with a supportive future, or they were simply not accepted as full members of the community and could be forced out. In all these cases, the social contract has failed temporarily or permanently. Even those who escape floods or famine conditions may have to do so because neither their government nor the international community at large has been able to avert the situation or bring them succour. Where land has been appropriated, social and cultural customs suppressed and only such alternatives offered as are deemed*

unacceptable, disaffection may be total. Yet these measures are usually carried out in the name of modernisation and progress."

He reflected on the contrast between traditional societies and modern states, the former allowing individuality, the latter expecting conformity in the name of national cohesion; on the ready availability of firearms of every description; on the scenario in some countries that have been levelled by war with the destruction of their economics and a measure of forced displacement. *"The unsettling effect of having been uprooted once or even several times previously is something conditioning people for a final uprooting, out of their country."*

Moving on to the special case of Africa, he said, *"The colonial partition of Africa, a continent already seriously weakened by the slave trade, without reference to the geographic, economic, social or political elements of African life, left an inheritance of largely artificial boundaries as well as a structural imbalance derived from colonial self-interest. Some national development strategies which placed emphasis on modernisation (education, creation of urban jobs, horizontal and vertical growth of cities and so on) tended to neglect the rural areas."*

Speaking of factors that have combined to bring about a drift to the towns, such as soil erosion, recurrent drought conditions (food insecurity) and population growth hardly concomitant with economic conditions¹⁴¹, he noted that there had been a mounting level of migration from Africa to industrial countries. Consisting of skilled manpower that home countries could ill-afford to lose, it resulted in the loss of jobs that had depended upon the existence of those skills and a slowing down of development measures. He went on to say:

"The 'push' factors are further complicated by other elements such as the high proportion of annual budgets devoted to equipping modern armed forces; the inadequacy of public services, including roads, railways and ports; the loss of international markets for exports and the loss of or reduction in the levels of foreign aid. The comparative youth of many nation-states only recently freed from the burden of colonialism, lacking therefore any tradition of statehood and finding it difficult to create national cohesion except along somewhat authoritarian single-party lines, also helps explain the "integrative revolution" facing many developing

141 Prince Sadruddin noted that the average annual population growth in the thirty-six countries of the World Bank's "low income" group (countries with a per capita GNP of \$370 or under) was twenty-six times that of Austria, the Federal Republic of Germany or the United Kingdom.

nations after accession to independence. Thus the inability of many governments to create conditions in which the population as a whole can expect to enjoy – quite apart from civil and political rights – the economic, social and cultural rights set out in the Declaration of Human Rights and the international Covenants¹⁴² may be better understood. Furthermore, it is surely no coincidence that of the thirty-six countries in the World Bank's low-income category, two thirds have either produced or have received refugees in the course of the 1970s – twelve in each category. Nor is it any wonder that there have been such frequent calls upon the international community to help, or that numerous inter-agency missions have recommended that the question of refugee assistance should be viewed in the broader perspective of development aid."

The vicious circle of "push" factors outlined above should be viewed in relation to "pull" factors, including people's awareness, thanks to global communications, especially radio, of conditions existing in the more affluent countries, and an expectation that their plight will be viewed with sympathy and that they will be assured of fair treatment. The prince predicted that by the year 2000 (twenty years on), with anything between 630,000,000 and 850,000,000 people living below a satisfactory subsistence level¹⁴³, the migration of large numbers was to be expected. And he also predicted that warm welcomes by industrial countries were not necessarily to be issued. Meanwhile, the "South" was coping, and in all probability would continue to cope, with many more refugees/migrants than the "North". But *"No wonder that mass movements have become yet another catalyst in the North-South polarisation. The South feels that its refugees get less, certainly on a per capita basis, than is the case in the North. One OAU observer at UNHCR's Executive Committee once suggested that a whole village could be settled in Africa for the cost of individual care and maintenance for a handicapped case in Europe or Latin America! This is also the subject of dissatisfaction between regions of the South: Africa feels that it has been getting too little assistance per capita in comparison to South East Asia. Thus there are certain imbalances in current approaches."*

142 The overwhelming majority of countries from which mass exodus had occurred in the 1970s had not so far acceded to either of the Covenants.

143 In a speech he made towards the end of the century, the prince was reported as expressing disappointment in levels of development, observing that in eighty countries people's incomes were lower than they had been ten years earlier. The number of people in poverty, earning less than \$1 a day, was now, he said, 1.2 billion. *"The Economist"* referred to this in its obituary (towards the end of chapter 24).

Some recommendations

The Special Rapporteur wrote: *“It seems increasingly important that standards of living should not remain so low that people see no alternative but to move. Economic distress ought to be capable of resolution if there are no major political factors to prevent a solution being arrived at.*

“Foreign aid practices should be more meaningfully influenced than they appear to be at present by humanitarian considerations, and administered in terms of how they could best alleviate conditions causing mass flight. On the basis that prevention is better than cure, if development aid were apportioned such that it would contribute to stability in countries and regions where a potential for mass exodus can be identified, this would lead to economies in the very substantial sums required for relief in countries of first asylum. It should be viewed as an investment for stability. In the same vein, reappraisal by developing countries of their needs and priorities would help to determine what could be done in terms of aid to prevent mass exodus. Elements which serve – such as corruption, bureaucracy and inefficiency – as disincentives to aid must be eliminated. Similarly, grants made available for developing countries to develop their educational infrastructure, particularly at tertiary level, would help counteract the tendency to facilitate overseas study leading in a high proportion of cases to their remaining abroad (brain drain).”

The prince placed emphasis on the need for a more integrated approach to development aid/bi-multi approach, for attention to sectors calling for medium or long-term involvement, for a standardisation of material aid that would be universally recognised and respected both by aid-giving and aid-receiving countries. Needs assessments should be made only by teams with sufficient expertise to discern both the needs of those who have fled their countries and what would be needed to avoid a continued outward flow. An “integrated multi-disciplinary planning team” would both help eliminate duplication and maximise the overall impact of international involvement.

Summing up

As a consequence of all the factors leading to mass exodus, the prince believed that it was time to update refugee, nationality and labour law, and

to re-examine asylum practice. To ensure greater clarity in mass influx situations as to numbers of people to be assisted, a mechanism seemed to be called for to carry out a refugee population census in an impartial manner. He recommended a reappraisal of developing countries' economic needs in relation to possible causes of exodus, standardisation of international aid criteria, and simultaneity in approach to the country of origin and the country of asylum, to gain a comprehensive view of the overall situation and thus be able to plan better. He further recommended that multilateral aid should take into account bilateral aid, to prevent duplication and ensure an integrated approach; and the introduction of an effective census mechanism to work independently of relief agencies, in order to determine in an impartial and professional way the numbers of border-crossers requiring assistance in mass influx situations. Three further recommendations were as follows:

The introduction of an early-warning system based on impartial information gathering and data collection concerning potential mass exodus situations, leading to missions reporting to the United Nations Secretary-General and competent intergovernmental organs for the purposes of timely action, if required;

The appointment of a Special Representative for Humanitarian Questions whose task would basically be to forewarn, to monitor, to de-politicise humanitarian situations and to carry out those functions which humanitarian agencies cannot assume because of institutional or mandatory constraints, as well as to serve as an intermediary of goodwill between the concerned parties;

The identification from among groups experienced in humanitarian questions of men and women willing and able to be called upon to form a corps of "humanitarian observers" to monitor situations, in case of need, and contribute through their presence to a de-escalation of tensions. A prerequisite for this role would be the concurrence of the governments concerned. The corps would facilitate the work of the Special Representative for Humanitarian Questions.

And finally:

Prince Sadruddin declared: *"It is abundantly clear that unless ways can be found to counteract the withholding of, or outright violations of, human rights, unless*

there is a more equitable sharing of the world's resources, more restraint and tolerance, the granting to everyone, regardless of race, religion, membership of a particular social group or political party, the right to belong – or alternatively to move in an orderly fashion to seek work, decent living conditions and freedom from strife – the world will continue to have to live with the problem of mass exodus. This problem, if left unchecked, will increasingly pose a threat to peace and stability around the globe.”

As I write this, UNHCR reports that 4,289,792 Syrians have been registered in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. They face winter weather in totally inadequate shelters. A further 11 million inside Syria (out of the original population of 22 million) urgently need help.

14

The UN Secretary-General the world never had

The UN Secretary-General the world never had

*The Herald, Glasgow*¹⁴⁴

A man for all nations

John Silverlight, *The Observer*¹⁴⁵

Prince Sadruddin's name was in people's minds and was frequently mentioned in the media throughout no fewer than four periods, namely in the autumn weeks of 1971, 1981, 1986 and 1991. So for twenty years, there were those who saw him as the ideal United Nations Secretary-General! And although he did not apply officially for the post, simply "making myself available to the international community", as he put it on various occasions, he was considered a likely candidate for the post twice, in 1981 – when he actually received the largest number of votes, but the USSR crushed the nomination by a veto – and 1991.¹⁴⁶

To document fully the whole process of the selection of the UN Secretary-General on specific dates, it would be interesting to get access to the records of Security Council meetings, and take notes on which delegation said what. Instead, we must rely on a number of press articles that seem to have summed up each crucial situation rather well, insofar as those who drafted them apparently had sufficient access to the facts. Again, I have had to resort to

144 *The Herald*, Glasgow, 15th May 2003 (obituary)

145 John Silverlight, *The Observer*, 1st January 1978

146 See for example in *Point de Vue – France, Sadruddin Aga Khan, prince en mission* of 31st October 1991

quite lengthy quotations, and hope that readers will find them illuminating.

In 1971, governments were seeking a successor to U Thant, the Burmese who had fulfilled two mandates. In fact, one newspaper as early as 1970, under the heading “WANTED... *a man for ALL nations*”, sketched what it imagined would be the requirements for that high post: “A man of almost incredible ability, of high independence, acceptable to all nations and people of all colours. Must be both bold and discreet”, and reported that “a number of diplomats with UN associations are wondering if the most likely candidate of all might well be Prince Sadruddin Khan (*sic*) who, though only thirty-six, is regarded as having an exceptionally wide international outlook and a great devotion to the United Nations, having been deeply involved first in UNESCO and then in UN affairs for nearly twelve years.”¹⁴⁷

The UNA Monthly of April 1970, below a large photograph of the prince, asked “THE NEXT UN SECRETARY GENERAL? going on to say “Youth and glamour may be brought to the post of UN Secretary-General next year when U Thant’s four-year term of office comes to an end. By all accounts, his eight years with the UN as Deputy High Commissioner then High Commissioner for Refugees have been an outstanding success. His work for refugees has won wide acclaim inside and outside the UN. His statesmanship, professional competence and drive have understandably led to the current speculation that he is a front runner.”

TIME magazine of 1st February 1971 pointed out that there were “few candidates who are not objectionable for one reason or another. Thant gallantly said that “regional considerations” should play no part in the choice of his successor, but they will. So will racial, religious, ideological and even emotional considerations. No one representing either of the superpowers or their closest allies has a chance. Yet a candidate must pass muster with both Washington and Moscow – the “Directorate”, as Brazil’s Ambassador João Augusto de Araujo Castro calls the superpowers. Nations whose external problems might disrupt world peace are also probably disqualified – Israel and the Arab states, for example, or India and Pakistan. Neither Moscow nor Washington wholly trusts the Black Africans (too unpredictable on any issue but race and colonisation [*sic*]), and the Russians feel that everything south of the Rio Grande except Cuba and Chile is a Yankee playground. Other possibilities include Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan of Iran.”

147 John Silverlight, *A man for all Nations*, *The Observer Review*, 1st January 1978 © Guardian News & Media Ltd 2016

The *Washington Post* on 13th September 1971 published an article by Stephen M. Schwebel entitled “*Will U Thant’s Successor Be---U Thant?*” Running through the possible options, Schwebel arrives at the conclusion that “there is one other possibility from Asia – or from Europe or Africa, it is not altogether clear. Prince Sadruddin Agha Khan, son of the late Agha Khan, younger brother of the dashing Aly Khan, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees since 1965, he has established...an excellent reputation as a serious and capable international civil servant. He is thirty-eight, and there is a tendency to discount him at present on the basis that his time will come later. But it is not impossible that if a deadlock should develop, his family’s influence in East Africa and West Asia, combined with his abilities and popularity, might be enough to bring about his selection. A negative factor could be India’s displeasure over his handling of the Bengali refugee problem. But India is not the power in United Nations circles it once was. Yet if it could move its new ally, the Soviet Union, to say no, that would be enough to depose (*sic*) of the prince.”

Sadruddin was not actually an official candidate for the post anyway – even if some people close to him said that he wanted it very much. To a *Guardian* reporter the prince said that he wouldn’t have wanted the job for itself, but only if he could have made a contribution towards peace: “*Simply for the post, no. I don’t believe in just being simply the captain of a ship: you have to be sure that the ship is seaworthy.*” And was the UN a seaworthy ship? – ‘*Bureaucracy*’, said Sadruddin. ‘*Parkinson’s Law*.’ He was an outsider, and anyone not a professional bureaucrat was going to be struck by Parkinson’s Law at the UN. You could see this more clearly from outside than if you had risen through the ranks.”¹⁴⁸

Prince Sadruddin had said in an interview in the mid-1960s, when asked what he thought he would have been doing had he not been appointed UN High Commissioner for Refugees, “*I think I would probably have chosen the UN, not necessarily the field I am in now. I have a very deep faith in the UN and in the UN system as a whole. It is important to align governments, building peace...*”¹⁴⁹ And later, he said, “*Once you’ve been involved in the UN, and been able to test your ability, you begin to know what areas you can function in, what you’re best at.*”¹⁵⁰

148 *Prince of Peace – The Terry Coleman interview: Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, The Guardian*, 7th October 1972 © Guardian News & Media Ltd 2016

149 NBC interview in New York, c.1966

150 John Silverlight, *A man for all Nations, The Observer Review*, 1st January 1978 © Guardian News & Media Ltd 2016

Indeed, by 1981 he had acquired extraordinary international experience at every level, his personality was deemed ideal for the job, and he was widely considered to be a candidate!

So how does the top UN job get filled?

The UN Charter, in article 97 (Chapter XV) says that the Secretary-General “shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.”¹⁵¹ For most of the UN’s history, we learn that the role of the General Assembly in appointing the Secretary-General has been limited to the formal act of appointment, with the Security Council doing the real decision-making. A majority of votes is required in each case. The Security Council can be in complete deadlock because of a veto or vetoes by one or another member (or by several). In 1981, the Council began the practice of conducting “straw polls” under which members would indicate either “encouragement” or “discouragement”. The straw-ballot process meant that votes could be cast informally, without the need for an official meeting in the Council chamber.

The appointments of 1971 and 1976 had been made after a marked use of the veto:

1971: Kurt Waldheim (Austria) was eventually appointed despite fourteen vetoes; Max Jakobson (Finland) and Carlos Ortiz de Rozas (Argentina) were each met with twelve vetoes.

1976: Waldheim’s reappointment was initially vetoed by China (now a member), then accepted.

1981: Kurt Waldheim, running for a third term of office, received sixteen vetoes from China, and it was because of his wanting to remain in office that the other candidates were kept waiting in New York, talking to delegates, waiting week after week for the situation to be resolved. By 5th November, the *International Herald Tribune* reported, in an article headed “*Asian Aides at UN Say China Hints At Dropping Its Veto of Waldheim*”: According to envoys close to Peking, China has indicated that it would re-examine its position if other candidates from Asia, Africa or Latin America sought the job. If these nominees fail to win solid support from Third World Countries here, and particularly the six Third World countries on the Security Council, China is said to be ready to take a different position.

151 Quoted in *Special Research Report : Appointment of a New Secretary-General*, <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/special-research-report>

“Among the other potential candidates are Javier Pérez de Cuéllar of Peru, a former UN undersecretary-general; Sadrudin Aga Khan of Pakistan, former UN High Commissioner for Refugees; Carlos Ortiz de Rozas, Argentina’s ambassador to Britain; Jorge Castañeda de la Rosa, foreign minister of Mexico; Shridath Ramphal of Guyana, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth; Radha Krishna Ramphul, Mauritius’ delegate to the United Nations; and Jorge Illueca, foreign minister of Panama.”¹⁵²

The *International Herald Tribune* reported that the Security Council’s president, Olara Otunnu of Uganda, declared that he would leave the list of candidates open for a few more days, after the Tanzanian Foreign Minister, Salim Ahmed Salim withdrew following fifteen vetoes from the USA. It said, “The best known of the candidates is Prince Sadrudin, whose nomination comes from Jordan and not Iran, the nation he claims as his own through family ties. His French birth, Swiss residence and American education stamp him as more Western than Asian. The Russians have sent out informal signals that they have questions about him.

“Mr Ortiz de Rozas was vetoed by the Russians when he ran against Mr Waldheim in 1971. Since then, however, Argentina has shipped wheat and beef to the Soviet Union, partly to offset shipments stopped by the United States. Argentina’s human rights record could handicap Mr Ortiz de Rozas in the eyes of several Security Council members.

“Mr Illueca is not well known here, although he served as Security Council president when it was Panama’s turn this year. The Soviet Union could also be an obstacle for him and for Mr Castañeda.

“Mr Pérez de Cuellar may be an exception. He has served as Mr Waldheim’s representative seeking to find a formula satisfactory to all sides that would remove Soviet troops from Afghanistan. He has had extensive dealings with Moscow, both in this job and as the Peruvian ambassador to the Soviet Union.

“The Security Council agreed on Tuesday that members will be given papers with the names of all the candidates. First the five permanent members and then the ten other members will mark in secret only those names they oppose, casting informal, negative ballots. From this straw poll, Mr Otunnu will determine which candidates stand no chance of election. He will then ask if they are willing to withdraw. The other candidates, and any who decline to pull out, will then be voted on formally.”

152 Bernard D. Nossiter, *Asian Aides at UN Say China Hints at Dropping Its Veto of Waldheim*, *International Herald Tribune*, 5th November 1981

To be elected, each candidate needed a minimum of nine votes. Sadraddin on his return from New York told me, and of course others, that he had received the most votes in the “straw ballot”. However, Russia vetoed his election, and this must have been a crushing blow. “Javier Pérez de Cuéllar was selected after Sadraddin Aga Khan (Iran) received one veto from the USSR.”¹⁵³

Just one veto! But for that veto, the world could have had what some esteemed would have been the best Secretary-General it had ever had. Six years later, *Forbes* magazine raised the question, “Why the Soviet veto?” and went on “partly because Prince Sadraddin was suspected – and rightfully so – of having pro-free-enterprise leanings. Even worse from the Soviet point of view, Sadraddin is a man who marches to his own drummer. But that, of course, means he would be no mere mouthpiece of the US and his friends, either.” The article commented adversely on Mr Pérez de Cuéllar’s incumbency: “This amiable but malleable man has held the \$168,000-a-year job for the last six years with a notable lack of distinction. The United Nations has lost further credibility in resolving disputes, and the 159-member world organisation has suffered its worst financial crisis.” It spoke also of the “disproportionate influence of the Soviet Union”.¹⁵⁴

Glasgow’s *The Herald* wrote on 15th May 2003, “In 1981, this capable and clever man (Prince Sadraddin) was branded by the Soviet Union as a stooge of the West. Delegates turned him down in favour of the little known, now long forgotten, Peruvian lawyer Javier Pérez de Cuéllar.

“A decade later, without reference to or understanding of his vast achievement as the youngest and most dynamic head of the United Nations Commission for Refugees in the 1960s and 1970s, certain British and American newspaper editors analysed him and found him wanting. Some said that he was little more than an on-the-make, egotistical and extremely ambitious Muslim upstart, a wealthy aristocratic, a playboy like his brother Prince Aly Khan who (some say) disgraced the famous religious family’s name by marrying and later divorcing Rita Hayworth, the Hollywood sex goddess in the early 1950s.

“So, instead of the vastly experienced and well-educated Prince Sadraddin Aga Khan becoming the most powerful voice at the UN, we got the likeable but ineffectual Boutros Boutros Ghali whose nationality (Egyptian) and ethnic background (Arab/African) seemed to count so much more than discernment

¹⁵³ *The Economist*, 22nd May 2003 (obituary)

¹⁵⁴ *Forbes*, 15th June, 1987

and an ability to spread out historical roadmaps on the Middle East and Africa in an era when America and Britain invaded Iraq for the first time and Nelson Mandela and the ANC kicked down the door of white rule in South Africa.

“At certain points of history, men capable of building bridges between ethnic groups, great religions, and conflicting and powerful interests are simply not wanted, and towards the end of his life Prince Sadrudin was a bitter man who could hardly say the words global village and new world order without feeling sick.”¹⁵⁵

In 1986, when Mr Pérez de Cuéllar’s mandate as Secretary-General was about to run out, the *Observer*, in an article of 28 September, wrote, “Most people assume that the Security Council will decide to put him forward to the General Assembly for another five-year term; it is becoming almost the custom that Secretary-Generals serve twice. But there is a chance – and it is no more than a small, glittering chance – that they might nominate someone else.”

The Observer affirmed that the five years that Mr Pérez de Cuéllar had been the world’s senior civil servant had not been very impressive. “It is not just that he has failed to reform the UN’s own structure as he promised back in 1982. It is that, lacking the energy and passion of some of his predecessors, he has mostly failed to interpose the United Nations between human beings engaged in killing one another. Gravest of all, he has done little beyond mild fact-finding visits to check the worst horrors of his time in office; the fighting in Lebanon and the ghastly, Orwellian war between Iran and Iraq.”¹⁵⁶

That year, Mr Pérez de Cuéllar had looked like standing down, having always maintained that he was too old to hold the post for two terms, and having undergone at the age of sixty-six a serious heart bypass operation, when he again hinted that he would retire in December. But it seemed that the five ‘permanent members’ of the Security Council – the United States, the Soviet Union, China, France and Britain – changed his mind. They wanted continuity, and this, *The Observer* maintained was a mistake. “For there is a man close to the UN who might – in my view – turn out to be the best Secretary-General the United Nations has ever had. He is not only capable of cleaning out and invigorating the whole bloated structure, but qualified in a very special way to deal with the international conflicts which lie ahead or are already burning. This man is Prince Sadrudin Aga Khan. Almost everything

155 *The Herald*, Glasgow, 15th May 2003 (obituary)

156 Michael Davie, *The prince who would save the world from itself*, *The Observer*, 27th January 1985 © Guardian News & Media Ltd 2016

about him is right for the job of Secretary-General. He is independent, almost stateless. He is only fifty-three, his energy and idealism intact. He is enormously experienced, not as a retired diplomat like Waldheim or Pérez de Cuéllar but as a transnational trouble-shooter.”

The article attributed Sadruddin’s “strongest card” to being “a leader of the Ismaili community, a Muslim moderate. The rebirth of Islam is by far the most important event of the late 20th century; the struggle to accommodate it – and contain the blind fury of its fundamentalist wing from the Middle East to Iran – is the supreme task of all statesmen in the world. And here Sadruddin Aga Khan – as Secretary-General of the United Nations – would have a unique chance of taming a creature which has already consumed the blood of millions.”

The article ended by saying that it was “a pity for the world, whose hunger and homeless and vandalism, Sadruddin’s issues, are flooding across all frontiers. I think we need him now.”¹⁵⁷

Sadruddin was interviewed in June 1987 by *Forbes* magazine, and on the subject of the selection of UN Secretary-Generals, he said, “Unfortunately, candidates aren’t necessarily judged or selected on the basis of merit. It is the principle of geographical rotation or balance that decides not only the presidency of the General Assembly, or the members of UN committees, but also frequently the incumbents for senior UN executive posts. This principle is seemingly being applied to the UN Secretary-Generalship, and I see here a very serious risk of regional confrontation. For example, since Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuellar is from Latin America, should the next Third World-er automatically be an African? Since we’ve already had three West Europeans in the top job, does this mean that the next person from the North to become Secretary-General should be an East European? If you argue along the lines of regional distribution, surely the East Europeans have a valid claim.”

In an interview in February 1991, asked if he hoped to become Secretary-General of the United Nations, Prince Sadruddin is quoted as having said, “Those who imagine that I am obsessed by this possibility and that’s why I resigned from the Salam operation¹⁵⁸ are wrong. A number of experts, including former UN people, are trying to work out a more solid, more rational selection process. I don’t know whether governments will make use of it at the end of this year. I rather doubt it, I am realistic. We may once again find we face a struggle for influence:

157 Neal Ascherson, *Why the UN should choose a Prince*, *Observer*, 28th September 1986 © Guardian News & Media Ltd 2016

158 The UN programme of assistance to Afghans (see chapter 17)

groups form and take decisions on criteria that are different from those you or I would imagine; in particular, geographical rotation will have an important role. Africa has valid reasons to be in the forefront at the end of this year."

Neal Ascherson of *The Independent on Sunday*, who called Sadruddin "the most accomplished of super-diplomats", asked him again in May 1991. "The prince allows himself a weary smile. 'That is a post', he says, 'that one neither fights to get nor fights to refuse if it is offered.'" Ascherson writes, "He seems the man for the hour: immensely experienced in UN work at sharp and blunt ends, and – as a leader of the Ismaili community – a representative of Islam in its most moderate and sophisticated form. The trouble is that the prince, still energetic and with his ideals intact, means change – and the five permanent members of the Security Council, who dominate the choice, are traditionally suspicious of change. As one UN veteran said a few years ago: "It displays a dazzling lack of understanding... to think they want a new broom. They prefer old brooms every time."¹⁵⁹

Contrary to expectations, Mr Pérez de Cuéllar stayed on in 1986; and the prince's availability (to be proposed as a candidate) fared no better in 1991, despite articles unreservedly favourable to him, such as the above, and another, from the *International Herald Tribune*: "UN's Hottest Topic: Who's to Succeed Pérez de Cuéllar? The permanent members of the Security Council, who control the final selection of candidates for Secretary-General, are said to be looking for a more charismatic leader to take the helm of an invigorated United Nations. The summit meeting of the seven industrial powers in London last month called for a tougher, activist United Nations, ready to intervene in world trouble spots." But whether they got it under the leadership of Mr Boutros Boutros-Ghali seems very much in doubt.

We may never know why the USSR imposed their veto in December 1981. Twenty years later, an *Economist* article about the prince would say, "He seemed the favourite to become the UN's Secretary-General in 1981, but the Soviet Union vetoed his candidature, claiming he was too pro-western, and vetoed him again in 1991. Around that time stories circulated that the prince was a secret agent for the British, using his job as a cover for intelligence gathering. It was almost certainly nonsense, but the Russians may have believed it. Sadruddin insisted that he had equal sympathies with Eastern and Western peoples. His description of himself as 'a citizen of the world' was a fair one.

159 Neal Ascherson, *The prince and the paupers*, *The Independent on Sunday*, 5th May 1991 © Guardian News & Media Ltd 2016

“He bore this second big disappointment in his life stoically. An even greater disappointment was the realisation of how little had been done for the world’s poor. In a speech not long ago, he said that in eighty countries people’s incomes were lower than they were ten years earlier. The number of people in poverty, earning less than \$1 a day, was stuck at 1.2 billion.”¹⁶⁰

As a matter of fact, there was no Russian veto in 1991 because Sadruddin was not one of the people whose names were put forward by the Security Council, and was not even a candidate in the accepted sense. He simply held himself ready, as he said in October 1991, in reply to a journalist’s question as to whether, if he were elected Secretary-General of the United Nations, he would welcome the strengthening of the powers of the holder. *“Let me just make my position clear: I am not officially a candidate to succeed my current boss, Pérez de Cuéllar. No government has proposed my name. Having said that, if some consensual formula has to be arrived at, I remain at the organisation’s disposal. Since I belong to the place, people are familiar with my pedigree and can put my name forward. I’ll see at that point, since all this takes time, because the procedure for dealing with applications needs to be refined. For the time being, I’ve got my work cut out with Iraq’s request for authorisation to sell oil to be able to purchase people’s basic necessities.”*¹⁶¹

What a difference he could have made, even in a too-short ten-year period as UNSG!

10th September 2015:

The NGO Avaaz is circulating people with a plea to sign a petition that could convince governments to make a more judicious appointment to the post of UN Secretary-General. They write:

The job of UN Secretary-General is handed out secretly by a few politicians behind closed doors. No reporting, no interview, no public information. It’s a morally inexcusable process that insults democracy and shuts all of us out.

70% of us feel the greatest challenges humanity has ever faced are being faced right now, and we desperately need to come together as one people to meet them.

The spectre of world war caused our great-grandparents to create the

¹⁶⁰ *The Economist*, 22nd May 2003 (obituary)

¹⁶¹ Henri-Charles Dahlem, *Coopération, L’invité de Co-opération*, October 1991

United Nations for this purpose but power-jealous nations have kept the UN weak by choosing weak leaders – mild bureaucrats who never challenge them. And they're about to do it again, affecting almost every issue we care about.

With world leaders converging on New York this month, the next leader of the UN is being chosen right now, in the backrooms of power. Let's raise a massive call for an open, professional process to choose the best leader from all 7,000,000,000 of us. Some nations are already calling for change, but powerful countries like the US and France don't believe the public cares about this. Let's show them how wrong they are *with a million voices to save the UN*.

The Guardian also claims that the selection process is opaque, non-democratic and politicised, which reduces the chances of achieving gender equality – at a time that many people think it is time to have a woman in the top job.

Let us hope that Avaaz is effective in convincing governments that we really do care!

15

Predictions

The world is a very small place.

Sadrudin Aga Khan

Man's inhumanity to man

Robert Burns, 1784

Sadrudin made many predictions throughout his adult life, and insofar as he was in a position to do anything about the often dire consequences of what he saw could happen, he acted, for example, as we have seen, in relation to both to the nuclear threat and the environment.

Extremely concerned all his adult life about the disparities between the rich and poor, Sadrudin spoke of the problems on many occasions. One of these was in a radio interview in 1972 in the Palais des Nations, already referred to in this book, when he said:

*"The rich countries should understand that if you don't promote development, either through UNCTAD or the other UN channels, or bilaterally, we are going to go towards a head-on clash, a head-on collision with a major disaster. Because the struggle today is against illiteracy, against disease, against over-population, against a low standard of living, and if that gap between the rich and poor is not narrowed somehow, the rich countries will perhaps suffer even more than the poor countries in due course."*¹⁶²

Some years later, Sadrudin said, *"The human race is on the move, and the years ahead offer the last chance for the rich north to halt this migration. Unless you have some kind of new economic order, people will continue to*

¹⁶² Interview with a Dutch journalist in 1972, Palais des Nations

*move north. All the barbed wire, laws and immigration controls in the world – nothing will prevent that.*¹⁶³

Sadrudin pointed out that the foreign debt of developing nations passed the one million trillion dollar mark in 1988. As a result, as he said, most third world countries were now paying 40% or more of their foreign-export earnings merely to meet interest payments, while local markets were stagnating. *“The poor (countries) are required to run faster and faster to stay at the same pace of development”,* he said. *“This cannot go on. The unilateral steps taken recently to suspend or drastically trim debt-service payments by countries like Peru and Brazil are indicative of the shape of things to come. Short-term measures cannot suffice in global terms: increasing indebtedness means not only prolonging the agony but also aggravating the disease.”*¹⁶⁴

As we have seen, in 1981 Sadrudin made it perfectly clear in his report to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights that inevitably, mass exodus would be the pattern of the future unless development activities on a hitherto unimagined scale were rapidly planned and executed, naturally in close co-operation with the countries concerned. The theme cropped up again and again in his reports and speeches.

Of course Sadrudin was a visionary, and of course it is a pity for the world, as one journalist put it,¹⁶⁵ that he did not come to be in a position – as he had hoped he might one day – to take initiatives of a kind that would transform the international community’s attitude towards the poorer countries and their populations, and ensure that billions (or trillions) of dollars, francs or euros got channelled into programmes of a kind that would transform the economies of those needy countries. If this sounds over-ambitious, we have only to think of the trillions devoted to developing and multiplying nuclear weapons, and of the trillions devoted to space research – to what end, we may well ask.

The major disaster he foresaw all too clearly forty-three years ago, and expressed in words already referred to in the Introduction to this book, is now with us, exacerbated, of course, by war and utter destruction in Syria that have come about as a result of human rights abuses such as Sadrudin identified in his 1981 report to the UN Commission on Human Rights.

163 Neal Ascherson, *The prince and the paupers*, *The Independent* on Sunday, 5 May 1991 © Guardian News & Media Ltd 2016

164 *Forbes* magazine, 14th June, 1987

165 “A pity for the world, whose hunger and homeless and vandalism, Sadrudin’s issues...” Neal Ascherson, *Why the UN should choose a Prince*, *Observer*, 28th September 1986

Week of 22nd-29th August 2015

Frantic people fleeing, fleeing war and loss, repression, terrorism, hunger, seeing in Europe their only hope of survival

For many weeks now, the media have been bringing us film sequences of Italian crews bravely struggling to wrest thousands of stricken people from the sea. These desperate migrants have left Libya in unsafe boats, having often found themselves in the clutches of traffickers who promised to take them to safety – at a price. Now – this very week – Greece is suddenly faced with the same kind of emergency: large numbers of people are rescued and disembarked on the Island of Kos, or on the Greek mainland, who then set off on foot to Macedonia, to Serbia and on towards the north-west, trekking for weeks without belongings but with their children, hoping to survive with only their determination to drive them forward. They – at the rate of 1,500 per day on this route – are desperate to reach Europe. Some, trusting in salvation from terror and loss, drown in the sea off the Greek coast; some are met by barbed wire after weeks travelling on foot over hundreds of kilometres, some are even sprayed with tear gas, so unwelcome are they, but oh how desperate. Today (22nd August 2015) we have seen the police of Macedonia spraying crowds with tear gas to try to repel them. What a shocking reception for desperate people who have managed to survive the war in Syria and the terrible conditions of the very long, harrowing journey from their stricken country.¹⁶⁶

Today we also hear that there have been distress calls from 3,000 people in small boats off Libya. Italian vessels have so far today picked up 1,500 of them and are bringing them in to land. They have rescued tens of thousands of others in recent weeks, and Italy is bearing the cost of having them – and keeping them alive!

Those coming through the Balkan countries are arriving in Hungary at the rate of 4,500 per day. They sleep at the side of the roads or beside the railways on which they have walked all day, like all the previous days. These survivors are hungry and exhausted. Many are traumatised, and there is little help for them. They try to keep going, and there is often temporary help for them, but there is not enough room in areas set up rapidly as makeshift camps in Austria. There are not enough blankets, there is not enough toilet paper even.

Stafan de Mistura, one of the most distinguished and most experienced

166 With the use of tear gas and razor wire, EU countries are skirting international refugee law. Quoted in *The Guardian*, 30th July 2015 © Guardian News & Media Ltd 2016

diplomats of our time, said, “I understood, at ten-years-old, the strongest pain for a political refugee is lack of dignity.”¹⁶⁷ In July 2014, Mr de Mistura became the UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy to Syria. It is his twentieth overseas mission in forty-two years of humanitarian work.

27th August: An absolute scandal, in fact sacrilege: bodies are found in a truck left on the side of a road in Austria. People had been hermetically sealed in, and left to perish in the most ghastly circumstances. We can imagine the traumatising experience that police officers had when the doors of these trucks were opened and they found bodies in such an advanced state of decomposition that so far, they could not even count them. Finally, a total of seventy-one tragic victims of men’s wickedness is arrived at. The truck had been there for about ten days, in the unusually tropical heat of this month of August.

And this same day, two boats carrying about 500 migrants sink after leaving Zuwara in Libya.

There is now a mass exodus from Syria, where people have given up all hope of being able to survive, because of the particularly violent four-and-a-half year civil war but also because of terrorists, those maniacs of the so-called Islamic State who kill, rape and terrorise. There are in fact 4,000,000 Syrians outside their country now, the vast majority for the time being in temporary camps in Turkey and Jordan. People are fleeing a range of countries at a rate seen only after the Second World War. This week’s Swiss magazine *Hebdo*¹⁶⁸ reports that the number of people forced to flee *per day* is put at 42,500. It seems unbelievable, but so far this year, 700,000 people have already sought asylum in the countries of the European Union. A graph shows us that the largest numbers are fleeing Syria, then Afghanistan, followed by Somalia, Sudan, Southern Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burma, Central African Republic, Iraq, Eritrea, Colombia, Pakistan, Vietnam – and so on.

All these people are desperate to restart their lives in Europe – and naturally, given their numbers, they are causing alarm across Europe now.

Carl Jung, when considering leaving Austria in 1937, quoted Lightroller, second officer on the *Titanic*, who when asked why he had abandoned ship replied, “I never left the ship, she left me.” One could almost say of the Syrians that their country has left them.

167 Read on Stefan de Mistura’s website

168 Hebdo, semaine du 13 août 2015

28th August: the BBC gives us more facts and figures reproduced on its internet page,¹⁶⁹ where we read:

“Migrant tragedy: Some 2,500 migrants have drowned in the Mediterranean this year as overcrowded boats head for the coasts of Greece and Italy, the UN says. The flow of desperate migrants from the Middle East and Africa hoping to reach Europe is already much higher than in the same period in 2014. Recent trends show that thousands of people are attempting a perilous route through the Western Balkans with the ultimate destination of Germany and other northern EU countries.”

More than 300,000 migrants have risked their lives trying to cross the Mediterranean to Europe so far this year, according to the UN. This compares with 219,000 for the whole of 2014. Shipwreck off Italy’s Lampedusa island on 19 April took an estimated 800 lives.

Nearly 200,000 people have landed in Greece since January this year, while another 110,000 made it to Italy.

Most of those heading for Greece take the relatively short voyage from the Turkish mainland to the islands of Kos, Khíos, Lesbos (or Lesbos) and Samos – often in flimsy rubber dinghies or small wooden boats.

Survivors often report violence and abuse by people traffickers. Many migrants pay thousands of dollars each to the traffickers, and robbery of migrants is also common.

Frantic governments, making their meetings a top priority to try to cope with this emergency – “a challenge to our European values”

For Europe certainly does not want to have to face a large influx of needy people – it has its own problems of unemployment. What if there are tens of thousands? Hundreds of thousands? Political parties are holding meetings, as usual. What is on their agenda? Migrants? Well, no, for the time being, it’s mainly how to win the next Election. But this is about to change, even though the media, while covering the shameful facts of homeless people, desperate people, they are also covering world athletics for most of each day this particular week.

However, Europe is about to be shaken out of its complacency. Germany announces this same week (29th August) that it is expecting

169 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24583286>

800,000 refugees to arrive this year. Thousands of people are trying to travel to Germany via Greece and the Western Balkans, crossing into Macedonia, intending to struggle on (despite the tear gas) into Serbia, then Hungary, Austria. In July alone 34,000 people were detected trying to cross from Serbia into Hungary, massing in Budapest main rail station in their thousands, trying to board trains to get to Western Europe. Germany's Chancellor, Angela Merkel, protests at measures aimed at impeding the onward march of these people fleeing terror, and says that Europe must live up to its traditions, based on Christian teachings. But she says that the influx will change Germany for ever – which is what many Germans are realising, not without dismay.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr António Guterres, is received on the Swiss television news desk on 26th August. Asked for his reactions, he affirms that the great majority of the “migrants” are refugees, fleeing Syria, leaving a devastated country and needing the protection of European countries. “They don't need barbed wire,” he said, “They need an answer.” He says that 290,000 people had arrived in Europe by sea, 45,000 have reached Austria via the Balkans. Many are traumatised. Giving the example of Lebanon, that has a very high percentage of refugees on its soil, he says that Europe needs to make the necessary effort – as it had done in 1956 for the Hungarians, and in 1968 for the Czechs. Since in Europe there are 508,000,000 people, he says, “if we divide up the refugees who are seeking asylum between the countries, with Germany and Sweden taking large numbers, solutions can be found. In any case, because of the Convention European countries signed in 1951, Europe has a legal obligation to accept refugees, and those fleeing war in Syria are certainly refugees. As for xenophobia, it simply has to be combated.”

The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr Peter Maurer, is welcomed to the Swiss TV news desk the following evening, 27th August. The nauseating news of the people left to die inside a locked lorry is discussed. Everyone finds this news overwhelming, not least Mme Merkel, who has asserted that solutions simply must be found for the refugees. The bodies of the people left to die from the stifling lack of air and the intense heat inside that lorry could not be counted because of the state of their decomposition... an absolutely horrifying story. Of course the driver had long since fled. Mr Maurer speaks of tragic events in Africa and

in the Middle East, of people dying of thirst in the Sahara, or drowning in the sea. He says that we cannot work on the basis of categories of people, we have to focus on their vulnerability. The fact that people cross to Europe in impossible conditions leads to the urgent need to help them. He says that in Latin America, the Red Cross has started with simple centres affording desperate people basic help all along the route. Mr Maurer speaks of the Red Cross helper overwhelmed by the tears of relief of a family helped in this way.

“We are seeing conflicts in Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Africa”, says the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. “If no political solutions are found, the great flux will go on, with ever greater potential.” He speaks well of Sweden’s generosity, regrets that in the United Kingdom the atmosphere vis-à-vis refugees has deteriorated. One of the main causes of flight he says is currently IS (Islamic State) terrorism. People who leave after losing everything, including family members, are distraught and deserving of the most compassionate assistance to start their lives again.

All this in the same week (22nd–29th August 2015)! I pick up our local paper, “*La Gruyère*” of Thursday 20th August, and read that an elderly and very distinguished archaeologist, Mr Khaled al-Asaad, President of the Arab World Institute and former Minister of Culture, has been murdered by “Islamic State” (IS) –has in fact been decapitated in public. It is unbearable. He was eighty-two and directed the archaeological site of Palmyra, a site of unique universal value listed by UNESCO, that these barbarians have since razed to the ground. The elderly man had refused to leave the ancient city when it fell into IS hands, and was captured and held by them for a month until they executed him, claiming he represented the Syrian authorities and had given lectures to infidels abroad. Palmyra – as perhaps everyone now knows – was an ancient Semitic city in present-day Homs Governorate, Syria.¹⁷⁰

170 Archaeological finds date back to the Neolithic age, and it was first documented in the early second millennium BC as a caravan stop for travellers crossing the Syrian desert. From the first to the second century, the art and architecture of Palmyra, standing at the crossroads of several civilisations, married Graeco-Roman techniques with local traditions and Persian influences. Its destruction and the assassination of its curator are a grievous loss to the world, particularly for all Syrians whose whole world has crumbled. *The Times*, 10th September 2015

What can Europe do?

In the face of quite frightening numbers of refugees – of a total that UNHCR has put at 50,000,000 this year, there are 4,250,000 from Syria at present, 2,000,000 from Afghanistan and 1,000,000 from Somalia, to mention only three countries of origin – European governments and their populations are wondering what can be done. From the first days of September, there have been delightful scenes of German crowds welcoming Syrian refugees at Munich rail station with innumerable placards of welcome and even of love! Angela Merkel has held out the prospect that Germany can accept a very large number of them, and this assurance, given Germany's dwindling birth rate, is pleasing to German industry that it would seem rather desperately needs manpower. Sweden is extraordinarily generous, adhering to its traditions, shared with other Nordic countries, of realism and openness. But there are countries not at all willing to take the number attributable to them. Initially, Britain claimed that it would only provide capital sums to help finance relief measures, but that it would not accept a quota imposed from Brussels. Then in the face of popular reactions to the very obvious distress of the Syrian refugees trying to make their way to a safe haven, any safe haven, the Prime Minister announced that the UK would after all take "several thousand" of them.

Angela Merkel is making "refugee-sharing" a test of European Union credentials. She urged fellow leaders to agree to a proportional distribution of migrants "with no limits". Countries of Eastern Europe have been reported as reluctant to take the "migrants". Slovenia said as early as 26th August that it would take Syrians, but they would have to be Christians. The Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico was quoted as saying "if you want to integrate people, their religion and culture must be similar to ours."¹⁷¹ This country of 5,400,000 inhabitants is ready to admit 200 Christian Syrians. In the face of the reluctance of other countries of Eastern Europe, Mr Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, in his first "state of the union" speech on 9th September setting out proposals for a comprehensive response to the Syrian refugee crisis, reminded those countries that their own refugees were welcomed in the West when they were fleeing Stalin during the Cold War years. The Juncker plan for Europe to take 160,000 refugees is, according to *The Times*, "a plan to take an unlimited number of people for an unlimited time."¹⁷²

171 *The Times*, 10th September 2015

172 *Idem*

European leaders are contemplating radical action in regard to Syria. France has already sent aircraft to study the situation on the ground. The British Prime Minister is speaking of sending aircraft to the area too. People are beginning to say that whereas IS is being attacked in Iraq, it is getting away with little opposition in Syria and it would be time to tackle them now. But there is reticence over Russia's friendship with President Bashar al-Assad, and today's *Times* speaks of an American warning that satellite pictures show Russian military cargo planes arriving at a Syrian airfield.¹⁷³

European countries are beginning to realise that more could and should have been done to prevent the creation of situations leading to this crisis. We hear the Swiss Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard saying on the TV news that a sum of one hundred billion dollars per year will be needed for substantial development aid such as might stem the flow of large numbers of migrants in the future. This chimes with ideas that Prince Sadruddin aired three and a half decades ago in a recorded conversation shortly to be reflected in this chapter. But where could such sums come from? Heavier taxation, perhaps? What increases in taxation can the population tolerate?

It must seem frustrating to leaders of European countries who are beginning to contemplate the possibility of financing development on a hitherto unimagined scale to be aware that in this world mostly governed by money, very large sums are in relatively few pockets. There are of course some very rich people in many countries of Europe. In the issue of *Hebdo* magazine referred to above, we learn for instance that the Czech Republic is gradually falling under the control of a handful of billionaires, some of whom happen to have close links with Switzerland. In their country they are using their fortunes to buy up the press and confirm their power (*asseoir leur pouvoir*). A certain Andréj Babis, who studied in Geneva, is reported as possessing 2.5 billion dollars. He owns the Agrofert group and the press group MAFRA while being Minister of Finance. Zdenek Bakala (1 billion dollars) owns coal mines and media, and lives in Nyon. Radovan Vitek (1.8 billion dollars) is a major investor in Crans-Montana. And so on. And the issue further informs us that in China, the middle class now numbers 200 million people who manage to save roughly half their earnings (albeit probably needing those for health care, schooling of their children and their retirement), while obviously the upper strata often send their children to universities overseas and can afford to invest large sums outside their country's borders.

173 *Idem*

Of course, some billionaires have set a splendid example to others with equivalent wealth, and this has been the case since the Rockefellers and Fords of this world set up foundations to help the less fortunate realise their aims. But few might wish to entertain thoughts of funding massive development projects – certainly a challenge, though the alternative seems apparent from what is happening now, day after day: uprooting, distress, danger, sometimes death.

Switch to late October 2015:

For weeks, the European Union has been holding meeting after meeting in the search for solutions. The problem is of course unprecedented. To date, 700,000 migrants are reported to have reached Europe, while several thousand more are living – momentarily at least – in Greece and the Balkans, with millions in Turkey and Jordan. The movement continues, but adding to the distress of the migrants is barbed wire and heavy police patrols, and nowhere to go, no one to advise them and give them food and shelter, it seems. The “Union” part of the EU seems to be under threat, with Eastern European countries belonging to the EU mostly determined to avoid taking in migrants permanently, and with each of the other countries demonstrating a certain level of reticence over admitting the numbers that it seems inevitable that they *should* accept. In Germany, Angela Merkel is losing popularity and there are well-attended street demonstrations against her open-door policy.

Meanwhile, Russia – as everyone knows, a friend of the Syrian dictator – has joined the coalition of Western nations in seeking ways to get rid of the terrorists with military action (though not using the same definition of the word as others) and, as everyone dares hope, end the war. But there is plenty of uncertainty on the world stage.

11th & 12th November 2015: Malta Summit

European Union and African leaders are meeting at present in Valletta to discuss measures “to stem the flow of people into Europe”. The meeting was planned earlier in the year, after about 800 people died when one of the migrant boats sank after leaving the shores of Libya. According to the United Nations, nearly 800,000 migrants have arrived in Europe by sea so

far in 2015, while some 3,440 have died or gone missing making the journey. Some 150,000 people from African countries such as Eritrea, Nigeria and Somalia have made the dangerous journey across the Mediterranean from Africa so far this year, arriving mainly in Italy and Malta. But this figure has been dwarfed by the arrival of some 650,000 people – mostly Syrians – via Turkey and Greece.

These dreadful statistics hardly bear thinking about.

It was announced this evening on world news that the EU wishes to offer 1.9 billion dollars to African countries – not realising, apparently, and having to have it explained to them by African leaders, that it takes years to provide the kind of circumstances liable to encourage people to stay. Countries are reported to be ready to pay up to \$3.6 billion to put a brake on movement.

Obviously, the migrant crisis has evolved so rapidly this year that European leaders have been struggling to keep up and formulate any coherent policies. Many are closing borders, with or without the help of razor wire such as Slovenia is using currently to close its border with Croatia. Meanwhile, the migrants keep coming, by sea – all too many not making it to a shore – or overland.

Throughout October, November and into December 2015 – the migrant crisis almost defies belief

BBC's Ian Pannell reported on 21st October that the migrant crisis was 'overwhelming' the Greek island of Lesbos, with Lesbos alone receiving 7,000 new arrivals a day, and the UN warning that the total for October could exceed 200,000. As can well be imagined, this avalanche of asylum-seekers was proving to be a huge challenge for the Greek authorities and the UN, with the system for registering and relocating the migrants facing collapse. Mr Pannell said that despite the approach of winter, the flow of refugees and other migrants to Europe was showing no sign of slowing.

The conditions in tented camps have been growing exceedingly harsh, as winter weather threatens. The cold is such that twenty-nine people are reported to have died from hypothermia while on board a ship in the Mediterranean, following their rescue, for they could not be supplied with blankets before the ship docked. "Millions of Syrian refugees have been living in camps in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey since the beginning of the Syrian civil war in 2011.

About 4.5 million spent last year's coldest months in tents, huts and makeshift settlements not built to withstand the freezing temperatures..."¹⁷⁴

UNHCR reports on the latest refugee figures: 4,289,792 people had been registered as of 17th November 2015: 2.1 million people are in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon and 1.9 million in Turkey. Obviously, the figure rises to some five million with those who have already arrived in Europe.¹⁷⁵

As winter takes over, the EU remains divided over how to tackle the refugee crisis, beginning to close frontiers until such time as those already admitted – over one million – have been more or less integrated. The calamitous attacks of IS on a Russian tourist airliner, on the French capital, and on a bus in Tunis – all within a few days – have sown more fear into the whole tragic picture. At least the December COP21 Conference in Paris has finally drilled it into the minds of very many VIPs that countless billions of dollars will be required in the future to counteract drought and other daunting effects of climate change throughout the world, not least in Africa.

* * *

To recapitulate one or two aspects relating to the above: Sadruddin, while he could hardly have foreseen the flight of millions from Syria from 2011 onwards, though he was well aware of the dangers that dictatorships could breed and of the growing threat to the world of terrorism, made it abundantly clear in his 1981 report that unless something was done very soon to build up the infrastructures in poor countries, there would be mass movements from south to north. The risk of mass exodus was again made quite clear in the reports of the Independent Commission at the end of the 1980s. All the members of the General Assembly of the United Nations received those reports. However, nothing very substantial was done to relieve the poverty and distress in so many of the poorer countries, including some in Africa, where terrorism is now added to the considerable woes that they have been facing all these years.

Western countries, with the noble exception of Scandinavia, have not managed to allocate the one percent of their gross national product (GNP) to overseas aid that back in the 1960s, it had been agreed would be a minimum required to offset problems in the "Third World". The first UN Development Decade, launched by the General Assembly in December 1961, had called on

174 *The Times*, 10th September 2015

175 Data from UNHCR, on <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional/php>, 17th November 2015

all member states “to intensify their efforts to mobilize support for measures required to accelerate progress toward self-sustaining economic growth and social advancement in the developing countries”.

It has seemed that while space research is deemed worthy of programs involving incalculable sums, the lot of human beings in countries many of which were impoverished by certain European and Arab countries by the nefarious slave trade is of relatively little interest. The migrant flow is however not likely to stop, and as Sadruddin foresaw, *the rich countries will perhaps suffer even more than the poor countries in due course*. The Canadian Force Commander in Rwanda in 1993/94, at the end of his harrowing mission, came to the conclusion that “human beings who have no rights, no security, no future, no hope and no means to survive are a desperate group who will do desperate things. The lack of hope in the future is the root cause of rage. If we cannot provide hope for the untold masses of the world, then the future will be nothing but a repeat of Rwanda, Sierra Leone, the Congo and September 11.”¹⁷⁶

Ideas of Prince Sadruddin on the possible creation of an action group¹⁷⁷

On 27th and 28th June 1981, Sadruddin held discussions with a Mr Godfrey Jensen on forced migration, giving Mr Jensen a summary of the measures in relation to uprooted people that the international community had carried out in the three and a half decades since the end of the Second World War, particularly of course the creation of UNHCR. He sketched measures that it would be well to contemplate setting up, in order to reduce the risks of mass exodus in the future: “an élite ‘think-tank’ combined with an exercise in preventive diplomacy”, as he put it in the course of the two discussions.

J: “Would it be possible for you to specify the kind of counteractions, pre-emptive action, that the group you have suggested would be likely to take wherever a refugee situation arises that would be not so much from acts of war but arising from internal upheaval and unrest? “

“I think that first of all you would have to start very early on and it means (this may sound rather basic, rather naïve), that you have to have people who really represent an élite, who can analyse a situation well in advance and plan

176 Lt. Gen. Roméo Dallaire *Shake hands with the devil, the Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*

177 Cassette recordings of the two conversations in the possession of the author

a contingency action as necessary; people who have time to think, who read the Economist and many other papers, and inform themselves about the realities of a situation in a country which is often seen from far away and misunderstood with first world standards as opposed to third world standards. What is the ethnic composition? What are the cultural and social realities of that country? Where might a clash arise? Where would a spark be that could ignite a major crisis? – you know, get to understand the complexities of the social fibre, the national fibre of a country like Laos, for instance. You would practically have to be a Laotian to understand it, and sometimes even Laotians do not understand it! To a certain extent it could also be said of a country like Poland. You really have to understand, you have to come to grips with the realities, not just react as a fait accompli.

“That’s no.1, so the action would have to have some really good people, the cream of the crop and then it would have to respect of course the sovereignty of the country, it should not be seen as something that would intervene in domestic affairs unless there was a measure of response and willingness on the other side. And here I’m optimistic, and I’ll tell you why. Because really the only area where the UN has been working and has even been invited to deal with domestic questions, where governments are usually so tough, is on humanitarian matters, and refugees. Governments are sometimes very happy to let the UN set up camps, find solutions to settle refugees in their own country. They allow the UN to have an operational role, they allow in delegates, they welcome them, they ask for them, they ask for international assistance to be whitewashed through the multilateral agencies. And it’s remarkable really, there are many examples of this. And if the UN is to promote peace in a situation like this, it needs strengthening in this area, it has to become stronger, more effective, more efficient.”

J: “Typically, what contingency action?”

“I think the combination of these two, analysing a situation well in advance, and the strengthening of the UN’s peacekeeping and peace-building role which countries welcome, it’s not seen as an infringement on domestic affairs, and it could actually prevent people from leaving, it could give them some reason to stay, some reason to believe that their condition could improve, that their lives would not be disrupted.”

J: “Of course this could not go against a foreign invasion.”

“No, not against outright foreign invasion – but internal disruption, a very healing, very soothing UN presence. Doing what the UN is doing in a host country, but doing it inside before it’s too late. Providing food, better equipment,

better sanitation, better hygiene, dispensaries, primary schools for certain areas of a country that are particularly destitute and particularly in need. The problems in the Horn of Africa are basically linked to basic poverty, backwardness, squalor."

The prince had these thoughts and the adoption by the UN General Assembly of a resolution to create "a new international humanitarian order" has no doubt a bearing on his setting up in 1983, jointly with Crown Prince Hassan Bin Talal, the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues.

16

Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues, 1983

He believed it was the duty of elites to improve the lot of humanity

The Guardian, 15th May 2003

“A new international humanitarian order”

At the beginning of the 1980s, the delegation of Jordan to the United Nations proposed to the UN General Assembly the establishment of “a new international humanitarian order”. The Crown Prince of Jordan, H.H. Hassan bin Talal, was a friend of Prince Sadruddin’s and we can suspect that in one way or another, both of them were instigators of this initiative. The United Nations General Assembly, after due discussion, adopted an initial resolution (number 36/136 of 14 December 1981) on “A New International Humanitarian Order”, and throughout the decade and on into the 1990s, the UN General Assembly focused on the matter.

For some time, there had been discussions at the international level on a wide range of humanitarian issues, in particular the problem of internally displaced people for whom there was no intergovernmental organisation to take care. In 1977, Sadruddin had drawn the attention of government members of his Executive Committee to the fact that internally displaced people were often in dire need, but there was no multilateral “machinery” to come to their aid. (As we have seen in the case of Biafra, back in the 1960s the mandate of the High Commissioner did not extend to helping people displaced within their country’s borders.) In his address to his Executive Committee several years later, Sadruddin explained that in certain instances (as in the case of Indochinese displaced by the war), he had been authorised

– even requested – by the UN General Assembly to assist under the guise of mounting “Special Programmes”, whereas his assistance to refugees came under General Programmes, and he continued:

“This distinction leads me to another fundamental question, i.e. the distinction between a refugee and a displaced person. Judging from the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, a displaced person would appear to be one who, while not fulfilling strictu sensu the refugee eligibility criteria, is in a situation analogous to that of a refugee. Additionally, it is felt by some that persons who do not cross an internationally-recognized border should be treated as displaced persons. Here again, there is need for clarification. A beginning could be made in the Executive Committee if the member Governments so desire.

“It seems to me that the question of definitions and criteria is as fundamental as the terms of reference of the Executive Committee to which I referred earlier. While it will clearly be up to the Economic and Social Council or the General Assembly to define or modify them further, I see advantage in a constructive exchange of views within this Committee.”¹⁷⁸

Emanating from the ideas contained in the Jordanian proposal and Prince Sadruddin’s own musings on issues of the day that he saw needed to be explored, and if possible acted upon, was his convocation, jointly with the Crown Prince of Jordan, of a consultative commission consisting of particularly distinguished people from all over the world. As a result, many people in the international sphere received this elegant invitation:

178 Sadruddin went on to say: “Mr Chairman, distinguished delegates, when faced with emergency situations requiring urgent humanitarian assistance, my main concern was not the terminology to be used for those operations or whether the funds needed for them should appear under column X, Y or Z of a financial chart. I was more concerned with the arrangements for helping the victims to survive, to do everything to bring them succour speedily and efficiently and to promote durable solutions to their problems. This does not mean, however, that institutional or legal arrangements relating to these operations are any less important than the operation itself. It simply means that because of the very nature of these humanitarian operations, action often preceded legislative texts. The unanimous support given by the pertinent organs including, in particular, the General Assembly, bears testimony to the fact that the international community approved of this course of action.” HC’S opening statement to the Executive Committee, 4th October 1977.

*Independent Commission
on
International Humanitarian Issues*

*Official
Inaugural Ceremony
Geneva, 5 July 1983
On the occasion of the establishment of the
Independent Commission*

*on
International Humanitarian Issues*

*You are cordially invited to the
Official Inaugural Ceremony
to be held at the Council Chamber,
Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Tuesday 5 July 1983 at 5.30 p.m.*

*The ceremony will be followed
by a Reception at 6.30 p.m.*

Door 4, Palais des Nations (kindly present this invitation card at the entrance)

*Programme
Introductory remarks by Sadruddin Aga Khan,
Convenor of the Commission*

*Address by Javier Perez de Cuellar,
Secretary-General of the United Nations*

*Address on behalf of the Commission: by Hassan bin Talal,
Crown Prince of Jordan*

*Address on behalf of the Host Government
by Raymond Probst, Secretary of State,
Federal Department of External Affairs*

*Reception
R.S.V.P.*

Membership of the Independent Commission:

Naturally, the two princes gave a great deal of thought as to whom to invite to participate in this high-level Commission. I actually had the honour of being included one day in these deliberations, and suggested the name of Simone Veil, to represent France.

These were the members of the Independent Commission :

- Susanna Agnelli, Contessa Rattazzi (Italy), *Cavaliere di Gran Croce OMRI (24 April 1922 – 15 May 2009) politician, businesswoman and writer. She was the first woman to be appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs in Italy, and she served for several years as a European Parliament MEP.*
- Talal Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud (Saudi Arabia), *formerly also called The Red Prince, is a senior member of the Saudi royal family. He is notable for his liberal stance, encouraging for a national Constitution and the full rule of law and equality before the law.*
- Paulo Evaristo Arns, OFM, Vice-Chairman (Brazil), Cardinal and Archbishop Emeritus of São Paulo.
- Mohammed Bedjaoui (Algeria), diplomat and jurist. *He has served as Algeria's ambassador to France and the United Nations. He has also served as a judge on the International Court of Justice and as President of Algeria's highest judicial authority, the Constitutional Council.*
- Henrik Beer, Treasurer (Sweden), *former Secretary-General of the League of Red Cross and Red Cross Societies.*
- Luis Echeverria Alvarez (Mexico), *former President of Mexico.*
- Pierre Graber (Switzerland), *former member of the Swiss Federal Council.*
- Ivan Head (Canada), *lawyer, academic and civil servant. He was an influential foreign policy adviser of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.*

- M.Hidayatullah OBE (India), *Vice-President of India and a former Chief Justice.*
- Aziza Hussein (Egypt), *the first Egyptian female member of a UN delegation to address the General Assembly, a visionary for women's rights. She helped draft the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1979.*
- Manfred Lachs (Poland), *diplomat and jurist who greatly influenced the development of international law after the Second World War.*
- Robert McNamara (USA), *former Secretary of Defence, serving from 1961 to 1968 under Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson.*
- Lazar Mojsov (Yugoslavia), *former deputy foreign minister.*
- Mohamed Mzali, Vice-Chairman (Tunisia), *Prime Minister of Tunisia.*
- Sadako Ogata, Vice-Chairman (Japan), *dean of the Faculty of Foreign Studies at Sophia University in Tokyo.*
- David Owen (United Kingdom), *British politician and former Foreign Secretary.*
- Willibald P. Pahr, Vice-Chairman (Austria), *politician and diplomat, former Minister of Foreign Affairs.*
- Shridath S. Ramphal GCMG AC ONZ OE OM OCC QC (Guyana), *serving as the second Commonwealth Secretary-General from 1975 to 1990 and a former Foreign Minister of Guyana and Assistant Attorney General of the West Indies Federation.*
- Ru Xin (China).
- Salim A. Salim (Tanzania), *Minister for Foreign Affairs.*
- Léopold Sédar Senghor (Senegal), *former President.*

- Soedjatmoko (Indonesia), *rector of the United Nations University in Tokyo.*
- Desmond Tutu (South Africa), *Anglican bishop and social rights activist.*
- Simone Veil (France), *former Minister of Health under Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, President of the European Parliament and member of the Constitutional Council of France.*
- Gough Whitlam (Australia), *former Prime Minister.*
- Zia Rizvi (Pakistan), *Sadrudin's special assistant from his years as UN High Commissioner for Refugees, was appointed Secretary General and ex-officio member.*

Working groups were set up to launch and supervise work over three years on a wide range of topics, and to draft the individual reports. For example, the members of the Commission who formed the Working Group on Refugees and Displaced people and helped in the preparation of the Report were Sadrudin himself, Hidayatullah, Lazar Mojsov, Sadako Ogata, David Owen and Gough Whitlam. The Drafting Committee consisted of Zia Rizvi (Co-ordinator) and three people whom Sadrudin knew were expert in the refugee field, Jeffery Crisp (Editor), Nicholas van Hear (Consultant) and Martin Barber (Adviser). Sadrudin was in fact one of the six members of most of the ICIHI Working Groups, including that on Street Children, with Susanna Agnelli (Convenor), Paulo Evaristo Arns, Henrik Beer, Manfred Lachs and Lazar Mojsov. Their report was the first comprehensive survey of unprotected children on city streets. He was a member of the working groups on disasters and on desertification, with Mohammed Benjaoui, Henrik Beer, Manfred Lachs, Sadako Ogata and David Owen, and that on Famine, with Mohammed Benjaoui, Henrik Beer, Manfred Lachs, Sadako Ogata and David Owen. The report on famine was "a devastating, non-partisan analysis of the elements that have brought starvation to Africa, and how they can be changed," as the editor, Mark Malloch-Brown, wrote.

The Report of the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues, entitled "*Winning the Human Race?*" went, of course,

to the States Members of the UN General Assembly. Published *inter alia* by Zed Books in 1998, it runs to 220 pages. Fifteen of these are the General Conclusions and Recommendations, and a page and a half covers the names of all those who had made contributions to expenses (half a page), and whose expert advice and valuable assistance are acknowledged (over a whole page).

In addition to the Commission's Report to the United Nations, ICIHI reports were widely published in the form of paperbacks of which there is a long list, including the following:

REFUGEES Dynamics of Displacement, Zed Books Ltd., London and New Jersey, 1986. This book covers both refugees and displaced persons. (Foreword by the Co-Chairmen).

FAMINE: A man-Made Disaster? Pan Books, London/Sydney, 1985 (Foreword by the Co-Chairmen).

STREET CHILDREN: A Growing Urban Tragedy, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1986 (Prologue by Susanna Agnelli, Introduction by the Co-Chairmen).

THE ENCROACHING DESERT: The Consequences of Human Failure, Zed Books, London/New Jersey, 1986 and College Press, Harare, 1986.

THE VANISHING FOREST: The Human Consequences of Deforestation, Zed Books, London/New Jersey, 1986 and College Press, Harare, 1986. (Foreword by Sadruddin Aga Khan).

DISAPPEARED: Technique of Terror, Zed Books, London/New Jersey, 1986.

MODERN WARS: The Humanitarian Challenge, Zed Books, London/New Jersey, 1986.

Other subjects treated were statelessness, autochthonous people, mass expulsions, urban migration and new man-made disasters. All the Commission's publications were translated and issued in all the official UN languages, and several in other languages too.

In the foreword to the book *Refugees: Dynamics of Displacement*, the Co-Chairmen wrote:

“Beyond the dramatic images on television screens and the sensational reports in the newspapers, a life of long listless days and dark nights goes on for millions of our fellow human beings. It is sustained by a mixture of fear and hope – and a deep nostalgic feeling for “home”. Of course, many receive the understanding, assistance and protection of the international community. But many more do not.

“This report does not deal only with refugees who leave their homeland to seek sanctuary elsewhere owing to persecution or a well-founded fear of it. It also covers several other categories of displaced persons whose plight is as real but who are by-passed by international arrangements and public debate. Who are they? Why do they become homeless? What can be done for them?”

The prince addressed a number of bodies on the concerns and recommendations of the Independent Commission. In February 1984 for example he was in London to address the House of Commons, in September 1987 he made a speech at the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and in February 1988, he addressed the UN Commission on Human Rights. On 24 September 1987, a press conference was held at the United Nations, New York, on the work of the Independent Commission. The co-Chairmen, Crown Prince Hassan ibn Talal and Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, were accompanied by Therese Paquet-Sevigny, Under-Secretary-General for Public Information. Prince Hassan said that the need now was not for new ideas but for ways to implement existing recommendations.

As Martin Barber, at that time the Chairman of the British Refugee Council and a close observer of international affairs, wrote later, “My own feeling has long been that the Commissions’ work was considerably more influential than people gave it credit for at the time, or indeed since. It captured the key new ideas of its time on a range of issues and presented them to both general and specialist audiences.”¹⁷⁹

Three years later, UNHCR in its publication *“The State of the World’s Refugees – a humanitarian agenda”*¹⁸⁰ wrote under the title National and International Initiatives:

“In 1986, the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian

179 Martin Barber, *Blinded by Humanity: Inside the UN’s humanitarian operations*

180 www.unhcr.org/3eb78a534.pdf) *The State of the World’s Refugees – a humanitarian agenda*

Issues published one of the first analyses of the problem of internal displacement. The international community's response to the plight of displaced people has been unsystematic," it observed. "New initiatives to assist the internally displaced are urgently needed." Since those words were written, the issue of internal displacement has assumed a far higher international profile, a trend that has been manifested in a number of ways.

"During the past decade, the number of international conferences, studies and reports on the issue of internal displacement has increased very significantly, as has the number of organisations with an analytical or advocacy role in relation to this subject. In addition to UNHCR, these include the Brookings Institution, the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, the Refugee Policy Group and the US Committee for Refugees, as well as international agencies such as the International Organisation for Migration, the UN Development Programme and UNICEF. Most recently, the Norwegian Refugee Council has announced its intention to publish a 'global IDP survey' on an annual basis, an initiative which should help to provide a more systematic set of data on this issue."

Indeed, the UN General Assembly Resolution 47/106 of 16 December 1992 gives us an idea of the importance that the international community gave to these activities. In its Resolution 42/120 of 7th December 1987, under the heading "New international humanitarian order" it had already applauded the work of the Independent Commission, calling on "Governments, as well as inter-governmental organisations, including those functioning at the regional level" to take good note of the Report, to bear in mind the recommendations and suggestions contained therein and "to make available to the Secretary-General information and expertise on humanitarian issues of concern to them, in order to identify opportunities for future action and to strengthen international co-operation in the humanitarian field." Five years later, its resolution 47/106 said:

The General Assembly

Recalling its resolutions 36/136 of 14 December 1981, 37/201 of 18 December 1982, 38/125 of 16 December 1983, 40/126 of 13 December 1985, 42/120 of 7 December 1987, 43/129 of 8 December 1988 and 45/101 of 14 December 1990 relating to the promotion of a new international humanitarian order,

Recalling also its resolutions 42/121 of 7 December 1987, 43/130 of 8 December 1988 and 45/102 of 14 December 1990 relating to the promotion of international cooperation in the humanitarian field,

Taking note of the reports of the Secretary-General and the comments made by various Governments, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations,

Noting the actions being taken by the specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations system with regard to humanitarian issues, examined by the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues, that fall within their respective mandates,

Convinced that solving humanitarian problems requires international cooperation and harmonisation of actions taken by Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations as well as individuals,

Recognising with concern the continuing need further to strengthen international responses to growing humanitarian challenges, and to undertake creative humanitarian action at the international, regional and national levels to alleviate human suffering and to promote durable solutions to humanitarian problems,

Recognising further the need for active follow-up to the recommendations and suggestions made by the Independent Commission and the role being played in this regard by the Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues, set up for the purpose,

1. Expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his continuing active support to the efforts to promote a new international humanitarian order;
2. Urges Governments as well as governmental and non-governmental organisations that have not yet done so to provide their comments and expertise to the Secretary-General regarding the humanitarian order and the report of the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues;
3. Invites Governments to make available to the Secretary-General, on a

voluntary basis, information and expertise on humanitarian issues of concern to them in order to identify opportunities for future action;

4. Calls upon Governments, the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations further to develop international cooperation in the humanitarian field;
5. Reiterates that international cooperation in the humanitarian field will facilitate better understanding, mutual respect, confidence and tolerance among countries and peoples, thus contributing to a more just and non-violent world;
6. Invites the Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues to continue and further strengthen its essential role in following up the work of the Independent Commission;
7. Encourages the international community to contribute substantially and regularly to the international humanitarian activities required to promote a new humanitarian order;
8. Requests the Secretary-General to remain in contact with Governments as well as governmental and non-governmental organisations and the Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues and to report on the progress made by them to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session;
9. Decides to review at its forty-ninth session the question of a new international humanitarian order.

Internally displaced people

UNHCR's 2000 report referred to earlier went on to say that in the early 1990s, the UN Secretary-General created a new appointment, that of Special Rapporteur on internally displaced persons,¹⁸¹ a post filled by the scholar and former diplomat, Dr Francis Deng of the Sudan. In fulfilment of his mandate

181 From 1992 until 2004 Dr. Deng served as the United Nations' first Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons

to examine the human rights issues raised by this problem, Dr Deng visited a dozen countries with large populations of displaced people and reported regularly to the UN Human Rights Commission and the General Assembly. He also contributed to a study of legal standards pertaining to the internally displaced and reviewed the then current organisational arrangements relating to the protection and material welfare of these groups of people.

Then an Inter-Agency Task Force on internally displaced people was established, chaired by the UN's Department of Humanitarian Affairs, with the purpose of looking more closely at the issue of organisational responsibility and coordination amongst the international agencies concerned. As a matter of fact, in January 2003 I was appointed by OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Geneva) to undertake a three-month mission to Liberia to assess the needs of the displaced, in coordination with the UN representatives in the country. However, within less than a month the successes of the rebels not only caused the mission to be cancelled but it brought about the evacuation of the UN staff already working there.

We see therefore that "early warning" on a number of issues that came to be expressed by the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues was taken seriously in various quarters. One likes to imagine that action was taken on most if not all of the recommendations. Unfortunately, this book would become far too long if the attempt were made to identify and describe any such follow-up on the observations and conclusions of the very distinguished international panel convened by Prince Sadrudin and H.H. Hassan Bin Talal. However, in a book published in 2010 entitled *The International Humanitarian Order (Security and Governance)* its author, Michael Barnett, Professor of International Affairs and Political Science at The George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs, has said that one of the genuinely remarkable but relatively unnoticed developments of the last half-century is the blossoming of an international humanitarian order – "a complex of norms, informal institutions, laws, and discourses that legitimate and compel various kinds of interventions by state and non-state actors with the explicit goal of preserving and protecting human life." The book features previously unpublished and original essays in a collection offering a critical assessment of the practices and politics of global ethical interventions in the context of the post-cold war transformation of the international humanitarian order. Unfortunately it came out seven years after Prince Sadrudin had left us.

* * *

In late 1985, Sadruddin was appointed Convenor and Co-Chairman of the Independent Working Group on the UN Financial Emergency established as a result of a General Assembly Resolution of December 1985.

The following summary was published in the *Encyclopaedia of the Nations*, under the heading The United Nations budget:

“A Group of High-Level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the UN, appointed by the General Assembly in 1985, submitted to the General Assembly in the following year its recommendations for enhancing the efficiency and reducing the expenditures of the organisation. Implementation of the group’s recommendations was the condition which a number of states, including the US, placed on further payment of their assessments.

“Among the solutions proposed in 1985 were an increase in the Working Capital Fund to US\$ 200 million, the issue of certificates of indebtedness in the amount of the arrears – in effect, borrowing from member states – and borrowing on the open market.”

The United Nations General Assembly, in an extraordinarily long Resolution, A/RES/41/213 of 19th December 1986, approved all the recommendations that Sadruddin and his Working Group colleagues had put forward. Given the prince’s responsibility in the matter, it may be worthwhile to set this one down in full (albeit without its Annex), even though few readers may wish to wade through such a ludicrously long resolution from beginning to end!

A/RES/41/213 of 19 December 1986

102nd plenary meeting

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and
financial functioning of the United Nations

The General Assembly

Recalling its resolution 40/237 of 18 December 1985, by which it decided to establish the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review

the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations,

Having considered the report of the Group and the related report of the Fifth Committee, as well as the comments on the report of the Group made by the Secretary-General and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination,

Expressing its appreciation to the Group for its report,

Taking fully into account the views expressed during the consideration of this item at the current session,

Recognizing the need for measures to improve the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations with a view to strengthening its effectiveness in dealing with political, economic and social issues,

Recognizing the need to improve the planning, programming and budgeting process in the Organization,

Reaffirming the requirement of all Member States to fulfil their financial obligations as set out in the Charter of the United Nations promptly and in full,

Recognizing the detrimental effect of the withholding of assessed contributions on the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations,

Recognizing further that late payments of assessed contributions adversely affect the short-term financial situation of the Organization,

I. Recommendations of the Group of High-level Inter-governmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations

1. Decides that the recommendations as agreed upon and as contained in the report of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United

Nations should be implemented by the Secretary-General and the relevant organs and bodies of the United Nations in the light of the findings of the Fifth Committee and subject to the following:

- (a) The implementation of recommendation 5 should not prejudice the implementation of projects and programmes already approved by the General Assembly;
- (b) The percentages referred to in recommendation 15, which were arrived at in a pragmatic manner, should be regarded as targets in the formulation of the Secretary-General's plans to be submitted to the General Assembly for implementation of the recommendation; further, the Secretary-General is requested to implement this recommendation with flexibility in order to avoid, inter alia, negative impact on programmes and on the structure and composition of the Secretariat, bearing in mind the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity of the staff, with due regard to equitable geographical distribution;
- (c) The Secretary-General should transmit to the International Civil Service Commission those recommendations having direct impact on the United Nations common system (recommendations 53 and 61), with the request that it report to the General Assembly at its forty-second session, so as to enable the Assembly to make a final decision; the expertise of the Commission should be availed of in dealing with the other recommendations over which the Commission has a mandate to advise and make recommendations;
- (d) The Secretary-General should take into consideration the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 35/210 of 17 December 1980, in implementing recommendations 55 and 57, to the extent they are agreed upon;
- (e) The Economic and Social Council, assisted as and when required by relevant organs and bodies, in particular the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, should carry out the study called for in recommendation 8;
- (f) The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, assisted as required

by the Joint Inspection Unit and other bodies, shall evaluate the implementation of the recommendations relating to the intergovernmental machinery and its functioning, as indicated in recommendation 70;

- (g) In the implementation of recommendation 24, the provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/201 of 8 December 1986 should be duly taken into account;

2. Requests the Secretary-General and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination to report to the General Assembly as indicated in recommendations 69, 70 and 71 of the Group;

II. Planning, programming and budgeting process

1. Decides that the planning, programming and budgeting process shall be governed, inter alia, by the following principles:

- (a) Strict adherence to the principles and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Articles 17 and 18 thereof;
- (b) Full respect for the prerogatives of the principal organs of the United Nations with respect to the planning, programming and budgeting process;
- (c) Full respect for the authority and the prerogatives of the Secretary-General as the chief administrative officer of the Organization;
- (d) Recognition of the need for Member States to participate in the budgetary preparation from its early stages and throughout the process;

2. Reaffirms the need to improve the planning, programming and budgeting process through, inter alia, the following:

- (a) Full implementation of regulation 4.8 of the Regulations Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, which governs co-ordination between the Committee for Programme and

Co-ordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions;

- (b) Implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 25 to 54 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on the work of its twenty-sixth session;
- (c) Ensuring follow-up of implementation of the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination;
- (d) Improvement of the representation of Member States in the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination in conformity with the provisions of paragraph 46 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977;

3. Resolves to achieve improvement in the consultative process for the formulation of the medium-term plan through:

- (a) Full implementation of the Regulations Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation pertaining to the medium-term plan, as contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 37/234 of 21 December 1982 and of the related Rules;
- (b) Submission of the introduction to the medium-term plan, which constitutes an integral element in the planning process, to Member States for wide consultations;
- (c) Consultations in a systematic way regarding the major programmes in the plan with sectoral, technical, regional and central bodies in the United Nations;
- (d) Drawing up by the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, of a calendar for such consultations;

4. Approves the budget process set forth in annex I to the present resolution;
5. Reaffirms that the decision-making process is governed by the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of procedure of the General Assembly;
6. Agrees that, without prejudice to paragraph 5 above, the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination should continue its existing practice of reaching decisions by consensus; explanatory views, if any, shall be presented to the General Assembly;
7. Considers it desirable that the Fifth Committee, before submitting its recommendations on the outline of the programme budget to the General Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the Charter and the rules of procedure of the Assembly, should continue to make all possible efforts with a view to establishing the broadest possible agreement;
8. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly, through the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, such supplementary rules and regulations as may be deemed necessary for the improvement in the planning, programming and budgeting process;
9. Also requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-second session a proposal on the date for submission of the outline of the programme budget and also on the date for final approval of the outline by the Assembly;
10. Further requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-second session on the implementation of the present resolution.¹⁸²

It has to be said that Prince Sadruddin evidently put to very good use the talent for financial matters that he had inherited from his remarkable grandmother!

¹⁸² Resolution A/RES/41/213 of 19th December 1986

17

Afghanistan, 1988-90

Logistics and management of humanitarian action are extremely important, the donors expect always a higher, ever higher degree of professionalism

Professor Jacques Forster

After the death in March 1985 of the fifth General Secretary of the Soviet Union, Konstantin Chernenko, and the assumption of his post by Mikhail Gorbachëv, the Cold War, dating from the end of the Second World War, was destined to come to an end within a very few years. It had seen Moscow supporting a communist government in Kabul and the invasion of Afghanistan by Russian troops. Now Mikhail Gorbachëv set about transforming the USSR, forming a remarkable partnership for peace with US President Ronald Reagan. What one historian called “a serious meeting of minds”¹⁸³ occurred, which led *inter alia* to the signing of the Geneva Accords of April 1988 that included an agreement on the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan by 1988¹⁸⁴.

On 11th May 1988, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Pérez de Cuéllar, asked Prince Sadruddin to accept the appointment as UN Co-ordinator for Economic and Humanitarian Assistance Programmes relating to Afghanistan (UNOCA), reporting directly to him. The request to Sadruddin was to take on the assignment, with the rank of Under Secretary-General, for one year. He was finally to devote all his time to it until the end of 1990. It had been only four weeks earlier that delegations from a

183 Robert Service, *The End of the Cold War 1985-91*

184 The Geneva Accords, known formally as the agreements on the settlement of the situation relating to Afghanistan, were signed on 14th April 1988 at the United Nations. *REFUGEES*, May 1988.

number of countries, including Afghanistan and Pakistan, had signed a multi-faceted agreement in Geneva that paved the way for measures to help the country get back on its feet.

Most people reading these lines will recall that for much of its history, Afghanistan has been the theatre of conflict. Just under 100 years ago, following the end of the third Afghan War (the first having been instigated by Britain in 1838 to counter the threat to British India from expanding Russian influence), Afghanistan recovered full independence, and Zahir Shah became king. His reign lasted for thirty years, until in 1963 a constitutional monarchy was established – only to be overthrown ten years later in a coup staged by the former Prime Minister, Mohammed Daoud. While the coup was based on nationalist principles, it was dependent on pro-Soviet military support that had included army training in the Soviet Union. Throughout the rest of the 1970s, though the “People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan” (PDPA) supported Daoud, the government had little popular support, and dissensions, coups and counter-coups eliminated one leader after another. Measures introduced to extend communist policies to Islamic tribal areas led to *mujaheddin* fighters stepping up their resistance to PDPA policies, and by December 1979, the Soviet Union under Brezhnev had decided to invade Afghanistan. The United States’ reaction under President Carter surprised the Soviet leadership. The US denounced Soviet aggression and enacted economic sanctions and trade embargoes against the Soviet Union, calling for a boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics – meanwhile stepping up its aid to the Afghan insurgents.

Traditionally, the Afghan people have mostly been farmers, although some have had a nomadic way of life. The dominant group of farmers are the Pathans, particularly in the Kabul area. The Tajiks, both traders and cereal farmers in the province of Herat and around Kabul, were the original inhabitants of Afghanistan. The Hazaras, another farming group, are found in the southern mountain ranges of the Hindu Kush. They were originally herdsmen from Mongolia. Other tribal groups are Baluchi nomads in the south, Nuristani farmers who live in the mountains of the north-east, and the Uzbeks, Turkomen and Kirghiz who have counterparts in the former Soviet republics. Ten years of insurgency that led to heavy Russian losses and the assiduous work over several years of President Ronald Reagan and General Secretary Mihail Gorbachëv in bringing about the end of the Cold War resulted in the total withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan by February 1989.

The damage to the country and the intensification of the civil war were such that some six million Afghans were now refugees in surrounding countries, mostly Pakistan and Iran. And as it turned out, Afghans could then not agree amongst themselves as to what kind of country Afghanistan should become.

* * *

In his book *Blinded by humanity*, Dr Martin Barber wrote that the withdrawal of Soviet forces left the Kabul government of President Najibullah without external military support, and that most international observers thought that “it would be only a matter of weeks before Najibullah’s government would fall and the *mujahideen* would take over. A massive international effort would be needed to provide humanitarian aid, help the refugees in neighbouring countries return and start the reconstruction of destroyed infrastructure.”¹⁸⁵ In the event, President Najibullah continued for four further years.

“*From swords to ploughshares*”, was the substance of Prince Sadrudin’s declaration during his first meeting with the press on Thursday, 12th May 1988. He asserted that the goal of UN assistance was to make it possible for the Afghan people to shape their own destiny. He went on to say that his major task was to formulate an appeal to donors, which would be possible only after a detailed examination of all components of the concerted inter-agency humanitarian effort. Immediately after his appointment, Sadrudin held meetings in New York with the major development agencies such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and then travelled to Rome for discussions with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO). In Geneva he met Jean-Pierre Hocké, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the heads of the International Labour Office (ILO), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), as well as a number of non-governmental organisations.

Within two weeks, Sadrudin left for Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran accompanied by the Administrator of UNDP, Mr William H. Draper, and senior representatives of FAO, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. The Secretary-General of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Mr Pär Stenbäck (then my supervisor), was another member of the

185 Martin Barber, *Blinded by Humanity, Inside the UN’s humanitarian operations*

delegation. On 5th December 2015, on a particularly memorable evening that my daughter and I spent with Pär and two friends from our Red Cross days, we listened enthralled to a description of the delegation's visit to Kabul, and here it is in Pär's own words.

A dramatic visit

“On 27th May at 8 pm, the small Falcon Jet belonging to the Swiss government left Geneva airport in the direction of Kabul. The night journey to Kabul was fascinating in itself. There was a full moon, and while we were all trying to sleep, we could hear the pilot's regular radio call: *UN number one calls Kabul, UN number one calls Kabul*. No answer was received. We began to wonder if the airport had been captured by the *mujahideen* rebels who were besieging the capital.

“Around 6 am we approached Kabul while still at a high altitude and chose to dive directly, almost vertically, towards the runway. We had been warned that the *mujahideen*, the freedom fighters in the mountains surrounding Kabul, had Stinger missiles. With shrieking brakes the plane landed and taxied towards the terminal. All along the tarmac Soviet armoured vehicles were parked, and around them there were groups of young soldiers, shaving or drinking their *tjaj* (tea), noticeably surprised at seeing our slender plane glide past. These young Russian soldiers were simply accommodated in their transport vehicles.

“We were quickly escorted to our briefings on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. At 4.30 pm a meeting with the President of the country, Najibullah, was scheduled. ‘No’, he declared, ‘there's no danger, the situation is under control. We are happy to receive aid, but our Soviet friends are supporting us well.’ But as the clock struck 5 pm, we heard a loud explosion, perhaps 500 metres away from the residence. We looked at one another with some concern, but Najibullah did not blink, he just continued with what he had to say. More bursts came during the rest of the interview.

“We learned afterwards from our foreign representatives that the *mujahideen* had the habit of starting their bombardment when the setting sun reached a certain angle. Then the Soviet observers, with the sun in their eyes, could not identify the firing spot.

“When we said goodbye to the stone-faced Najibullah, many of us thought that we were seeing this man for the last time. And so it turned out. When his Soviet protectors withdrew homewards and Kabul was conquered, Najibullah sought refuge in an embassy, but the mob stormed it and hanged him on a lamp post. It really seems difficult for the world to learn the Afghan lesson, for the presence of foreign troops has never had a happy ending; at some stage the mob in Kabul has the last word.”

In an interview with *Refugees* magazine in November 1988, Sadruddin said that the first priority, as determined by the UN Secretary-General, was to mobilise the entire UN system in a co-ordinated effort to facilitate the resettlement of all those displaced by the conflict – both the refugees outside (estimated to number six million) and those who were now homeless and uprooted within Afghanistan. After this, the task was to build up the basic infrastructure, essential for a return to normal living in a country which had quite literally been laid waste, and where the list of needs was endless.

“My role, then, is basically to rally all the means at the UN’s disposal, to develop an inter-agency action plan tailored to the situation and the needs of the Afghan people, and to make sure that fund-raising efforts are integrated rather than coming from a number of different sources, because this would, of course, create considerable confusion. It is, in any event, crucial for projects and programmes on a regional basis to be both unified and autonomous. We must at all costs avoid establishing a kind of dependence on charitable handouts from outside. This would be totally alien to the nature of Afghans, who are a very dignified and independent people.”

It was going to be a mammoth assignment. Sadruddin went on:

“Another of my tasks, as I see my role, is to conduct negotiations – of necessity a very delicate matter in such a mercurial political situation – with all the parties concerned: the governments and the Afghan authorities, particularly in those regions where we will be called upon to take action. I also see my role as providing a clearing-house for all information relating to Afghanistan and of possible interest to the UN system: to the donor countries who will want to know how their contributions for each sector are to be used, and also to all the non-governmental organisations already working in the field, or who will soon be working alongside us.

“It is my belief that the elements of the role entrusted to me by the Secretary-General have been clearly understood. They have been referred to right from the start in all the analyses of the situation in Afghanistan.”

Sadrudin invited Martin Barber to join his team and to work initially in Islamabad, Pakistan as chief of mission there. The prince knew Martin well, from the time that from 1975 to 1977 the British doctoral student had very ably handled the politically delicate programme for displaced people in Laos under Jacques Cuénod's direction. Then at the end of the 1970s Martin had headed the UNHCR unit concerned with the crisis that arose when huge numbers of traumatised Cambodians flooded across the Thai border after Vietnam invaded the Khmer Rouge "Kampuchea". A few years on, Martin, while presiding over the British Refugee Council, had played a part in the production of the ICIHI book on Refugees.

To guarantee and demonstrate impartiality towards all parties concerned both within Afghanistan and further afield, Sadrudin established his new headquarters in a villa, "La Pelouse", in the grounds of the Palais des Nations, Geneva. He assembled a team of staff, many of them recruited from the pertinent UN organisations, before travelling to negotiate agreements with each of Afghanistan's neighbours, Iran, Pakistan and the Soviet Union, that would enable UNOCA to set up offices in each of their countries. Zia Rizvi, the brilliant Pakistani lawyer referred to earlier, joined him to help design the diplomatic, political and practical initiatives that would be required. Stefan de Mistura, the Swedish national mentioned earlier, served the Co-ordinator for Afghanistan as Director of Fundraising and External Relations from 1988 to 1991.

Martin Barber wrote that "the international effort for Afghanistan in the 1980s and 1990s was characterised by a passionate intensity. Afghans had been subjected to the most horrendous suffering, because the leaders of great powers, thousands of miles away, had allowed their Cold War disputes to be played out in a hot war across Afghanistan's stark landscape. Many UN and NGO representatives brought to the country a kind of manic determination to do something, anything, to help alleviate the Afghans' pain."¹⁸⁶ The question of co-ordination was a colossal one. Pakistan had previously allowed no fewer than seven Afghan political groups to establish offices in Peshawar, and had adroitly avoided the creation of a unified opposition to the communist government in Kabul. There were the almost countless NGOs. Within the government of Pakistan, three ministries were responsible for Afghan questions: Foreign Affairs, States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON – to be consulted on everything to do with Afghan refugees in Pakistan) and Defence. And several UN agencies had been present in Kabul and/or in

186 Martin Barber, *op cit*

Pakistan: UNDP, FAO, WHO and others had continued to run programmes in Kabul and in the main cities under government control. Martin tells us how the whole nature of the international aid effort in Afghanistan would change, with supplies being brought in from all the neighbouring countries in an integrated effort that crossed internal lines between warring factions, and he writes of some odd features in the overall, fast-developing picture: for example, because WHO had been running programmes in Kabul and soon – thanks to UNOCA's newly-formed relationships with the governments of Afghanistan, its neighbours and *mujahideen* parties – it could develop programmes in the rural areas of Afghanistan, WHO's programme in Kabul was managed from the WHO Regional Office in Egypt, but the WHO programme in eastern Afghanistan was to be run from the WHO headquarters in Geneva!

The magnitude of the tasks of co-ordination can barely be imagined! With the international NGOs operating out of Peshawar and Quetta, Pakistan, the UNOCA main office in Pakistan was in the capital, Islamabad, with sub offices in Peshawar and Quetta. In Iran, UNOCA established its office in Teheran, while in the Soviet Union, the UNOCA team worked from Termez, the border town on the Amu Darya River, in what is now Uzbekistan. Naturally, in Afghanistan UNOCA had its office in Kabul.

* * *

"First and foremost," Sadruddin wrote, "the country must be de-mined as far as possible. Otherwise these mines – especially the anti-personnel mines – will be continually triggered by people who will lose a hand or a foot in the process. Then there is the enormous problem of an infrastructure where everything has been destroyed: major roads, secondary access roads, bridges and villages. Due to a lack of maintenance, the irrigation network is now virtually non-existent. From years of lying uncultivated and unwatered, the land has become rock-hard. It has to be broken up, sown and fertilised. And then the entire school system has been dismantled. (...)"

Before a start could be made on tackling all these problems, the UN Secretary-General had launched a two-part appeal for US\$1.166 billion, the first part centring on the emergency situation and rehabilitation, to help with the return of refugees and provide initial infrastructure measures. The second half of the appeal concerned the first steps needed towards reconstruction, later to be handed over to the UNDP and financial institutions such as the World

Bank that would have long-term involvement with Afghanistan's recovery.

Anxious to convince all the fighting factions that the much-needed aid would be brought into Afghanistan on the basis of the principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality, Sadruddin set about arranging with the authorities of the neighbouring countries, starting with Pakistan, to send in aid from their territory. Martin reports how the initial meeting was a success: President Zia-Ul-Haq met the prince and Martin in Islamabad and agreed to set up the required links with the military and the provincial authorities. Next day, President Zia, many of his top military officers and the US Ambassador were all killed when the Lockheed C-130 Hercules aircraft in which they were travelling crashed soon after take-off from an airstrip in Bahawalpur, about 330 miles south of the capital Islamabad. President Zia and his entourage, which included the US ambassador to Pakistan, Arnold Raphel, and Brig. Gen. Herbert M. Wassom, the head of the US military aid mission to Pakistan, had just observed a test of the US-made Abrams M-1/A-1 battle tank at a remote desert location.¹⁸⁷ Miss Benazir Bhutto took over as President of Pakistan, and the work of UNOCA would go ahead in Pakistan on the basis of contacts with the military.

Martin tells us that in the course of the first winter, the prince decided to open an air-bridge from Pakistan, and a planeload of medical supplies was expected in Islamabad, to be flown on to Kabul. The pilot unfortunately decided that he did not relish flying into Kabul, and flew home instead!

Asked when he thought that repatriation of the huge numbers of Afghans living principally in Iran could be expected to start, Sadruddin explained: *"I believe that everyone agrees with the High Commissioner for Refugees in thinking that a large-scale repatriation is not feasible before next spring. But this depends to a great extent not only on the weather – winter is a difficult time in Afghanistan – but also on political developments inside the country. It all depends on the Afghans themselves. They must find Afghan solutions to their problems, solutions which will, I hope, avoid a bloodbath and further loss of life. The country has suffered enough. And I believe that Afghan political leaders on all sides are duty bound to assume responsibility for their people in order to avoid renewed turmoil. Too high a price has already been paid for the errors of a political situation which led Afghanistan into a nine-year old war. Civilians, women and children were certainly not consulted during the course of these*

187 Palash Ghosh, *International Business Times*, 27th April 2013, <http://www.ibtimes.com/who-killed-general-zia-pakistan-perhaps/>

events. It is also hoped that the people of Afghanistan will be allowed to confer and consult amongst themselves, free of any backstage manipulation. There are far too many protagonists on stage already in this conflict."¹⁸⁸

The UN Secretary-General appointed a Special Representative, Dr Diego Cordovez, to take on the political aspects of the ongoing crisis in Afghanistan, and thanks to his painstaking negotiations the Geneva Agreement had been arrived at. He was by now encouraging intra-Afghan consultations, endeavouring to get those talks underway by making a series of proposals which he felt offered a possible basis for continuing dialogue. As Sadruddin said:

"Mr Cordovez's mission was, in fact, different from mine. His lay within the framework of the political good offices of the Secretary-General and the United Nations. My role, which has indisputably come about as a result of the Geneva agreement, is a task of reconstruction and rehabilitation which is strictly humanitarian and apolitical. It would be intolerable if relief and assistance were to become politicised."

Asked about his contacts so far, and the structures he had established, Sadruddin said:

"For any large-scale humanitarian operation the UN must begin with certain ad hoc measures, a certain degree of improvisation. This was the case in all the major assistance operations which I directed when I was myself High Commissioner, notably in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent after the 1971 war, or in Cyprus following the events that split the communities. Inter-agency co-operation is always confronted with certain problems, certain resistance. There are always some flies in the ointment, but we must try to be flexible and act pragmatically. I am very grateful to all directors, agency heads and heads of international institutions for the way in which they have responded to the Secretary-General's decision. They were all either with me in person, or sent a high-level envoy when I undertook my first visit to the region on 27th May, immediately after my appointment. Opinion was greatly struck by this approach, because people are not accustomed to seeing the UN act so promptly and in such a co-ordinated way. I believe this constituted a precedent. We have even been criticised for being over-enthusiastic, too quick off the mark. I think this is wonderful!

"Today, this co-ordination is all settling into place. We are a tiny team of some twenty individuals, trying to organise a vast operation involving considerable funds."

188 REFUGEES, November 1988

Asked whether he was optimistic about the future for Afghanistan, he replied,

*"I don't think I would have taken on the job if I hadn't been optimistic, because it is an extremely exacting and difficult task. Since the Secretary-General's appeal on 10th June, we have collected US\$ 100 million in cash and in kind – a remarkable figure for two and a half months. This means that we can already embark on specific projects in the field, but it goes without saying that this is just the beginning... An additional reason for optimism is my unreserved admiration for the Afghan people – for their courage, their dignity and their independent spirit. They are a noble and a hardy people – workers used to hardship and the rigours of their climate and environment. I have every confidence in their ability to rebuild their country. But they need help in order to be able to help themselves. There are certainly some very interesting developments taking place on the international scene. Just the other day, the High Commissioner said to me: 'Peace is breaking out all over!'"*¹⁸⁹

Sadrudin had spoken of the need for mine clearance. Martin Barber, who was to become a world expert on the subject after devoting much of his career to this vital area of work, wrote, "Nothing in my career has given me more pleasure and excitement than my association with the efforts to rid poor countries of the anti-personnel landmines that lie in wait, ready to rip a leg from a passing child... The story begins here in Afghanistan."¹⁹⁰ In the report that he submitted to Sadrudin on 31st August 1988, two weeks after their visit to Pakistan and the death of President Zia, the first and longest section was devoted to the topic of de-mining. Meetings were set up with senior Pakistani military officers to plan a training programme for volunteers among the Afghan refugees, so that they could be taught how to clear their own villages of landmines, once they returned home. The hospitals run by the Red Cross in Peshawar and Quetta bore stark testimony to the horrors being inflicted by anti-personnel landmines on Afghan villagers and refugees returning from Pakistan. In village after village in the Afghan provinces bordering Pakistan, Soviet and Afghan government forces had driven the civilian populations either into the cities or across the border into Pakistan, so that they could not provide bases and support for the *mujahideen* fighters. Then, to prevent the villagers from returning, they had laid thousands of anti-personnel landmines.

¹⁸⁹ *idem*

¹⁹⁰ Martin Barber, *op cit.*

In that same article, Sadruddin was reported as having refused to sanction the use of dogs in de-mining work. *"People laid the mines, people will have to remove them,"* he said.

Unfortunately, the de-mining operations were subject to many problems and received some sharp criticism from the media (and as it happens, not only the de-mining part of the programme). One US newspaper wrote that the most controversial and costly of all the projects funded by the office of the UN Co-ordinator was a multimillion-dollar one funded largely by the United States, to help clear Afghanistan of millions of land mines. The United Nations had spent nearly \$3,000,000 training over 7,000 Afghans in mine-clearing procedures at a Pakistani army facility, it said, but now, a year later, most of the trainees had disappeared and most of those remaining were considered unqualified, with fewer than fifty actually going into Afghanistan to begin work. "Shakil Khan, a retired Pakistani army major who heads the mine-clearance programme, conceded that costly mistakes have been made. 'It is a very important and well-founded criticism,' Khan said of the charge that training funds were wasted. 'But this is the first time the UN has taken up this kind of programme. Now we have learned from mistakes and we think the whole operation will improve this year.'" ¹⁹¹

In May 1989, Sadruddin, who had given the name "Operation Salam" to his work as co-ordinator, created a Committee on Assistance to Disabled Afghans, and published *"The Guidelines and Priorities for Assistance to Disabled Afghans"*. He said that the responsible agencies to work on programmes the conception of which were laid down in the Guidelines were WHO, UNICEF, UNHCR, ILO, UNESCO and UNIFEM (UN Development Fund for Women), working in close co-ordination with NGOs and of course with his office. He wrote in his Foreword:

"The Guidelines describe a tragic situation caused by the effects of both war-related disabilities and crippling diseases such as polio, TB and malaria. The guidelines outline a three-pronged approach to deal with the problem, prevention, medical treatment and referral and rehabilitation. Currently, all three components are seriously deficient. Afghanistan needs new facilities, skilled medical and para-medical workers, training, and the integration of the few services that do exist. These guidelines provide a blueprint that will set the pattern for our joint efforts on behalf of disabled Afghans. Thousands

191 "US Aid Funds for Afghan Rebuilding seen as wasted", by Mark Fineman of the *Los Angeles Times*, 28th April 1990

of children, women and men need our help to become once again a proud and productive part of a long and free tradition.”

Sadrudin felt bound to speak in many fora of the severe problems persisting in Afghanistan. Over the almost three years that he served as the UN Co-ordinator for Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes relating to Afghanistan, he addressed for example the Third Committee of the 44th and 45th Sessions of the UN General Assembly, the UN Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), the UNDP Governing Council and a number of NGOs in Washington, London, Vienna and Madrid. In a statement on 4th May 1989 on the state of Afghanistan, he spoke of the dire humanitarian dimension, and also of the “political quagmire”, quoting an Afghan friend as having said, “The war in my country is being fought with American arms, Saudi money, Afghan blood – and Pakistan will get the prize”.¹⁹² Sadrudin referred to Operation Salam activities as “building blocks for peace”. Afghanistan was of course “a challenge to the notions of international solidarity and resolution of regional conflicts. The success of the UN in that country is relevant not only to the credibility of the system but also to the future of multilateral aid.”

However monolithic the needs were at any point after the Soviet withdrawal, and the relative hopelessness of managing to meet them, before the prince resigned his post at the end of 1990, 157 reconstruction projects out of the 473 so far planned had already been carried through and 206 others were in process, building dispensaries, creating living accommodation, and working on irrigation and roadbuilding. The international community had donated over one billion dollars for the overall programme, USSR promising \$400 million worth of equipment and first aid. The Secretary-General accepted the prince’s resignation “with regret”. Despite all Sadrudin’s best efforts, not all his approaches had been met with success, and because of the ongoing fighting, the millions of Afghan refugees remained stranded in Iran and Pakistan. “At least we established a framework which the UN could use in future”, Sadrudin said to comfort himself.¹⁹³ President George Bush congratulated him¹⁹⁴ :

192 Statement to the UNDP Governing Council, 1990

193 Neal Ascherson, *The prince and the paupers, The Independent on Sunday*, 5th May 1991 © Guardian News & Media Ltd 2016

194 Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991

"I can well understand why UN Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar wanted to put on the public record his 'deep appreciation and thanks for your tireless efforts in discharging a mission of such complexity and magnitude'. Clearly, your great humanitarian instincts and moral commitment have helped countless Afghans who have suffered from the Afghanistan conflict and ensured the many accomplishments of Operation Salam. I extend the appreciation of the United States and my personal thanks to you for the job you have done."

In the twenty-five years since then, Afghanistan has rarely been out of the news because of the competing elements that have threatened – and still threaten – its stability. Kabul fell first in 1992 to the mujahideen, then in 1996 it fell to the Taliban. Successive United Nations Secretary-Generals have appointed other top people to the top jobs in Afghanistan, among them Stefan de Mistura mentioned earlier, the Italo-Swedish diplomat of great distinction as well as novel methods. Speaking of Mr de Mistura's work methods, Michael Keating, a friend of his for over thirty years who served as De Mistura's deputy in Afghanistan, said, "He's trying to explore all options, that's the way he is." And in Afghanistan, certainly Mr de Mistura did try everything, including, reportedly, having camels painted blue to avoid detection on night journeys.

Despite the efforts of all concerned over those two and a half decades that followed Sadruddin's involvement, including the creation of an International Security Assistance Force composed of troops of several NATO countries, Afghanistan still needed massive investment in its own security forces, estimated at over US\$ 4 billion a year. This enormous sum was pledged at the Chicago summit of May 2012. But as Michael Keating wrote, "It is not enough. Unless funding for Afghanistan's security forces is matched by investment in meeting people's basic needs, and by robust efforts to protect civilians and human rights, the money being spent on security could be wasted." Keating, already very familiar with Afghanistan, had been the UN's Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator the previous year.

A UNOCHA article of 27th December 2011 reported that even as international military forces prepared to leave Afghanistan, aid organisations were still struggling to help millions of people cope with conflict, environmental hazards, fragile governance and underdevelopment¹⁹⁵. Over the twenty-one years that had elapsed since Sadruddin completed his three-year mission, humanitarian conditions had been steadily deteriorating due

195 UNOCHA article, <http://unocha.org/top-stories/all-stories/hc-interview-afghanistan>, 27th December 2011

to conflict and a series of natural disasters, including drought, flash floods and other extreme weather forms. Increased fighting in 2011 disrupted many essential services and made the work of humanitarian organisations even harder. Michael Keating, whose international career had begun with Prince Sadruddin thirty years earlier, found himself in the difficult position of balancing political realities with increasing humanitarian needs, in one of the most complex emergencies in the world. He said that aid and development alone could not deliver peace, any more than security forces. “An inclusive intra-Afghan political process is a must, supported by neighbouring countries, both to bring the country’s long nightmare to a close, and to reduce the need for costly security.¹⁹⁶... The bedrock of longer-term security and stability is sustained improvement in the quality of life, authorities that are accountable, institutions that function, and jobs... . Afghans are increasingly anxious about the future, and frustrated. Five million still live as refugees or undocumented migrants. Conflict-induced displacement has risen steadily over the last five years and now amounts to over 500,000 people. Women and children suffer disproportionately from the conflict.”¹⁹⁷

On 2nd June this year (2015), the current UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator for Afghanistan, Mark Bowden, reacting to the announcement by People in Need that nine members of their national staff had been killed in an attack on its compound in Zari district, made the following statement:

“Once again, I am appalled to be speaking out following the killing of aid workers who are providing much needed assistance in Afghanistan. I share the grief of our colleagues at People in Need and the families of those killed.

“This most recent attack highlights the challenges aid workers face and the unacceptable sacrifices aid workers make when working in Afghanistan. Since the start of 2015, twenty-six aid workers have been killed, with another seventeen injured and forty abducted.

“Aid workers in Afghanistan provide emergency trauma care, run feeding programmes for malnourished children, and assist people displaced from conflict and natural disasters. Attacks against aid workers lessen their ability to carry out these essential activities, leaving the most vulnerable in Afghanistan most at risk.

“I call on all parties to ensure that those providing humanitarian assistance

196 Statement to the CRN World Report Contributors Conference, Atlanta, 4th May 1989

197 Michael Keating: *Real security in Afghanistan depends on people’s basic needs being met*, in <http://www.theguardian.com/profile/michael-u-keating>

have safe access to people in need and can carry out their lifesaving work unhindered”.¹⁹⁸

How very troubled Prince Sadruddin would have been at this and other news from the country he had energetically assisted for almost three years at the end of the 1980s. Today, 15th October 2015, President Barak Obama has announced that because of the strength of the Taliban threat, he will not after all reduce the US forces numbering over 9,000 that he had foreseen reducing by about half by the end of this year.

198 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs report found on <http://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/statement>

18

Forever active, 1990s

You have to come to grips with realities

Sadraddin Aga Khan¹⁹⁹

Prince Sadraddin, 54, still commands huge international influence

*Forbes magazine*²⁰⁰

Throughout the last four years of the 1980s and throughout the 1990s, Prince Sadraddin continued to act with his habitual dynamism on several fronts. The three years in which he was heavily involved with Afghanistan feature in the previous chapter, and his work in Alp Action is described in chapter 11.

World Wildlife Fund for Nature

In 1986 the prince became one of the three Vice-Presidents of WWF-International's Board of Trustees as part of a series of appointments to the Board and WWF-International's Advisory Council. WWF was renamed World Wildlife Fund for Nature that year. Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, is its President. The Hon Russell E. Train (USA) and Timothy A.P. Walker (UK) were also appointed to the Board.²⁰¹

In a statement to the WWF International Council in 1983, Sadraddin quoted Pythagoras as saying: "For as long as man continues to be the ruthless

199 From a recorded conversation with a friend, Mr Godfrey Jensen in June 1981

200 *Forbes magazine*, June 15, 1987

201 *WWF NEWS*, Jan-Feb.1986

destroyer of lower living beings, he will never know health or peace. For as long as men massacre animals, they will kill each other. Indeed, he who sows the seeds of murder and pain cannot reap joy and love.” Even before being appointed to the Board, the prince worked closely with WWF and one suspects that he may have provided not insubstantial funds for this international NGO whose broad aims coincided with his own. He was keen for it to become more active, and in 1987, given the worldwide concern for the plight of African elephants, and in order to understand how they were distributed as a means of developing plans for their conservation, WWF and Elsa Wild Animal Appeal (EWAA) commissioned a study of continental elephant populations. Using the latest mapping computer technology, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), data from all over Africa could be integrated and analysed. It was found, not surprisingly, that the factor correlating most closely with elephant population density was the degree to which elephant groups were effectively protected. Bull elephants, particularly the older members with larger tusks, had been stalked so intensively that in many areas there were very few (or none) remaining. Opportunities for mating were missed. Some 609,000 elephants were left in 1989, less than half the 1,300,000 estimated ten years previously.²⁰²

Sadrudin, on the eve of his first Board Meeting in Washington, gave his views to the managing editor of *WWF News*, David Mitchell, on the vital questions facing everyone. He spoke of the threat of nuclear war and went on to say, *“Another danger is a slower transformation of our planet through wanton exploitation and the squandering of our resources leading us to a major ecological disaster. The latter is linked with a need to develop new world economic relationships. Issues are therefore defined on East-West and North-South axes. We have changed the world but failed to change ourselves. We can choose between instant or slow death, on the one hand, or common survival and the prospect of a harmonious future on the other.”*

The question was put to him as to why he chose to devote so much of his time and energy to conservation, when many people believed that the conservation of wild species was rather a luxury when seen against the background of human misery in so many countries. Sadrudin's response was that *“conservation is not a luxury but a necessity. Human beings and animals should not be seen on a basis of either-or. All species are part of our fragile planetary ecosystem. Human misery will increase if wild species are allowed to disappear. Our leaders must perceive*

202 Bellerive Foundation Newsletter, December 1990

*the necessity of establishing a new pact with nature. It is because I am convinced that mankind can no longer continue to destabilise nature that I do what I can to promote conservation. We are partners with nature, we share the world. We need to gain an understanding of this from childhood. The principles and ideals of conservation should be included in the curricula of primary schools and further developed throughout the education system. People should learn that animals and other forms of life are not lower beings. We must understand the interdependency of our planet, learn to respect all forms of life – not only human rights, which are also often sadly forgotten.”*²⁰³

In 1991, WWF and Alp Action combined on 7th June for the release in the Haute Savoie Alps of the first bearded vulture born in captivity.²⁰⁴ It was the occasion for WWF to celebrate its thirtieth anniversary, and to state that it now had 4,000,000 members from twenty-eight countries. At that point, it reported that it had carried out work on 5,000 projects in 130 countries, with an investment of \$ 175, 000,000.²⁰⁵

WWF continues to protect endangered species, including Bengal tigers, whales, pandas and elephants, and has enabled hundreds of other species to live on. Everyone must by now be familiar with WWF’s symbol, the panda, chosen both because the panda is an endangered species, and because of its black and white nature – to save ink, as founder member Sir Peter Scott, the renowned ornithologist and son of the Antarctic explorer, who painted the design, explained.

* * *

Personal Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Humanitarian Assistance Relating to the Crisis between Iraq and Kuwait: 1990/91

Tomes have been written about the relationship between the erstwhile

203 WWF NEWS, Mar-Apr.1986

204 *La Femme d'aujourd'hui*, 16 October 1991

205 WWF’s Mission as described on its website is “to conserve nature and reduce the most pressing threats to the diversity of life on Earth. We organise our work around these six ambitious goals: Forests – to conserve the world’s most important forests; oceans – to safeguard healthy oceans and marine livelihoods; fresh water – to secure water for people and nature; wildlife – to protect the world’s most important species; food – to double net food availability, freeze its footprint; climate – create a climate-resilient and zero-carbon world, powered by renewable energy.”

President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein and the rest of the world, in particular of course the Gulf War, known also as “Operation Desert Storm”, and the suffering of Iraq’s people. In August 1990, there was the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, and in January 1991, a number of allied nations led by the United States launched a military operation to free Kuwait.

When Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2nd August 1990 with more than 100,000 soldiers backed up by 700 tanks, the Kuwait representative at the United Nations New York addressed a letter the same day to the President of the Security Council, and with unprecedented speed, the UN Security Council met – the same day, 2nd August – and passed Resolution 660 demanding the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait, and granting itself the right “to use all necessary means” to make Iraq comply with the demand.

Four days later, in its Resolution 661 of 6th August 1990, the Security Council, “Reaffirming its resolution 660 (1990) of 2nd August 1990”, and “Deeply concerned that that resolution has not been implemented and that the invasion by Iraq of Kuwait continues with further loss of human life and material destruction, Determined to bring the invasion and occupation of Kuwait by Iraq to an end”, set up some very sweeping sanctions, in the hope of convincing President Saddam Hussein to comply without further delay. The sanctions included the freezing of Iraqi and Kuwaiti assets abroad and a ban on trade imports and exports with both Iraq and Kuwait. A Sanctions Committee was established to monitor implementation. Saddam Hussein’s government responded immediately by formally annexing Kuwait on 8th August.

Security council composition 1990/91

Permanent members: China, France, United Kingdom, United States, Soviet Union.

Non permanent members: Austria, Belgium, Ivory Coast, Cuba, Ecuador, India, Romania, Yemen, Zaire, Zimbabwe.

Iraq’s invasion and the potential threat it posed to neighbours, especially Saudi Arabia, the world’s largest oil producer and exporter, prompted the United States and its western European NATO allies to rush troops to Saudi Arabia to deter a possible attack. Egypt and a number of other Arab nations joined an anti-Iraq coalition, contributing forces to a military build-up known as “Operation Desert Shield”. Iraq was concurrently building up its occupying

army in Kuwait to about 300,000 troops. By January 1991, the allied coalition against Iraq had reached a strength of 700,000 troops.²⁰⁶ Meanwhile, the UN Security Council on 29th November, in Resolution 678 adopted by thirteen votes to none with two abstentions, authorised the use of force against Iraq if it did not withdraw from Kuwait by 15th January 1991. The sanctions were seen to be slow in generating the expected outcome.

Trapped after the invasion of Kuwait:

All communication had been cut with Kuwait since 2nd August 1990, and as the weeks went by, international concern mounted and the UN Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar asked Sadruddin, although he was still fulfilling the function of Co-ordinator for United Nations Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes Relating to the People of Afghanistan, to undertake another new task: to help very large numbers of foreigners trapped in Kuwait as a result of the invasion. By then, many foreigners were uncomfortable about living in Iraq either. Obviously, this was a mission needing to be carried out in the most delicate of circumstances. Speaking of the people clamouring to leave Kuwait, Sadruddin was widely reported as saying on 19th September 1990, *"They are suffering a lot. They need food. They need medicine. They need shelter. Some way must be found to assist these people in co-operation with Iraqi authorities, or they will die. The planes will be taking back dead bodies."* The Iraqi authorities had turned down a direct appeal from the Secretary-General to work with his special envoy, who wanted to arrange direct flights out of Baghdad, the capital of Iraq, and out of Kuwait. But Sadruddin said that the Iraqis *"unfortunately are under some misconception"* that his job was connected with the UN resolution permitting humanitarian shipments of food and medicine into Iraq only if their distribution was monitored by international relief agencies. *"My mission is to speed up the departure of third-country nationals"*, he said, speaking of the 250,000 to 300,000 people reported by international agencies to be waiting to get out of Iraq and Kuwait.

Very many of the foreigners in Kuwait were from Jordan, a country of only 3,000,000 people whose economy, largely based on import-export activities and bolstered for years by the earnings of Jordanian workers sent in from

206 Encyclopaedia Britannica

outside, was now very badly affected by the sanctions against Iraq. As early as 20th August 1990, the Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs had written to the President of the Security Council explaining that Jordan, while wishing to carry out its Charter obligations in good faith, requested “to enter into consultations, on an urgent basis, with the Security Council with regard to finding a solution to the problems that will arise...” As Sadruddin explained in a detailed report of October 1990 after he had been in Jordan, workers’ remittances had brought to Jordan roughly the same amount of foreign exchange as all merchandise exports together. *“Yet what Jordan is witnessing today is a massive repatriation of a large part of its labour force. The number of returnees is not known at this time, but the Government estimates from the jump in school enrolments that over 100,000 people have returned in the two months since the crisis broke out. Jordan will need assistance in providing basic social and economic services to the returnees and in providing the training and associated costs of job creation. Indeed, as the Crown Prince himself noted to me, some of the expenses that Jordan has been meeting in the Palestinian refugee camps are very difficult to sustain in the current financial and economic crisis.”* Referring to Jordan’s request for consultations, the prince wrote, *“It is my finding that the request of Jordan for assistance indeed requires prompt international action. The Security Council should make every effort to see that these embargo-related losses are compensated in full in order to avoid destabilising the economy and the country. Jordan is not the target of the embargo, but it may be its greatest victim. As it is, the economy will be crippled within a few weeks if emergency financial support is not forthcoming.”*²⁰⁷

The UN Security Council was meeting more frequently than ever before, trying to counter the defiance of the President of Iraq. The following indicates what the United Nations was up against, and what it was striving to accomplish. “As regards Kuwaiti and third-State nationals in Iraq, resolutions 664 (1990) of 18 August 1990, 666 (1990) of 13 September 1990, 667 (1990) of 16 September 1990, 674 (1990) of 29 October 1990, 686 (1991) of 2 March 1991 and 687 (1991) of 3 April 1991 impose an obligation on Iraq to release, facilitate repatriation of, and arrange for immediate access to them, as well as the return of the remains of any deceased personnel of the forces of Kuwait and of the Member States co-operating with Kuwait pursuant to resolution 678 (1990) of 29 November 1990. Furthermore, paragraph 30 of resolution 687 (1991) requires Iraq to extend all necessary co-operation to the International

207 Poorvi Chitalkar and David M. Malone, *The UN Security Council and Iraq*, United Nations University

Committee of the Red Cross in facilitating the search for Kuwaiti and third-State nationals still unaccounted for. Despite its best ongoing efforts, the Committee has not received information as to the whereabouts of the persons reported missing in Iraq.”²⁰⁸

The Gulf War, that started with bombing sorties on 16th January 1991 attacking Iraq’s military targets, ended when Kuwait was freed by ground forces a mere 100 hours after they began their surge across Kuwait into Iraq on 24th February.

With subsequent rebellions by Kurds in the north of Iraq, while there was serious unrest amongst the Shia Muslims in the south, it was necessary to position 500 United Nations guards, in particular in northern cities to prevent massacres of Kurds. Sadruddin on behalf of the United Nations signed a Memorandum of Understanding with President Hussein, “*a spin-off of the ceasefire agreement Saddam accepted to end the Gulf War. That agreement maintains international sanctions and requires that Iraq dismantle its weapons of mass destruction.*” It enabled certain humanitarian programmes to continue, but the MOU was due to expire at the year-end (December 1991).²⁰⁹

Sadruddin made such trips to Baghdad to talk with the authorities as were necessary to reach breakthroughs, initially in relation to a shipment of food and medicine en route from India. Iraqi officials said eventually that they would not try to interfere with the distribution of this first major shipment of food and medicine. The Indian ship, carrying supplies for Indian citizens and other foreigners in need, had on board a number of relief officials who would be responsible for distributing the cargo once the ship docked. Some United Nations officials had been saying privately that the Baghdad government appeared ready to use food as a political lever, in the hope that shortages among Iraqis as well as foreigners would become an embarrassment to the United States and other Western nations, and induce them to ease the sanctions. (The sanctions were eased eventually, but not before the population had suffered from them.) With regard to the movement of people blocked in Kuwait and Iraq, Sadruddin reported that with Iraq refusing an airlift out of Baghdad and Iran blocking an exodus across Iraq’s eastern border, contingency plans were being made in Jordan to handle at least as many new arrivals as had already fled – by now over 600,000. “*We really don’t know what to expect,*” he said.²¹⁰

208 accessed on [http://www.Un.org/en/SC/repertoire/89-92/Chapter%208/Middle%](http://www.Un.org/en/SC/repertoire/89-92/Chapter%208/Middle%208)

209 Prince Sadruddin Press Clippings, <http://www.ismaili.net/press/jrns.0011.html>

210 Prince Sadruddin Press Clippings, <http://www.ismaili.net/press/jrns.0001.html>

Fortunately the prince's skill in diplomacy brought about the outcome the world had been hoping for. Neal Ascherson of *The Independent on Sunday* wrote on 5th May 1991, "He supervised the repatriation of more than a million people escaping from Kuwait, mostly through Jordan. Then he prepared to cope with refugees from Iraq itself during the fighting, but surprisingly few came, discouraged, he guesses, by lack of fuel and fears of bombing on the roads. The aftermath of war brought the real test: the chaos in the demilitarised zone on the Iraq-Kuwait frontier, the insurrection and flight of the Shia, the unexpected Kurdish catastrophe, and the still-unfolding disaster of Iraq itself after the destruction of its infrastructure."

Executive Delegate of the Secretary-General for a United Nations Inter-Agency Humanitarian Programme which dealt with problems of Iraq's border areas

In the immediate aftermath of the Gulf War in 1991, the Secretary-General dispatched an inter-agency mission to assess the humanitarian needs arising in Iraq and Kuwait. The mission visited Iraq from 10th to 17th March 1991 and reported that "the Iraqi people may soon face a further imminent catastrophe, which could include epidemic and famine, if massive life-supporting needs are not rapidly met." (S/22366, para. 37).

A United Nations Press Release of 9th April 1991 announced the appointment by the Secretary-General of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan as Executive Delegate to co-ordinate a humanitarian programme for Iraq's border areas.²¹¹ Again, the prince's mission required diplomatic finesse. President Saddam Hussein was deeply suspicious of the UN, and was loath to do anything that would benefit the country's Shia Muslims. One journalist wrote in May, "Prince Sadruddin, at present heading the UN relief operation in Iraq, has acted again and again over the years as the special representative of the Secretary-General in refugee crises. With more than thirty years of experience in this field, he operates as a sort of supreme co-ordinator who brings together governments, popular leaders, the UN agencies, the non-governmental organisations and charities, and the Secretary-General's office. His task is not just succour for displaced victims, but planning their return

211 Press release SG/A/455, IK/15 of 9 April 1991

to their homes and – increasingly – acting as a raiser of funds from the rich nations.”²¹²

Throughout 1991, with growing concern over the humanitarian situation in Iraq, the United Nations proposed measures to enable Iraq to sell limited quantities of oil to meet its people’s needs. On 15th August, the United Nations Security Council resolution 706, adopted by thirteen votes to one, stipulated a mechanism that would allow Iraq to sell oil in return for humanitarian aid from Member States. The Council, acting under Chapter VII, adopted the resolution after recalling resolutions 661 (1990), 686 (1991), 687 (1991), 688 (1991), 692 (1991), 699 (1991) and 705 (1991). The provisions of Resolution 706 functioned in a way similar to that which was later implemented in the Oil-for-Food Programme of the latter 1990s: it determined that Iraq could sell oil for up to \$1,600,000,000, following approval of each sale by the Security Council Committee established in Resolution 661 (1990). It also decided that part of the proceeds from the sale of the oil would be used for payments to the United Nations Compensation Commission to help compensate Kuwait after the Iraqi invasion. However, Iraq refused initially to sell the oil under this resolution, claiming it was a violation of its sovereignty and that it imposed a “guardianship” on its people.

“Prince Sadruddin threads his dangerous way between the victorious coalition, the Iraqi government, the Kurdish leaders and the problems of the Secretary-General, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar”, wrote a London journalist. “He is expected to appeal to Saddam to carry out the UN Security Council resolution calling on Iraq to sell \$1,600,000,000 worth of oil under tight restrictions, with most proceeds to be used to buy food and medicine or to pay off war debts, other oil sales being forbidden by the sanctions.”²¹³ The humanitarian programmes the prince was overseeing in Iraq were already short of cash, with donations affected by frustration over Iraq’s refusal to abide by the oil-selling plan. Sadruddin had appealed for \$418,000,000 to cover costs through to the end of the year, but had received only \$300,000,000. Week by week, Sadruddin had been maintaining the necessary contacts with the Iraqi authorities so that Resolution 706 would remain actively on everyone’s agenda. “*When the principle and the mechanism of this resolution are accepted by all the countries concerned, my office will be entrusted with*

212 Neal Ascherson, *The prince and the paupers*, *The Independent* on Sunday, 5 May 1991

213 Idem

implementation and with supervision to ensure that it all goes through smoothly”, he explained.²¹⁴

Over the closing months of 1991, as Sadruddin was having to shuttle to and fro to the border areas to get help to the most desperate displaced people, he found the Iraqis *“living in disastrous conditions. What water is available is polluted, epidemics threaten, and everyone is undernourished because the basic handouts are limited to only what is really indispensable.”* While he finally managed to negotiate successfully with Tariq Aziz, Iraq’s Foreign Minister, for the establishment of a UN relief programme for tens of thousands of Shia Muslims trapped in deteriorating conditions in the marshlands of southern Iraq, Sadruddin took the view, now gaining support in the Security Council in the face of American and British reluctance, that lifting sanctions against Iraq was the central point. *“There is no way that Iraq can restore any kind of economic life until sanctions are lifted, at least partially. The Catch-22 here is that they are compelled to maintain humanitarian relief while sanctions last. If the Iraqis were allowed to get on with reconstruction, we could probably withdraw very quickly.”* Asked whether he thought that there was a conflict of aims – that the coalition was really working to overthrow Saddam Hussein, whereas the UN relief operation was solely humanitarian, Sadruddin said that he did not believe that there was any clear thinking about that. *“But there is a contradiction in making the civilian population pay such a heavy price for sanctions, especially with a hot summer coming and its risk of epidemics, in making people who have already suffered a lot pay an even greater price – in the hope that this will bring about political change.”*²¹⁵

It all took time, but the distressed Shia in the south of the country were now supplied with basic necessities until they felt that it was safe enough to return, and Sadruddin was confident that he would succeed in extending the humanitarian aid arrangements beyond the end of 1991.

From then on, the international community continued to keep a strict eye on Saddam Hussein’s regime, trying to minimise the suffering of the people. Most of the sanctions remained in force for far longer than had been envisaged, in fact through to 2003. Many readers will remember how questions of inspecting the Iraqi government’s supposed stocks of “weapons of mass destruction” filled the media columns worldwide for some time, and how a new Iraq war started, when a combined force of troops from the

214 Idem

215 UN Office of the Iraq Programme Oil-for-Food

United States and Great Britain (with smaller contingents from several other countries) invaded Iraq in March 2003 and rapidly defeated Iraqi military and paramilitary forces. On 9th April, the statue of Saddam Hussein in central Baghdad was torn down. “While all previous attempts to overthrow the regime had failed, the fall of Baghdad put an end to the blitz offensive launched by the United States and their allies on March 20th, 2003.”²¹⁶ These dramatic events brought to an end a twenty-four-year regime that had caused a great deal of suffering by Iraqi people and would, *it was hoped*, usher in an era of democracy.

216 Euronews, 9 April 2013, in an article entitled “Ten years on”.

19

The Prince, the United Nations, UN peacekeepers and the Rwanda genocide

There's a linkage between the presence of refugees and the problems of peace and security.

Sadrudin Aga Khan

Some of Prince Sadrudin's views on the United Nations

In the early 1970s, Prince Sadrudin in an interview with a Dutch journalist defended the United Nations, while being aware that the UN was in some respects not altogether living up to the high vocation set down in the Preamble to the Charter and its Article 1 (the latter already quoted in chapter 5):

Preamble

We the peoples of the United Nations Determined

- to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
- to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
- to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
- to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

And for these Ends

- to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and
- to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and
- to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and
- to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

Have Resolved to Combine Our Efforts to Accomplish these Aims

Accordingly, our respective Governments, through representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations.

The Purposes of the United Nations are:

To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;

* * *

The transcript of part of that interview with the Dutch journalist reveals some of Sadruddin's thinking in regard to the United Nations.

Interviewer: Mr. High Commissioner, it's very good of you to come out of your office for a while in this great big building that was built for the League of Nations – the cradle and the grave, one could say, of the League of Nations. Is there any reason for all this pessimism, to think that one day it could also be the grave of the United Nations?

A. *“Well, that would mean that world war would again face us, because as you know, the death of the League of Nations was linked directly with the World War. And I think one has to hope and pray and believe that there will not be another world conflict. This building has particular meaning for me, because my father was President of the League of Nations, as you know. I do hope that the UN is going to be able to look forward to a better future.”*

Q: Right. 25 years after San Francisco, there are many people, not only General de Gaulle, who have virtually written off this organisation as “a child with a too-big head” as we say in Dutch, maintaining that it’s not doing enough in the way of world politics, in the way of world peace, and not even for the social development of the less developed nations. Do you share this rather grim view?

A. *“No, I don’t. I don’t think I would be working for this organisation if I did share this view. I believe that there is room for improvement certainly. The UN should be able to do much more. I think it should improve itself before blaming it always on the governments, and saying that the big powers and other governments do not sufficiently support UN programmes, do not give generously enough to the UN programmes. There is need for change, I think the UN has to be streamlined, the Secretariat has to be improved, one has to have much more real coordination, not just talk about it, to have a UN global approach, especially on a country-by-country basis – which is finally where the performance and the results of the UN are judged.”*

Q: What would you say is really wrong with the UN, is it the structure itself, the veto of the big powers, the lack of interest that the big powers seem to have in the organisation, saying we’ll settle problems our own way, or what?

A. *“I feel first of all that the UN should really be a world organisation, and politically this means obviously that all governments have to be members, and naturally I am thinking essentially of China. I believe that there should be universal representation in the world body. Now this is one thing that is wrong politically, and a great deal should be done to promote the universality of the UN. I think also that the UN has been hamstrung a great deal because of the deadlock that sometimes takes place as a result of bilateral interests, like for instance the big powers, who are sometimes not interested in using the UN as*

much as they could, because they feel it is in their interest to work bilaterally rather than through the international organisations. I think the UN should do something to prevent this, essentially to be able to prove not only to governments but to public opinion that multilateralism in the political field and in the field of economic and social development is in the general interest. And since the world is a very small place today, what is in the general interest is also in the interest of the individual member governments.”

Q: Well, that would call for a better image of the United Nations, and a better image would start with its own image-making. The public information office doesn't work very well, does it?

A. *“Well, no, perhaps it doesn't. I think there is room for improvement there, certainly. I think that here again, you know, one should try to get young people more aware of what the UN does, not so much the ideas of the UN, the idealism of the Charter and so forth, but what it does in a concrete way in the developing countries; what it has done to preserve peace, even if it does seem to be hamstrung occasionally; what it could do to restore peace. And I think the information media today which is so vast, and where you have such tremendously effective means at your disposal, should be used much more actively by the UN Secretariat. There should be initiatives taken. I think that a lot of what the UN does in the economic and social sphere is largely ignored, and that I think is largely the fault of the UN information system.*

“In my Office, for instance, we have been able to solve refugee problems permanently. I think people know this. Millions of people have been integrated or resettled or repatriated through this multilateral system of the UN. Furthermore, in the field of health, in the field of labour, children's welfare (I am referring to UNICEF), in the field of development, the UN Development Programme is doing a great deal which is largely ignored. And one should not always focus on the shortcomings of the UN in the political field, one should be able to project what it is doing in these other fields, and focus more on the real results that have been achieved.”

Q: We have some of the best and some of the worst here in Geneva. The World Health Organisation has eradicated malaria for millions and millions of people, and I wouldn't hesitate to mention this organisation called UNCTAD, the UN Conference for Trade and Development, it's 6 or 7 years

old, and I think it has promoted neither trade nor development. Why has this particular organ of the UN been a failure?

A. *“You should look towards the governments. Governments have been extremely unrealistic in passing a lot of resolutions that don’t really have any meaning. And many of the resolutions that are voted today in the General Assembly or in the agencies, like the one you mention, are not worth the paper they are printed on. And I think this is sad. I think there’s a false sense of judgement. Government representatives think that if you get a point through in a resolution it means something, but it doesn’t really mean anything, nobody will probably read the resolution. It’s all very sad. The developing countries should realise that you can’t just blackmail the rich countries to obtain money. That money is sometimes not very well spent. And also the rich countries should understand that if you don’t promote development, either through UNCTAD or the other UN channels or bilaterally, we are going to go towards a head-on clash, a head-on collision with a major disaster. Because as you know very well, the struggle today is against illiteracy, against disease, against over-population, against a low standard of living, and if that gap between the rich and poor is not narrowed somehow, the rich countries will perhaps suffer even more than the poor countries in due course.”*

Q: All this might call for a stronger leadership of the Secretariat itself. U Thant has said, rather apologetically, “I work for 126 or 127 governments. How do you expect me to take stronger initiatives?” I don’t think that that is always a valid excuse, do you?

A. *“Well, I have always believed, you know, that a lot of initiatives can and must come from the inside. I think if you wait for governments to take the lead, you can wait for a long time sometimes, for all the reasons that you have just pointed out. Of course it is very difficult at times to take initiatives, but I think it is something that has to be looked at across the board. In many areas, politically, economically, initiatives can be taken, as long as you have very carefully beforehand determined in what particular direction you can obtain results. This means that you have got to be in contact with the realities of the world. You have to be able to find out whether initiatives will succeed, and I really believe that occasionally they can succeed. I think there is a lot of information that can be somehow put out by the UN Secretariat. There is a*

lot of secret diplomacy that can be carried out, there's a lot of convincing that can take place if you have the right contacts at the right level, and if you have sufficient coordination within the Secretariat to get the UN to move towards a particularly precise and well-formulated objective. So I am sure that you are right when you say that initiatives can be taken, should be taken – in the general interest.”

On another occasion, the prince said that he thought that in the new world order (a term he was reported as using ironically), the concept of sovereignty had to give way. *“When you have a situation which threatens international peace and security, when a refugee problem becomes a massive exodus, it's no longer a problem for the country itself and provides a locus standi for international action. I am interested in this French idea of a “droit d'ingérence”, a right of intervention going beyond the Geneva Conventions and providing the international community with some legitimacy.”* He went on to say that the UN had to change. *“It has to be based on a larger constituency than the Security Council. Germany and Japan are outside it, though they are the strongest economic powers in the world now. That is an anachronism; the basic underpinnings of the UN belong to 1945.”*²¹⁷

* * *

On one occasion, the prince said to me at the end of a meeting that we had both attended, *“When you start to speak of the UN, people's eyes begin to glaze over...”* This was before 7 April 1994 and the explosion of violence in Rwanda unleashed within hours of the shooting down of the aircraft carrying back the presidents of both Rwanda and Burundi from meetings in Arusha (Tanzania). Killings of Tutsis and of moderate Hutus, on a scale previously unimagined by the world but planned for some time by extremist elements of the Hutu regime, was triggered. Ranks of the Presidential Guard and mobs armed with guns, machetes, grenades and lists of Tutsis went from house to house to kill men, women, children and babies. They set up road blocks to prevent movement within the cities and towns. A reign of terror had begun which lasted a hundred days and cost at least 800,000 innocent lives – some say in excess of a million.

217 Neal Ascherson, *The prince and the paupers*, *The Independent on Sunday*, 5th May 1991

Rwanda shortly before 7 April 1994

Against a background of civil war, peace negotiations were held in Arusha, Tanzania between the Hutu government and the Rwanda Patriotic Front, the armed movement initiated in Uganda by Tutsi refugees no longer willing to live as second-class citizens outside their country thirty years after being forced to flee. The Arusha Accords, signed in August 1993 and providing for demobilization by both sides, turned out to be ineffectual even though the pretence that they were going to be adhered to was kept up for months.

Warnings of trouble brewing had been given *inter alia* by two United Nations Special Rapporteurs (1991 and 1993), and by the British NGO Oxfam, the latter reporting that Rwanda “stands at the brink of an uncharted abyss of anarchy and violence, and there are all too many historical, ethnic, economic and political pressures that are likely to push it over the edge.”²¹⁸ The 1993 Special Rapporteur, Mr. B.W. Ndiaye, had carried out a mission to Rwanda in April 1993, reporting back to the Commission on Human Rights which took his report at its fiftieth session in August 1993.²¹⁹ In Mr. Ndiaye’s succinct prose, we read that during 1992, he had “received reports and allegations relating to extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions of unarmed civilians by the Rwandan security forces in connection with the armed conflict between government security forces and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR) since October 1990”. He had also received information concerning “killings of members of the Tutsi minority...allegedly perpetrated with direct or indirect involvement of the security forces.”(para 2) He wrote that his work had been greatly facilitated by the considerable amount of information brought to his attention by various human rights organizations, both Rwandan and international, which he said was on the whole sufficiently convincing and precise to be taken into account. Making special mention of the report of the International Commission of inquiry, which he was able to use as his main working document because of its methodical and specific nature and the diversity and consistency of the testimony it contained, he had concluded after cross-checking that the

218 Quoted by Stephen Kinzer in his book *A Thousand Hills* (p.115)

219 Economic and Social Council: Document E/CN.4/1994/7/Add.1 of 11 August 1993: Commission on Human Rights, Fiftieth session, Item 12 of the provisional agenda – Report by Mr. B.W. Ndiaye, Special Rapporteur, on his mission to Rwanda from 8 to 17th April 1993

substance of the allegations of human rights violations and in particular of extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions could be regarded as established.

The Special Rapporteur referred to President Habyarimana's seizure of power in a 1973 coup d'état (5 July 1973), when about 50 political leaders from the previous regime were reportedly "done away with" and practices of ethnic discrimination, already causing the expulsion of Tutsi from schools and universities,²²⁰ were institutionalized. New refugee flows numbering tens of thousands were a result – and were of concern to Sadruddin Aga Khan's Office, of course, requiring new relief and settlement measures in the four countries surrounding Rwanda. The Rwandan friends I made in Geneva in the 1980s, Damien Ngabonziza and his wife Thaciana, fled on foot at night through the Virunga mountains, having (like many others) received a warning that they would be killed if they did not leave the country.

The Special Rapporteur related how after Habyarimana's coup d'état, regional rivalries were added to the existing ethnic antagonism, with the north-west, the home region of the president, enjoying privileges in relation to the rest of the country. While the majority of the population reportedly considered "that it is possible for the two main ethnic groups to live together peacefully, there is a certain élite which, in order to cling to power, is continuing to fuel ethnic hatred, for instance by spreading rumours prejudicial to the Tutsi." (para 20) "Real power remains vested in the President of the Republic, who controls the army, the police force and most of the local government... A climate of mistrust and terror currently prevails in Rwanda... The prevalence of crime is also sometimes used to cover up acts of political violence. There are several cases of murder or attempted murder of political opponents, journalists or troublesome witnesses that have been passed off as ordinary crimes." He reported that the situation had become particularly explosive with the distribution of weapons to civilians by the authorities. (paras 21-22) The report referred to the number of displaced persons, between 900,000 and one million, adding "an indeterminate number of persons who, as a result of local acts of violence whose presumed perpetrators are still at large, live in a permanent state of terror and dare not move back into their homes, cultivating their fields in the daytime and spending the night in the open or with members of their families." (para 23)

220 Antoine Mugesera, *Les conditions de vie des Tutsi au Rwanda de 1959 à 1990 – persécutions et massacres antérieurs au génocide de 1990 à 1994*

In the section of the report labelled “A. Types of violations”, the Special Rapporteur wrote that killings had been taking place not only in the combat zones during or after clashes, but also in areas situated some distance from the hostilities. “In the latter case, it has been shown time and time again that government officials were involved, either directly by encouraging, planning, directing or participating in the violence, or indirectly through incompetence, negligence or deliberate inaction.” The number of victims had sometimes reached tragic proportions, as for example in Kibilira, where at least 348 persons were said to have been killed in 48 hours shortly after the outbreak of war in October 1990.(para 28) In the following paragraph, Mr. Ndiaye reported that death threats and “political” assassinations had been used to intimidate or eliminate the regime’s opponents, witnesses of human rights violations, or human rights activists. Such violations of the right to life had sometimes been committed by government officials.

In the section of his report labelled “B. Persons responsible for violations”, he reported that it had been noted that those committing the violations had been manipulated or directed by some higher authority. Speaking of violations attributable to the Rwandan armed forces, the Special Rapporteur spoke of the hurried recruitment campaign after the start of the armed conflict, increasing numbers from five to forty thousand men within a few months. The undue haste with which recruits had been selected and instructed had had negative repercussions on the discipline of the combatants and on their training in the rules of war. These inadequacies, combined with the low wages received by the soldiers, facilitated the crimes committed, such as the endemic practice of raping Tutsi women (cases of 12-year-old rape victims have been reported), looting, armed attacks, revenge killings and murders of civilians (para 33)... “Soldiers of Bigogwe camp (Mutura Commune) are said to have organized fake attacks by rebels during the night of 4 February 1991, so that they could then unleash indiscriminate and bloody reprisals against those alleged to be responsible. The FAR are also accused of incitement to murder and of giving logistic support to the killers...setting up roadblocks.”(para 35)

The report goes on along similar lines for another twenty paragraphs, each tending to be quite as alarming as the others (under headings *Violations attributable to local government officials*, *Violations attributable to political Party militias*, *Violations attributable to clandestine organizations*, *Violations attributable to private individuals*, *to the Rwandese Patriotic Front...*; *Absence of the rule of law*, *Tradition of impunity*, *Judicial system* (lamentable), *Absence*

of any system for the protection of ethnic minorities, *Injurious propaganda*). Then come the Special Rapporteur's conclusions and recommendations.

The word "genocide" was brought into use by the Special Rapporteur before the much larger-scale violence began, and unfortunately, there was really no time to implement the recommendations before April the following year, for they would have required years rather than months, and furthermore, they would of course have required the goodwill of the authorities, that patently was not available. The Special Rapporteur must have realized that there was little hope of action being taken on his recommendations before things got out of hand, although his paragraph 60 and the first line of his paragraph 61 remain significant in the circumstances:

"These recommendations take as their starting-point the principle that although their country is poor and overpopulated and they are exposed to all the evils of underdevelopment, Rwandese citizens, whatever their ethnic group, political affiliation or social origin, have the same fundamental rights as all other citizens throughout the world. There is no reason why their lives should not be as precious and well protected as the lives of citizens of the Netherlands, for example. The international community cannot remain indifferent to their situation and must therefore provide its assistance wherever that of the Rwandese State is inadequate or non-existent."

A UN Peace-keeping mission was sent to Rwanda in October 1993, with at its head Major-General Roméo Dallaire, an experienced and highly conscientious Canadian officer. Very soon after he arrived and almost daily from then on, he provided the UN New York with graphic accounts of the dangerous way in which events were moving towards some sort of climax.

Over months prior to its getting off the ground, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda, UNAMIR, set up by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations headed by Kofi Annan, had had its strength cut back successively by the Security Council to one that was almost meaningless in the circumstances. Stephen Kinzer writes in his book *A Thousand Hills* that Major-General Dallaire, far from getting a thorough briefing for his mission, was nowhere near grasping "the intensity of the maelstrom into which he was stepping". Like his boss Kofi Annan, he was forced to accept the drastic cuts in manpower that both France (a great ally of the dictatorial Hutu regime) and the United States had worked resolutely to bring about. It so happened that Rwanda had a seat on the Security Council at that time, occupied by a representative of the country's extremist faction, presumably in a position

to deliver misleading information about the government's intentions to the assembled diplomats.

The reluctance of Western political elites to provide political and material support for the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda meant that the UN Secretariat lacked the backing to undertake population protection and weapons raids. Members of the Secretariat adopted a defeatist approach to the UNAMIR commander's calls for a liberal interpretation of his mandate.²²¹ As a result, under the authority of Kofi Annan and his team at UN Headquarters who were handling several crisis situations at the same time, Dallaire had to proceed with a mission to do nothing more than "monitor observance of the ceasefire agreement" recently signed at Arusha, "monitor the security situation" and "report on incidents". "UNAMIR was deployed naively and undernourished, a deadly combination", an American diplomat wrote afterwards, quoted by Kinzer. It simply had no teeth. The day after a formal ceremony to inaugurate the UNAMIR headquarters – and this was many weeks before the fateful day of 7 April 1994 when things got out of hand – death squads attacked in five places and killed more than twenty Tutsi. "The swiftness, the callous efficiency and the ruthless number of men, women and children murdered principally by machetes and bayonets characterized this well-orchestrated operation," Dallaire reported to New York.

Two weeks later the Force Commander reported another massacre in which eighteen bodies were found with "hands cut off, eyes pulled out, skulls crushed in and pregnant women cut open." Over the next few months, he sent many anguished cables like these. Kinzer surmised that their only effect in New York was to contribute to a spreading sense that Dallaire was an excitable type, overly energetic, and not experienced enough to place African violence "in its tribal context."

Dallaire in his own account of events²²², relates how in January 1994, an informer whose name was simply given as "Jean-Pierre", a man hitherto seriously involved with the extremists, came to him with an astonishing offer: to reveal the plans by which death squads in Kigali could slaughter one thousand people in twenty minutes and the places where the army was hiding four large caches of rifles and grenades that were soon to be distributed to *interahamwe* (extremist) gangs. The Force Commander prepared a two-page

221 Michael Pugh, *Peace Enforcements, Key Developments*, in *The Oxford Handbook on the UNITED NATIONS*, p. 375

222 Lt.-Gen. Roméo Dallaire, *Shake hands with the devil. The failure of humanity in Rwanda*

cable outlining his plan to raid the arms depots whose existence violated a provision in the Arusha peace accords that banned the storage of weapons in Kigali. A few hours later, he was stunned by a return cable from New York that ordered him to suspend his planned raid on the grounds that it “clearly goes beyond the mandate entrusted to UNAMIR”.

Other informants came forward in the weeks that followed, all of them warning that powerful Rwandans were methodically preparing to exterminate both the country’s Tutsi population and the moderate Hutus. Dallaire in a series of cables to New York pleaded for permission to conduct “weapons search and seizure operations.” Kofi Annan reportedly turned down these requests, insisting that the UN force “cannot take an active role” and must limit itself to “a monitoring function”. Dallaire was warning that a catastrophe was imminent, but his superiors did not want to listen. Kinzer writes that “Annan made sure that no ambassadors ever saw the ‘genocide fax’, as Dallaire’s cable about Jean-Pierre came to be known. That cable was, as one American diplomat later wrote, ‘a starkly written warning sign, a scarlet message of danger to civilians, to the peace process, and to peacekeepers...(a) graphic cataloguing of detailed plans for violence and sedition.’”

To the few UN officials who saw it, however, it was inconvenient. It proposed an operation that would make the Rwanda mission more complex and therefore more controversial. So to the eternal shame of the United Nations, it was buried. “We were cautious in interpreting our mandate,” Annan’s deputy at the UN peacekeeping office, Iqbal Riza, explained afterwards, “because we did not want a repetition of Somalia”. The Clinton administration had been deeply scarred by the Somalia debacle, so following President Clinton’s lead, the Washington officials kept themselves in wilful ignorance of the looming crisis. Meanwhile, the desperate Dallaire received conflicting instructions.

Too late to prevent the genocide

On 5 April – two days before the start of the genocide (a term that for a very long time the UN wished to avoid using), the Security Council met to authorize an extension of the UNAMIR mandate. But it seemed impossible at that late stage to do much about it. It was a bad week for peacekeepers, as Kinzer writes, for the mission in Somalia was collapsing, and in Bosnia,

Serbian troops were storming across UN lines to attack the “safe haven” of Gorazde. No one wanted more bad news, and in his report on Rwanda, it appears that the Secretary-General Mr. Boutros-Ghali did not give any. Reportedly, despite the Force Commander’s explicit reports, he attributed much of the violence in Rwanda to banditry, claiming that the country’s leaders were committed to the peace process. Belgium, France and the United States skillfully evacuated their soldiers and nationals, reinforcing General Dallaire’s conviction that the rapid deployment of just five thousand well-trained and well-armed professional troops in the first days of the genocide would have stopped or substantially reduced the tragedy. Later Mr. Boutros-Ghali reportedly claimed that if he misled the Security Council, it was only because he had been away from New York for weeks and was not well briefed on what was happening in Rwanda.

Day in, day out throughout those terrible weeks of April and May, then throughout June and into July, the regime’s “Mille Collines” radio broadcasts continued to whip up hate, convincing the population that the invading Tutsi army would rape and murder them all and calling for the assassination of Madame Agathe, the conciliatory prime minister. Madame Agathe soon came to the Force Commander asking for protection for herself and her family, and Dallaire assured her of UN protection, posting UN blue berets in front of her house, but in the infernal situation in which he was placed he had no means of arresting the country’s downward spiral. He was not even able to prevent the atrocious rape and murder of the prime minister, whose UN guards were forced by the attackers to lay down their arms. It was not long before the radio called for the murder of Dallaire too.

There was talk of withdrawing UNAMIR, and Dallaire referred to “the Security Council and all its dithering”.²²³ Before long, as he wrote, “The Council had finally voted for the skeleton force option. The resolution’s phrases were pure UN-ese: ‘having considered... express regret... shocked... appalled... deeply condemns... demands... decides... reiterates... reaffirms... calls upon... invites... decides to remain actively seized of the matter.’” And he continued “With Resolution 912 now in writing...I had to explain to my troops – many of whom were very tired and sickly because of the lack of proper food and medicine, while others were in a zombie state after living horrific and traumatic experiences in this cesspool of guts, severed limbs, flesh-eating dogs and vermin – that although acts of heroism had been

223 Idem, page 308

performed by many of them, the world had decided not to support us in our efforts but instead to pull most of us out to safety.²²⁴

The horror that had begun in earnest cost the lives of up to a million people, killed in the most horrifying circumstances over one hundred days. Part of the Belgian Peacekeeper contingent was viciously murdered, and while by and large foreigners got to be airlifted out, there were also grievous casualties among missionary workers. Despite the exceptional dedication of those making up the peacekeeping force – many in the end severely traumatized and unfit for further service – the UN had failed Rwanda ignominiously.

All that remains as disturbing as ever in the minds of many Rwandans and all those who love the country and its people. Today one cannot travel far in the country without coming across one genocide memorial after another. My Tutsi friends, Damien and Thaciana, now living in Kigali, accompanied a friend and myself on a journey in the direction of Lake Kivu in February this year (2015). They pointed out a place where fifty thousand people had been massacred in the space of two weeks. They told us that it was not only Tutsi who were massacred, but all the moderate Hutus were killed too, along with Hutus married to Tutsis – as has been confirmed by many sources.

Could it not have been different?

Given the reputation of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, who was ready to take initiatives and to use diplomacy in tricky situations, it is grievous that he was passed over for the “top job”. Never would he have allowed that genocide to happen, not only because of his considerable experience in the 1960s and 1970s of Rwanda and its refugee flows, but because on taking office he would have brought into being the “action groups” that would have heeded all the warning signs, keeping abreast of each piece of pertinent information that came through and recommending appropriate action. Had the prince *only* been appointed Secretary-General in 1981 when a majority of nations voted for him, he would have seen to it that he was consistently briefed on the real situation in countries like Rwanda. He and his brilliant associates would have devised measures to temper the escalating Hutu extremism stemming from the presidential family that threatened to stifle all attempts to build a fairer society. Furthermore, recognizing the damage already done by colonial

224 idem, pages 322-323

policies in Rwanda over the years prior to 1962 when the country was a UN Trust Territory, Sadrudin, concerned by the damage neo-colonialism was doing in underpinning an unelected and unrepresentative government, would surely have found ways to bring about substantial change for the better.

Even if Sadrudin had been elected only in 1991, his influence would surely have saved those 800,000 to a million lives and intolerable, incalculable suffering on the part of survivors. The trauma of people who saw their families hacked to death, who themselves were amputated and scarred by machetes and who lost their homes, would never have occurred. The prince and his close colleagues would have understood the complexities of Rwanda, and would have managed to counter the heavy investment made by France in arms and in stationing part of its army in the country to help combat the Tutsi advance. That European presence in the situation of dynamite tended to assure the ruling Hutus that they had nothing to fear, and as a consequence, they went ahead with the massacres with impunity.

Surely, drawing on his diplomatic skills, Sadrudin, using preventive diplomacy, would (I firmly believe) have reasoned successfully with the presidents of the two members of the UN Security Council that were loath to allow a valid Peacekeeping force to be set up. President Mitterand and his son and advisor, Jean-Christophe were close friends of the Habyarimana family, and had been fully backing the Hutu regime for years, in order to keep Rwanda within the so-called “Francophonie”. President Clinton was smarting from his Somalia experience. The United States, the United Kingdom and France combined to deny the Security Council the means to rescue Rwandans from the atrocities. But if Sadrudin had been at the helm in the UN when the situation in Rwanda deteriorated to the extent that it did under Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, surely the Security Council would have felt bound to agree to realistic measures being put in place – instead of there being “too little, too late”.

As it was, the Force Commander in the conclusion to his long account wrote, “Could we have prevented the resumption of the civil war and the genocide? The short answer is yes. If UNAMIR had received the modest increase of troops and capabilities we requested in the first week, could we have stopped the killings? Yes, absolutely... If UNAMIR 2 had been deployed on time and as requested, would we have reduced the prolonged period of killing? Yes, we would have stopped it much sooner.”²²⁵

Five or six months before the start of the genocide, people like the archbishop

225 idem, page 514

of Rwanda mentioned earlier could see the writing on the wall and crossed into Uganda. How tragic that the rest of the world remained blind, week after week, to what was happening in that little overpopulated country. It is surely no wonder that the new Rwanda government, facing utter chaos and hardly knowing where to begin to rebuild the country, had no confidence whatsoever in the international community. It had to take over the abject ruins of a severely traumatized, dysfunctional country that was now short of not only the million or so killed in the previous hundred days, but also of about two million who had fled in terror into neighbouring countries, most of them into Zaïre – along with the “génocidaires” who had been allowed by the French military on the border to take their arms and equipment with them.

* * *

Heartache and remorse of the world body

Ten years later, Kofi Annan, now Secretary-General of the United Nations, tried to make honorable amends in publishing an apologia issued in a press release. It is worth reproducing several passages of this document.

Rwanda Genocide ‘Must Leave us Always with a Sense of Bitter Regret and Abiding Sorrow’, says Secretary-General to New York Memorial Conference

Following are Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s remarks at the Memorial Conference on the Rwanda Genocide, organized by the Governments of Canada and Rwanda in New York, 26 March (2004):

“The genocide in Rwanda should never, ever have happened. But it did. The international community failed Rwanda, and that must leave us always with a sense of bitter regret and abiding sorrow.

“If the international community had acted promptly and with determination, it could have stopped most of the killing. But the political will was not there, nor were the troops.

“If the United Nations, government officials, the international media and other observers had paid more attention to the gathering signs of disaster, and taken timely action, it might have been averted. Warnings were missed. I recall a 1993 report by a United Nations special rapporteur that spoke specifically of an impending catastrophe.

“The international community is guilty of sins of omission. I myself, as head of the UN’s peacekeeping department at the time, thought that I was doing my best. But I realized after the genocide that there was more that I could and should have done to sound the alarm and rally support. This painful memory, along with that of Bosnia and Herzegovina, has influenced much of my thinking, and many of my actions, as Secretary-General.

“None of us must ever forget, or be allowed to forget, that genocide did take place in Rwanda, or that it was highly organized, or that it was carried out in broad daylight. No one who followed world affairs or watched the news on television, day after sickening day, could deny that they knew a genocide was happening, and that it was happening on an appalling scale.

“Some brave individuals tried to stop the killing, above all General Romeo Dallaire of Canada, who is here with us today, the force commander of the small UN peacekeeping force that was on the ground at the time. They did all they could. They were entitled to more help.”

Mr. Annan referred to the huge loss of life, admitting that the 800,000 men, women and children had been abandoned to (as he said) the most brutal and callous of deaths, as neighbour killed neighbour and sanctuaries such as churches and hospitals were turned into slaughterhouses. He went on to say that an entire country was shattered and a terrible chain of events gradually engulfed the entire region in conflict. “Ten years later we are trying to pick up the pieces. In Rwanda itself, the United Nations is doing its utmost to help people recover and reconcile. We are present throughout the country – clearing mines, repatriating refugees, rehabilitating clinics and schools, building up the judicial system, and much else. In Tanzania, a United Nations criminal tribunal continues to pursue the main perpetrators of the genocide.”

Among other things Mr. Annan said was the realization that the genocide in Rwanda raised questions that affect all humankind – fundamental questions about the authority of the Security Council, the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping, the reach of international justice, the roots of violence, and the responsibility of the international community to protect people threatened by genocide and other grave violations of human rights. He said that there had been intense debate, and some genuine advances – practical and philosophical – on some of these questions over the past

decade. But he feared that whatever was done, confidence in an effective response in a similar situation in the future could be misplaced. His message was above all one of remorse for the past and resolve to prevent such a tragedy from ever happening again.²²⁶

* * *

As Sadruddin had said in 1972, people should know more about the successes of the United Nations, including:

“what it has done to preserve peace, even if it does seem to be hamstrung occasionally; what it could do to restore peace. And I think the information media today which is so vast, and where you have such tremendously effective means at your disposal, should be used much more actively by the UN Secretariat. There should be initiatives taken.”

The failure of Peacekeepers in Srebreniza in July 1995, with the massacre by the Serb army of a thousand men and boys and eviction of the women from that enclave purported to be a “safe haven” guarded by blue berets, occurred only 16 months after the UN’s failure in Rwanda. Given the troubled times we live in, might not Sadruddin, in the ten years as UN Secretary-General that so many had hoped he would be asked to serve, have succeeded with his diplomatic and strategic genius in laying down hard and fast rules for UN Peacekeepers that opposition factions would not dare to challenge? The question is of course rhetorical.

And did people’s eyes “glaze over”, as Prince Sadruddin said, when one started to talk to them about the UN because the world organization set up to maintain peace had lost the esteem of millions?

At the time of writing (October 2015), there are reportedly 124,746 uniformed men and women serving in 16 UN peacekeeping operations, of whom 19,292, seconded by 50 countries, are serving in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 10,539 in Southern Sudan and 9,142 in Mali. A total of 122 countries contribute uniformed personnel to these operations.²²⁷

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226 Press Release SG/SM/9223 AFR/870 HQ/631/2004

227 *La Liberté*, 2nd October 2015 and <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/factsheet>, 31st August 2015

On 4 May 2014, the UN Security Council announced the creation by the United Nations of a medal to be awarded to UN peacekeepers and civilian staff demonstrating great courage. The medal was being named after a heroic Senegalese peacekeeper who died while saving hundreds of lives during the 1994 Rwanda genocide. The proposal for the medal had come from the Kingdom of Jordan.

Captain Mbaye Diagne distinguished himself during the hundred days of Rwanda's genocide by conducting several missions, going through checkpoints held by armed militias, to save hundreds, maybe thousands of Rwandans. He was unarmed, and finally he was killed on 31 May when a mortar round exploded near his car. Rwanda's U.N. Ambassador, Eugene Richard Gasana, paid tribute to Captain Diagne in a speech in the Security Council, of which Rwanda was a member and sometimes president in 2013 and 2014. Ambassador Gasana, born a stateless refugee in Burundi, found it difficult to make the speech 20 years after those tragic events without briefly breaking down, and had to apologise to the other members for the short interruption.

Jordan's U.N. Ambassador Prince Zeid al-Hussein said that the fact that no U.N. official at headquarters had ever called the captain's family after his death "can only be described as shameful. I am absolutely sure everyone here would join me when I say we are sorry – profoundly sorry – for the way you have been treated by us here at the U.N.," he said." The award will be known as the "Captain Diagne Medal for Exceptional Courage".²²⁸

Two postscripts

An International Crisis Group

On the initiative of a group of well-known transatlantic figures who despaired at the international community's failure to anticipate the tragedies in the early 1990s of Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia and to respond effectively to them, an independent non-governmental organization was set up in 1995: the International Crisis Group (ICG). A former US Ambassador of the "mover and shaker" type, Morton Abramowitz and Mark Malloch-Brown (former UNHCR officer, former head of the UN Development Programme,

228 UN Honors Senegalese Peacekeeper with Courage Medal, www.voanews.com/content/un-honors-senegalese-peacekeeper

and former UN Deputy Secretary-General and UK Minister), hatched the idea which was to create an organization that would be unlike any other, with a highly professional staff acting as the world's eyes and ears for impending conflicts, and with a highly influential board that could mobilize effective action from the world's policymakers. This was exactly along the lines of Sadrudin's 1981 idea of an "action group", of "preventive diplomacy", and in fact we see that Sadrudin played a lead role in lobbying in Europe for the establishment of the ICG.²²⁹

"Kofi Annan, as the new UN Secretary-General in 1997, talked of a responsibility to intervene", writes Mark (Lord) Malloch-Brown in his book *'The unfinished global revolution'*. The world could no longer ignore, out of deference to national sovereignty, he argued, mass crimes committed against people by their own governments." And so little by little, the UN came to accept the idea of "Responsibility to Protect". This was of course, a case of "better late than never". The International Crisis Group is today generally regarded as the world's leading source of information, analysis and policy advice on preventing and resolving deadly conflict.

Conflict prevention

UN's failure to stop the genocide caused lasting damage to UN ideals and credibility. "The world bore silent and shameful witness to its own apathy. It was a failure of collective conscience and civil courage at the highest and most solemn levels of responsibility."²³⁰ The concept of peacekeeping underwent a transformation in the 1990s, and furthermore, conflict prevention moved to the top of the UN's agenda under the leadership of Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The General Assembly received a report in June 2001 entitled "Prevention of Armed Conflict", pledging "to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention".²³¹ The focus on conflict prevention had intensified following the international community's inaction in relation to the Rwandan genocide, and now it was proposed to give strong emphasis to the need for preventive strategies to address the underlying reasons for conflict.

229 Mark Malloch-Brown, *"The unfinished global revolution"*, 2011

230 Ramesh Thakur, *Humanitarian Intervention: from "Humanitarian Intervention to The Responsibility to Protect"*, in *The Oxford Handbook on the UNITED NATIONS*, p.396

231 Rama Mani, *Peaceful Settlement of Disputes & Conflict Prevention*, in *The Oxford Handbook on the UNITED NATIONS*, pp.311-2

20

Globalisation, 1998

Money has an enormous capacity to destroy

Professor Saskia Sassen²³²

Without human rights we cannot move forward as a global community

HE Ambassador Bill Richardson, United States Permanent Representative to
the United Nations, New York

Prince Sadruddin, from the time that he had been a recent graduate, expressed deep concern about some of the effects of globalisation, above all of course detrimental effects on the poorest communities, on countries struggling to develop as nations. On one of the numerous occasions on which he expressed this concern, he said, “*Economic fundamentalists have been on a rampage. It’s time to stop them. The economic paradise promised by unlimited, uninhibited, inescapable global -free trade has proved illusory. President Clinton acknowledges that world finance is in the worst shape since the Depression.*”

Sadruddin translated his concerns into the organisation, in the name of the Bellerive Foundation, of an important international conference in Geneva, run jointly with Globe International and with the co-sponsorship of the W. Alton Jones Foundation, Inc., Geneva, March 1998.

The subject of the conference was “*Policing the Global Economy – Why, How*

232 Said in the course of a lecture at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, on 22nd April 2015. Dr Sassen is the Robert S. Lynd Professor of Sociology and co-chairs The Committee on Global Thought, Columbia University. Her recent books are *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton University Press 2008), *A Sociology of Globalisation* (W.W.Norton 2007), and the 4th fully updated edition of *Cities in a World Economy* (Sage 2011). They are apparently translated into twenty-one languages.

and for Whom?” The programme was structured around four themes, each to be introduced over the four days by seven speakers (but in one case by eight) and followed by a time of questions. The first session was “*Beyond the Davos Culture*”, the second “*How can the Trade & Environment Agenda be Revived?*”, the third “*UN Reform: Balancing the WTO with a proposed ‘World Environment Organisation’*”; and finally, the fourth “*Globalisation: The Challenge of Global Governance Reflecting the Cultural and Ethical Dimensions*”.

Naturally here, as was the case in chapter 12 on the three-day colloquium on nuclear issues, one cannot reflect in a couple of dozen pages the tenor of all the major contributions made at the conference. Perhaps it is in order to feature simply the opening addresses and one or two addresses from each section, in the hope of conveying at least some of the subject matter, while commending the interesting record of proceedings edited by the prince.²³³

The opening addresses

Prince Sadruddin, referring to the title of the conference, said:

“By ‘Policing the Global Economy’, we in no respect imply the eventual establishment of some kind of supranational ‘police force’ in order to try to regulate international trade and global capital markets so their benefits flow to the poor, dispossessed and marginalised. Who could possibly organise and administer such a body? How could it ever operate effectively, even if instituted in some form or other?”

Rather, the prince said, the conference was a very real – and he believed the first – public attempt to bring into focus the varying strands of what was undoubtedly one of the greatest challenges, if not the greatest challenge, facing the world as the bi-millennium approached: “*Namely, what role does globalisation play in the creation of a just and sustainable future world society?*” Answering the question involved grappling with developments of unprecedented complexity and trying to resolve issues that cut across cultural, ideological and theoretical boundaries. It was no longer enough to examine the pieces of the puzzle through reductionist spectacles. Rather, the challenge was of assembling the pieces into a more coherent vision of the future.

The prince observed that globalisation took many forms and was advancing at tremendous speed. He suggested that before it generated a momentum such that one day we would have to face a rude awakening and

233 *Policing the Global Economy – Why, How and for Whom?* Edited by Sadruddin Aga Khan, Cameron May, 1996, second edition 1998

a realisation that there might be no way back, we did well to pause and take stock of its many implications.

"This consultation provides a forum in which to review, challenge and perhaps reconcile dominant dogmas... We will devote these three days to three spheres crucial to human survival: the social, the ethical, and the environmental. As in nature itself, each is inter-related. Globalisation through trade does not just affect economies. It affects whole societies, ordinary people and their culture. In human systems and ecosystems alike, diversity provides the basis for balanced communities. How can diversity be maintained in the face of market-driven imperatives?"

Globalisation also had profound implications for often closely held ethical and cultural underpinnings, the prince said. How could a diverse group of almost 200 nations, many of them with many different cultural groups, deal with the challenges now facing the world community? Was there a need to develop a universal ethic of planetary trust and stewardship such as is recognised by all religions? There was already a significant loss of cultural diversity. What were the implications of the loss of traditional cultures and beliefs as people were gradually integrated into the global marketplace?

"Globalisation also affects the environment", the prince said. "The Rio Principles and Agenda 21 both proclaim that trade and environment are mutually supportive... The relationship between trade and environment is obviously complex. Is free trade compatible with sustainable development?"

Sadrudin raised still more questions: *"How can the positive relationships between trade and environment be enhanced? And what kind of framework do we need to mediate between conflicting objectives? If the WTO does not have the capacity or the mandate to mediate, who should? Some have argued in favour of a new international body such as a World Environment Organisation. The WTO, various UN bodies, the IMF and the World Bank will increasingly have to join hands in addressing these issues. What kinds of domestic laws must be in place before trade avoids magnifying domestic environmental harm? Should the trade system require compulsory financial assistance to developing countries to help them set and enforce environmental laws? And how can countries protect their shared environment? What happens when countries cannot agree? These questions will continue to arise as markets grow and humanity's impact on the environment remains unchecked."*

The prince expressed the hope that as the conference was being held between the World Trade Organisation's Ministerial meeting in Singapore (9th-13th December 1996) and the follow-up in May, the report of the proceedings, to

be made available as the Bellerive/GLOBE contribution to the May ministerial conference, would prove useful.²³⁴

Mr Gérard Ramseyer, President of the State Council of the Canton and Republic of Geneva, extending a welcome on behalf of the State Council, observed in his address that recent Stock Exchange upheavals on the other side of the world had contributed to raising public awareness of the effects – and potential negative implications – of globalisation. “These sudden crises, which have damaged the economies of countries which until then were flourishing and were often quoted as examples of dynamism, undermine confidence and sow the seeds of doubt in the minds of the most ardent supporters of the ‘global village’”, he said. New geopolitical situations were also perturbing the fragile balances created by humankind. The bipolar world with which we had been familiar for fifty years had given way to a humanity in which zones of peace vie with a world which is tearing itself apart. In the four corners of the globe, whole populations endured the consequences. Political crises and mass exodus ruined once flourishing economies or dashed hopes for progress in developing countries. He thanked “the Bellerive Foundation and GLOBE International for having taken the initiative to bring about, in a spirit far removed from polarisation and partisan attitudes, a constructive confrontation of contrasting views on the theme of globalisation and its implications for the fabric of society.”

HE Ambassador Walter B. Gyger, Head of the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the International Organisations in Geneva, wishing participants success in this important conference, said: “You are asking the right questions at the right time and in the right place.” He went on to refer to the recent demonstration against the WTO and the movement against the MAI (Multilateral Agreement on Investment) that indicated that people felt anxious about the globalisation of the economy and the globalisation of many problems. “No one can deny the need for standards, codes of conduct and the development of ethical principles. I hope that all of you share my attachment to free markets, the freedom to communicate and the freedom of the individual. But this freedom goes hand in hand with a responsibility towards others, their cultures and our ecosystem – and the equilibrium between the two cannot be left to chance; this freedom must be exercised through conscious and responsible political decisions.”

234 *Policing the Global Economy – Why, How and for Whom?* Edited by Sadruddin Aga Khan. Cameron May 1986. As the copy I have is a Second Edition, one can assume that the report of proceedings was indeed found to be useful.

In a message, **HE Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations**, commended Prince Sadrudin for taking this initiative, “an exceptionally timely event”. He said that a key topic on the agenda was the relationship between trade and the environment. “The crucial task before us is making these mutually supportive. All too often emotions blur national approaches. The fruits of globalisation can be extended to the disadvantaged and the poor only if markets remain open, if we resist calls for protectionism, if we use positive measures such as the transfer of finance and technology, to achieve environmental goals in developing countries.”

HE Ambassador Renato Ruggiero, Director-General, World Trade Organisation, began by expressing his “most sincere appreciation to Prince Sadrudin Aga Khan, who has inspired and guided the effort that brings us here today. This is a further notable event in his long and distinguished career of international public service. I hope all the discussions at this important conference will reflect his selfless dedication to building global understanding.” The ambassador then spoke of how the trading system had expanded over the previous twenty years, and how it was now called upon to take account of environmental policy, financial instability, labour standards, ethical issues, development policy, competition law, culture, technology and in fact, “Globalisation can become shorthand for everything we might not like about the world as it is. Of course the world we live in is still unacceptable in many respects. The benefits of development are not evenly shared, and marginalisation remains a real threat for too many. To deny these realities is not an option. But it is equally not an option to deny the reality of globalisation, or the reality of the great opportunities it opens up to find answers to our shared global problems. The reality of globalisation is the reality of interdependence... trade remains a key element in sustaining and spreading the benefits of interdependence.”

The ambassador gave some facts, stating that over the previous fifty years, trade had been a powerful engine for growth. In 1950 its ratio to global GDP was 7%. Now it represented 23%, and a third of the twenty-five largest trading countries were developing countries. Over the past ten to fifteen years the share of developing countries in world trade overall increased from 20% to 25%. For the manufacturing sector it doubled from 10% to 20%, and on current trends it could exceed 50% by the year 2020. Ten developing countries with a combined population of 1.5 billion people doubled their income per head. From 1990 to 1996, developing countries recorded an

average growth of 5.4%, three times more than advanced economies. Exports from the industrialised countries to the developing countries had grown each year by an average of 10.1%, while exports from developing countries to the industrialised world had grown by an average of 7.3%. “This is the virtuous circle of globalisation”, he said and he went on to observe the role of new technologies in shrinking the constraints of time and space – the low cost of intercontinental telephone calls, the cost of computers and the availability of internet – contributing to the possibility for people the world over to access information and education. “Never before has a generation had so many resources for human development”, he said. “The lengthening list of environmental, social and ethical challenges that now transcend borders, jurisdictions and culture” called for building a global consensus in these areas, reaching enforceable global agreements, and building the kind of global institutions needed to manage them.

“As I said a few days ago to Prince Sadruddin, I believe that the real issue of this exciting conference should be how to improve global architecture for global needs.”

Mr. Tom Spencer, President, GLOBE International, declaring himself “a long-term observer and admirer of the WTO”, explained why the term “policing” in the title of the conference pointed the conference in the right direction. He spoke of the role in the tortured Bosnia and Herzegovina of the UN International Police Training Force (IPTF), going on to say: “We force ourselves to move beyond polite clichés to a real world in which people die if institutions malfunction. My instinct is that we face a global situation where our institutions are just about as *ad hoc* and just about as ill-co-ordinated and unholistic (*sic*) as those under which the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina currently exist.” Mr Spencer spoke of the forthcoming anniversary of the GATT/WTO, of efforts in the European Parliament, the US Congress, the Japanese Diet etc. to try to help the evolution of the world trading system as a key part of global interaction and global institutions. “Indeed, it was in that context that we had the first co-operation between GLOBE and Bellerive, face to face with key GATT Ambassadors from the southern nations in order to tell them that we did not feel we would be able to get the GATT Round through Northern parliaments unless there was an institutional home for the ‘trade and environment’ debate.” That was a success, he said, so Globe welcomed the establishment of the CTE/WTO Committee on Trade and Environment. He was happy that the CTE was now permanently established, but he would be

happier still if he thought it was capable of delivering anything.

On climate change, Mr Spencer, referring to Kyoto, provided some alarming facts, saying namely that even if we succeeded in reducing those emissions to a so-called acceptable level by the end of the next century, concentrations of those gases in the atmosphere would go on rising for another thirty years. And he asserted that temperatures would go on rising for another thirty years after that, and the sea level would go on rising for another thirty years after that. "Therefore, if you want to look at the time-scale of the type of challenges that we are dealing with, you need to put the intense need for decisions to be taken in the next few years, against the consequences stretching over at least the next two centuries. How do we communicate the sense of urgency from one part of our great piece of global architecture to another part of it?"

He went on to say that he had also learnt from Kyoto that discussions of equity, discussions of ethics, and discussions about how differing cultures interacted, were not the luxury of an academic seminar. They were absolutely crucial, and he went on to speak of a symposium that Prince Sadruddin and he had chaired a couple of years earlier in Brussels, "A private symposium on cultural and ethical aspects of the WTO, with particular reference to animal welfare issues." But, he said, animal welfare issues were just the toughest of the whole series of environmental issues, as they required our extraordinarily man-centred species to stretch its consciousness just a little bit further than we normally did. From that seminar, which took place with key people from the European Commission and officials from the European Union, they had brought back proposals to Ambassador Ruggiero. It seemed to them that not only were they desirable in their own right, but that to embrace such considerations in the core of the WTO was essential to the continued good functioning of the WTO itself.

Mr Spencer suggested that the world had "actually stumbled into globalisation by a mixture of chance, technology and the way in which history has panned out." It had no institution, or it had inappropriate institutions, some with very old practices that were acceptable for those original mandates in the 1940s and 1950s, but were now actively perverse. He hoped that the conversation about to be engaged in would be stimulating. "We have invited some of the world's most aggressive conversationalists to Geneva not in order to engage in conflict for conflict's sake. Indeed it is just possible that we may come to regret, at various moments over the next three days, having invited

the incompatible, the incorrigible and the incomprehensible to one dining room table. We aspire to a synthesis. But speaking personally, I would happily settle for a stimulus.” He hoped that it would be “an exhilarating conversation, both dangerous and deadly serious.”

Session I: Beyond the Davos Culture

The Rt.Hon Sir Leon Brittan, QC, Vice-President of the European Commission, said: “As a regular attendee at Davos, I plead guilty to being in a small way a part of that culture, and in no way wish to criticise it. On the other hand, it is clearly necessary to mix the deliberative and reflective nature of the Davos process and culture with the practical application of the results of that reflection.

“At the risk of anticipating somewhat tomorrow’s session on trade and environment, I would like to apply that approach to what might well be called the trade and environment conundrum, and to suggest some new policy directions. I hope to convince you that it is possible to solve all the trade and environment dilemmas so far highlighted by the Committee on Trade and Environment, and indeed to make it clear that the European Commission has an active plan for solving them.”

He took as his starting point the tendency for trade and environment to be seen in separate boxes, with separate policy communities. This was, he said, largely a function of the way in which governments were organised, with separate trade and environment ministries. His firm belief was that the two were mutually compatible: needing to be combined in a way which would achieve effective results for both sets of policies. There was a clear need for policy coherence here, he said, and with that in mind, he wished to tackle in turn some of the key problems in the trade and environmental field, namely MEAs (Multilateral Environment Agreements), eco-labelling, process and production methods and the precautionary principle. He would also like to say something about the Committee on Trade and Environment and the prospects for future trade liberalisation.

Sir Leon believed that the European Union should press hard to resolve the potential difficulties caused by the overlap between WTO rules and trade provisions in MEAs, though the case should not be overstated, for there were very many MEAs which co-existed with the WTO without major difficulties arising. After elaborating on this theme, he went on to speak of eco-labelling,

about which there had been a great deal of discussion in the CTE and elsewhere. It was time, he said, “to try to draw the discussion to a close with a view to achieving a clear and practicable conclusion.”

This long address which also covered other topics ended with the speaker saying, “It is time to tackle the difficult issues and to reach practical conclusions. We will never be able to satisfy everybody. But there is no insuperable difficulty in accommodating legitimate environmental concerns within trade policy if we focus our efforts on the central issues and do so in a determined and practical way.”

Session II – How can the Trade Environment Agenda be Revived?

Dr Gary Sampson, Director, Trade and Environment, World Trade Organisation

The intervention by Dr Sampson was made at the invitation of the chair to address some of the main questions posed from the floor following the keynote address by Ambassador Ruggiero. Dr Sampson began by quoting WTO’s two key objectives: to progressively remove trade restrictions that distort and restrict international trade flows, and to create and maintain the open and liberal rules-based multilateral trading system, and he went on “The WTO disciplines are primarily based on the concept of non-discrimination. Within its terms of reference, it is fair to say that the WTO has been successful in doing what it is supposed to do.”

The speaker referred to the questions raised as to whether trade and environment policies could be mutually supportive, whether globalisation could be considered an opportunity to enhance international co-operation and whether there was a constructive role for the WTO to play from the environmental point of view. He said that he thought there was scope for a constructive role for the WTO and that it was playing that role. “Growth is not of itself inherently environmentally-friendly. Sound environmental management policies should go hand in hand with increased economic growth. Such policies, however, are the responsibility of national governments, not the WTO.” In environmental goods and services, the WTO had a role to play, the speaker said, asserting that WTO had been working for years to remove the form of agricultural subsidies that led to the excessive use of agro-chemicals and loss of bio-diversity. He went on to say that WTO was the antithesis of a supranational body, so governments were free to adopt whatever national

standards they wished in respect of the environment or any other area, including cultural, social, environmental, ethical or economic matters. While national standards could be established and enforced nationally, the WTO was not the vehicle for enforcing those standards internationally through trade discrimination.

With regard to poverty in rural areas of Africa, Dr Sampson pointed out that WTO had not been assigned the role to help with problems of the lack of food and clean drinking water, yet WTO was “working hard within its terms of reference to advance the cause of least developed countries. The WTO is not an environmental policy-making institution and to the best of my knowledge its Members have no intention of it becoming one. International standards and initiatives are best agreed to multilaterally by those who have the expertise and capacity to do so.” The right of governments to do whatever they wished at home to achieve their own domestic environmental goals was never questioned.

Dr Vandana Shiva, Director, Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Natural Resource Policy, India

Dr Shiva pointed out that it was the poor in the Third World who fought hardest to protect the environment – “because nature’s capital is their only capital and they must protect it to protect their own lives and livelihoods. Trade liberalisation is becoming the biggest threat to the environment and the survival of the poor in India.” She said that US trade representatives had been visiting India from 1989 onwards “and threatening to use crowbar tactics to open up the Indian economy to US corporations”. She quoted one as saying that if a certain plant was not accepted “we would be subject to retaliation in all kinds of ways. Given that we have that kind of history of being forced to open up, I get a bit nervous when trade representatives suddenly speak on behalf of the Third World. I also think there is a second reason why things are going wrong, related to the fact that both the northern environmental community and the northern trade community sincerely believe that you need to be rich to be environmental. Last week at the WTO meeting a rather eminent economist said that you have to have a per capital income of \$175,000 before you can care.” But, Dr. Shiva said, it was the poor who were actually defending the environment in the Third

World “by literally putting their lives on the line.” She gave the example of a group she had been helping “that is fighting the relocation to their area of a steel manufacturing plant. The people have not allowed the plant to come for three years. The economics is very simple. The people know that, by destroying their economy, their environment and their ecosystems, they are providing a subsidy to big business. These people live in an extremely biodiversity rich economy in which peasants with one-acre plots can earn more than 100,000 rupees a year because of the richness of the biodiversity, not because of capital investment. The steel plant would give these people 100,000 rupees in total for resettlement, but would destroy them for life... Two women have been shot, but they are not giving up.

“These are the kinds of instances which remind us that you do not need a \$175,000 income. You need something else. A culture that recognizes that people are part of nature and the environment.”

After making many more points of interest, Dr Shiva said, “In conclusion, I would like to say that sovereignty of people and countries has been totally dissolved through the globalisation paradigm. No solution to poverty or environmental prices can be found without reclaiming sovereignty. We need to remember what sovereignty is. It is self-organisation, it is self-rule.” It cannot be managed from outside.

Session III – UN Reform: Balancing the WTO with a proposed ‘World Environment Organisation’?

HE Ambassador Rubens Ricupero, Secretary-General, UNCTAD

The ambassador began by saying that he believed that others would be better qualified to speak on this topic, but went on, “Beyond the issue of mistaken *dramatis personae*, I should also admit to some deep misgivings about the implications behind this session’s title. First of all, we are no longer living in the golden age of institution-creating – the optimistic, even naïve, 1950s and 1960s when people believed that the best approach to problem-solving was to start a new institution. On the contrary, ours is a sceptical, niggardly era when countries do not pay their dues to the UN: calls for the abolition of multilateral institutions are more frequent than for their creation.” He said that secondly, the analogy with the WTO was misleading, because it was only after a long and difficult process that following the non-ratification of

“the over-ambitious International Trade Organisation”, the “club-like inward-looking GATT” with its original membership of twenty-three had been replaced by the WTO “with a membership of 130 countries and a vigorous outward orientation”.

The speaker pointed out that the United States, only “on board” for the Rio de Janeiro summit on the climate after strenuous last-minute efforts had been made, “consistently used its unrivalled power to steer and drive the negotiations. Thus, as far as the environment is concerned, the biggest hurdles to overcome have frequently been those belonging to the most powerful and decisive member of the international system.” He suggested that it was instructive to look at how the UN’s High Commission for Human Rights had been established. “It is no coincidence that human rights and the environment are the two most important contributions of the second half of the 20th century to the advancement of the relationship of man to his fellow-beings and the living world.” What he called their “*idées-force*” were owed not to State bureaucracies or international organisations but to “the efforts of non-State actors – NGOs, alliances of private citizens, and the anonymous work of committed women and men from all walks of life.” He believed that governments should view the environment as an essential element in the planning of all economic projects. WTO, the ambassador stated, did not put barriers in the way of the international community pursuing shared goals in MEAs, and did not ride “roughshod over the existing MEAs and supporting national environmental legislation” as had been announced in the previous session. But he went on to say, “No invisible hand is at work to generate a sort of automatic, effortless harmony between clashing objectives”, and “unfortunately without government intervention, and in the absence of well-defined property rights for public goods or goods to which access is generally open – such as clean air, clean water, or biodiversity – these environmental assets have been treated as free goods in the economic production process.” Consequently, the speaker said, they had been overused in production activities. In these cases, there was a clear need for governments to intervene “especially where the sustainability of environmental services is endangered.”

The speaker had attended a meeting the previous week sponsored by several of the largest NGOs working in environment. It had been agreed there that the proposal for a world environment organisation was utopian, and instead there was a proposal for a “Standing Conference on Trade and

Environment” to be established. The intention, as he understood it, was “to make it easier for voices at all levels to consider in a collective and co-ordinated manner the international rules needed to ensure that the trade and the environment regimes are mutually supportive”, and he believed that only good could come of such a process.

Mr Edward Goldsmith, co-founder, International Forum on Globalisation

Mr Goldsmith made a telling statement at the very beginning of his address, saying that his thesis was that there are no effective institutional methods for ‘policing’ the global environment. To the extent that the global environment will be ‘policed’ at all it is only likely to be by mass social movements, he thought. “This will become easier as the global economy starts to break down. I do not see the development of the global economy as irreversible. The global economy is highly vulnerable and contains the seeds of its own disintegration.”

With regard to the notional World Environmental Organisation, Mr Goldsmith agreed with other speakers that such an organisation was not really feasible. For one thing, he said that to set it up was not in the interests of the large transnational corporations that controlled the global economy via the WTO and similar organisations, and “even at a national level, an effective environmental agency has yet to be set up. The Ministries of the Environment that now exist in most European countries do very little. They are invariably forced to toe the government line on all major issues. Anything they propose that adversely affects the government’s economic priorities is automatically rejected.”

**Session IV – Globalisation: The Challenge of Global Governance
Reflecting the Cultural and Ethical Dimensions**

**HE Ambassador Bill Richardson, United States Permanent Representative
to the United Nations, New York**

The ambassador began by saying, “I would like to commend His Highness, the W.Alton Jones Foundation and GLOBE International for organising this important conference. I was a very active member of GLOBE; I remember coming to Geneva some four years ago for one of the stimulating luncheons at the home of the prince, where we talked about refugees, the environment and human rights. Discussion thus far has been lively and intellectually

provocative. Much has been said of the Davos culture, and after this conference I wonder if people will be pondering on the Geneva, or Aga Khan, culture?”

He noted that as there had been increasing globalisation in all areas of human activity, including the economic, social and environmental spheres, environmental issues had received increasing attention and it had been recognised that many environmental problems, such as climate change, were global in nature. “We must all work together to take corrective action”, he said. Other environmental problems were essentially local or regional, for example diminishing supplies of fresh water, and there, the international community could share experiences and facilitate the transfer of information and technology to address the matter. “Governments of the world have recognised that globalisation touches all areas of our lives (and) under the auspices of the United Nations, governments and NGOs have met in Rio de Janeiro, Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing to draw up what amounts to a fundamentally new global consensus on issues such as environment and development, human rights, population, social development and women’s rights. I would emphasise that this is a global consensus – not western, not developing country, not a Davos consensus, but a global one. We all agree on the importance of taking an integrated approach to policy-making at all levels.” He elaborated on what had been agreed.

Turning to human rights, the ambassador referred to the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, putting emphasis on the word “universal” and saying that exceptions to the principle of full human dignity to all members of the human family undermined the dignity of all. The evidence of history, he said, was that human rights were integral to the promotion of peace and security, sustainable economic development and social equity, without which “we cannot move forward as a global community”. He spoke of the progress made on core labour standards, and in relation to women’s rights and population. “On the environmental front, increased attention to the status of women, including access to education and health care, have led historically to lower population growth rates”, with benefits to the environment, given the basic food and shelter needs of populations often under stress.

Finally, the ambassador pointed out that at the five international meetings he had mentioned, the major challenges the world faced had been identified – a first major step forward. “Our second step forward was reaching agreement on how we should approach these challenges: the result is an agreed-upon framework for addressing key cross-cutting issues of the next century. Now

we move on to the more difficult task of implementation. Rather than spend our limited time and resources on developing new mechanisms, bodies or organisations, we should get on with the task at hand, using the framework we have to implement the agreements already reached as we move into the next century.”

Dr Martin Khor, Director, Third World Network, Malaysia

Dr Khor suggested that on the topic of ethics and cultural perspectives, the session should look at this as it related to global governance. “The ethical dimension means that as human beings we have rights. It is thus a human rights issue: the right of individuals and countries. Ethics covers the rights of all human beings to fulfil their basic and human needs and thus implies an equitable form of distributing the world’s resources and the fruits of those resources.” He said that if sustainable development was to have any real meaning, it could be defined as a process by which the over-consuming elite of our world and the over-developed part of our world reduced their resources and enabled them to reach the two-thirds of humanity who were under-consuming, and to free those resources for the use of future generations. He said that both cultural diversity and socio-economic diversity should be respected. He pointed out that whereas it was generally recognised that countries had a right to help when they were weak and poor, the paradigm of partnership was being rapidly eroded, for many of the promises and pledges made at top United Nations conferences remained unimplemented or had become steadily eroded by the lack of political will. Thus the paradigm of North-South partnership had been overridden by the other paradigm of globalisation, which had strengthened over the previous few years in favour of the paradigm “let the market rule”. We had to ensure the survival of humanity as well as of the environment.

Closing Statements

Mr Tom Spencer, before handing over to Prince Sadruddin for the reading of the co-chairmen’s concluding comments, made a few personal comments “as someone who has listened and benefited tremendously from our debates.” He said that he was “still appalled by our inability to convey a sense of environmental urgency and ethical urgency to those who run the existing

ad hoc structures that we call global governance.” Referring to Mr Ruggiero’s allusion to the growth of world trade having compressed time and space, he said, “What it has done is to compress the time we have left to find a sustainable solution; it has compressed the space that we have to live in as individuals and societies on a crowded planet. We could say that we think the people of the planet deserve something approaching an apology for what has been blundered into, as well as what has been deliberately sought.”

“Finally”, he said, “we have at times had a slightly chaotic conversation, because we are all passionate about different aspects of the problems confronting us. What I have found genuinely exciting is the creative and accurate use of the word ‘paradigm’. I remain extraordinarily encouraged by this the last few days, and it gives me great pleasure to thank you all again.”

Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan thanked everyone, including representatives of the W. Alton Jones Foundation, for their generous participation in this meeting, as he put it. He expressed the hope that the media would “continue to explain and clarify this very complex debate beyond the confines of this room to public opinion – something which I deem to be essential.”

Because of copyright constraints the co-chairmen’s ten conclusions cannot be reproduced here. They were of course all important, not least the agreement “with the need to establish a framework to coordinate the MEA secretariats, both between themselves and between them and the multilateral system, in particular UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP and the WTO.

As the prince said, *“Those who come from the developed world have a very complicated time, and a hard task. In the underdeveloped world, in certain respects things are so much simpler. Priorities and values are not lost sight of. My wife, who is Greek, always reminds me of a wide formula of the Ancient Greeks: Pan Metron Ariston, which means, loosely translated, ‘In all things moderation’.”* “The major problem,” the prince said, *“is that we see a total breakdown of this fundamental principle today. The Ancient Greeks had a good word for this too, ‘hubris’. Society is always looking for more power and wealth.”*

He returned to threats that the world faced as a result of global warming and its long-term effects – like environmental degradation, which *“strikes blindly, killing both the innocent and the guilty – both the good and the bad – including animals, which have as much of a right to life as we do, and plants. It has ripple effects which we have not yet even begun to ascertain.”*

Finally, the prince said, *“We have heard a great deal recently about Outer Space; the threats of asteroids hitting Earth; the discovery of water on the Moon. So we may*

be running out of water here, but we can find more on the Moon! What better example of unbridled hubris. Let us continue to work together. Outer Space is interesting but we have serious and pressing problems to tackle right here. Whether we are believers or non-believers, perhaps the time has come to focus rather more on Inner Space."

* * *

Seventeen years after the Conference, Dr Saskia Sassen, the Robert Lynd Professor of Sociology at Columbia University, New York, and co-chair of the Committee on Global Thought, spoke in a lecture at Fribourg University on 22nd April this year on migration and globalisation in which she referred to expulsions, "when modest neighbourhoods become part of global finance. One instance of what we measure as development is actually expulsion, for huge tracts of land in Africa, Latin America etc. are bought up, leading to expulsions of populations." She revealed the statistics on foreclosures that led to urban land being laid bare until such time as the foreseen mega projects took shape, with total investment volumes in New York of \$55 billion, in London Metropolis of \$47 billion. "Qatar now owns more of London than the Queen", she told the audience. Crises come about as a result of the systemic feature of capitalism, producing extremes. Her books, including *The Global City*, first published in 1991 (updated in 2001) were quite possibly familiar to Prince Sadruddin, and if they were, he must have been horrified at what he read; and he could be horrified today at learning the scarcely believable statistics of foreclosures and corresponding contracts of recent years.

21

Outlook and personality of an outstanding man

He was a very parfit, gentil knight

Geoffrey Chaucer, 1342-1400, *The Canterbury Tales*

If I am suggesting that there are parallels between a fictitious 14th century nobleman and Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, it is because both were crusaders, and judging from Chaucer's description, the "parfit, gentil knight", who had been on innumerable crusades, was, like the prince, an exceptionally fine person of great distinction – "chivalrous, brave, loyal, generous, prudent and of good breeding", we read. But of course his preoccupations were totally different from those of the prince. He did not have the fate of millions of uprooted people on his shoulders, nor did he have a deep-seated concern about nuclear proliferation, or about globalisation, or about our environment – and yet still manage to forge and to nurture a tremendous range of friendly relationships, accompanied by his wife Princess Catherine Aleya, a Greek born in Alexandria who had been married earlier to a Lebanese businessman.

We have really seen from all that goes before what issues most concerned Sadruddin and the use to which he put his considerable gifts and his energy. People's appreciation of him, his own speeches and how he responded to enquiries in numerous interviews are also revealing of his outlook and his personality. In 1991, soon after the prince had set up Alp Action, he said to an interviewer that he attributed his commitment first of all to his family background:

"I have always tried, through the blend of East and West that is my birthright, to understand these two universes. I felt while I was studying that I would be able to contribute to a better understanding of some of the global problems, that have no boundaries.

He spoke also of the principle of Islamic solidarity and Muslim fraternity, the moral obligation not to lead a selfish life, particularly if one has been favoured at birth.

Speaking of his great friend Denis de Rougement, the Swiss philosopher (1906-1985), Sadruddin said,

*“Denis de Rougement was my inspiration and my master, a fantastic man. We were conscious of what the ancient Greeks called “hybris”, excessive ambition, the Faustian pact. It’s basically the myth of Icarus, who crossed the borderline that each human being should impose on himself by his own conscience. If man ventures beyond, if he starts playing at being god, will he not, sooner or later, in manipulating energy, in creating a substance that was not part of nature, have to give an account of his acts?”*²³⁵

Senator Edward Kennedy, for thirteen years chairman of a Senate sub-committee on refugees and one of Prince Sadruddin’s lifelong friends from the time they were students at Harvard, said in 1978, just after the prince resigned as High Commissioner, “Sadri cares for people and their condition and aspirations, and I know he helped to save the future for literally millions of families round the world. He leaves in place an invaluable instrument for peace and relief in the years ahead.”²³⁶

Dr Philippe Roch, who *inter alia* was the Director of WWF Switzerland until 1992, and from 1992 to 2005 Director of the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment, says that Sadruddin, whom he knew well, was, with his passionate concern for the environment, practically ahead of everyone else.

“He really was a pioneer – very few important people had the concern that he had so early on. We had a very great deal in common and it was a great joy to meet in various venues, such as in major events in Lausanne, Geneva and at his home in Bellerive, a magic place. He had tremendous courage to break the ground, for example in connection with the protection of seals with Franz Weber back in the late 1970s, and in relation to the nuclear threat. Though we did not actually work together, we were often working on the same themes and we co-operated very well to achieve the same goals on the protection of nature, for example elephants, the Alps or to stop the nuclear

235 Michel Chevallier, Dossiers Publics No.77, mai-juin 1991, *Sadruddin Aga Khan, l'aristocrate des Nations Unies*, page 33

236 Quoted by John Silverlight in *The Observer Review*, 1st January 1978 © Guardian News & Media Ltd 2016

madness. I only regret not having been with him even more, for our thinking and our activities were complementary to one another.”²³⁷

John Silverlight of *The Observer* wrote,

“Largely thanks to the good offices of UNHCR and to Sadrudin’s patience, tact and sheer diplomatic skill, nearly three-quarters of a million Sudanese refugees and displaced persons were repatriated or resettled. An even bigger test came with the violent birth of Bangladesh. The High Commissioner was accused both of not acting quickly enough and of acting too quickly, thus interfering in the internal affairs of Sovereign States. The criticism died down. The relief work went on... An old UN hand compared him to the great Dag Hammarskjöld. Sadrudin laughed: ‘Hammarskjöld was a cool Nordic. I’m an emotional Middle Easterner.’”

The article goes on:

“He said how difficult he had found it not to be rude to governments. Emotional, no doubt, controlled too. Even more than Hammarskjöld, Prince Sadrudin is that rare specimen, the truly international man. Born in Paris, a resident of Geneva, he looks a typical product of the affluent world. Yet when appropriate, he’ll say ‘We people of the Third World’. An aide remembers him walking in the mud in the Plain of Jars, in Laos, talking to the comrades in their quilted coats, the Pathet Lao, eating with them on rough wooden tables.”

Another journalist, after writing of the prince’s UN work over 30 years, wrote in 1991,

“Heads still turn when Prince Sadrudin enters a room. The years may have left him sadder and wiser, but the old Harvard polish glows, the brown eyes twinkle, the earnest, lopsided smile continues to disarm. He has preserved his independence. Some of it comes from wealth but the independence is also to do with the supra-national nature of the family, hereditary heads of the Ismaili branch of Islam. This curious status of “world citizenship” has helped him to become the most accomplished of super-diplomats. In the past few years, he has been constantly on the move.”²³⁸

And how Sadrudin cared about nature! The more one reads about what he did in partnership with very many others through Alp Action and

237 Conversation with the author. Dr Roch was Directeur de l’Office fédéral de l’environnement, des forêts et du paysage avec le titre de Secrétaire d’Etat (400 collaborateurs et collaboratrices, budget de 600 millions de CHF), 1992-2005. He has also been a member of the board of directors of the Global Environment Facility, of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and of the United Nations Environment Programme

238 Neal Ascherson, *The prince and the paupers*, *The Independent on Sunday*, 5th May 1991

looks at the many press photos, the more his involvement with the life of the mountains appears to have delighted and fulfilled him. Seeing him crouching to examine handmade wooden tiles with some of the apprentices who were about to work on the re-roofing of a 17th century Gruyerian chalet in the Vanil Noir nature park, freeing the great bearded vulture so long absent from the Alps or shovelling earth over the first sapling of a huge replanting project, one could sense his delight.

The prince was very interested in young people, and saw them as future leaders. In a speech in Oxford in 1983, he said,

*"It is to the people – and especially the young – that we look for a lead in the struggle to create a world based less on power and more on concepts of justice, equality and freedom. The people who vote in this and other democracies have far more influence in bringing reform pressure to bear on governments than large international organisations which tend to be hamstrung by politics and bureaucracy. Throughout history, the force behind some of the most significant and lasting reforms may be seen to have emanated from small groups of dedicated individuals, producing imaginative solutions to problems which seem to elude the technocrats."*²³⁹

Among Sadruddin's specific concerns, as we have seen, were the arms race of the two superpowers and the placing of nuclear arms in an increasing number of countries. He gave everything he had to raising consciousness about the threat not only to human life but to the environment as a whole. He seized on every means available to him to create and support efforts beneficial to our life support system, means ranging from his participating actively in the World Wide Fund for Nature to campaigning with his wife to raise consciousness about the effects of the fur trade, to undertaking animal protection activities in Africa, to campaigning for circuses without animals, and to launching an almost infinite number of projects to protect the Alps, the oceans, the Black Sea and so much else.

Sadruddin was a very highly cultured man and his interest in mankind knew no limits. His extraordinary collection of Islamic and Indian art is described in the next chapter and in annexes III and IV.

His manner was such that people felt at ease in his presence. Journalists were immediately put at ease. Michael Davie of *The Observer*, in a major article entitled "A prince who would save the world from itself" wrote,

"If you did not know who he was, you might put him down in this setting (Claridge's) with his good looks, his immaculate tailoring and his light and

239 *Refugees and Human Rights – The Dull Edges of our Dogmas*, 11th Gilbert Memorial Lecture, Oxford, February 1983

easy manner as an international banker. You would be very unlikely to guess the main point about him: which is that he belongs to the very small group of seriously rich men whose principal interest is the clouded state of the planet. He is a natural diplomat, with a talent for seeming to listen attentively to others and for getting on terms quickly with strangers; and multilingual, speaking perfect English.” And Davie went on, “He is properly described, I suppose, as Iranian, but as another international operator puts it: ‘He doesn’t really have a nationality. He is a little bit above the battle, but his great virtue is that after years of grappling with refugees he knows how damaging sovereignty is. As the world drives more and more to sovereignty, he is a voice of sanity. He is good at working on problems ignored by the UN because they threaten sovereignty.’ He is as near as you will find to an international man.”²⁴⁰

The same article tells us more about the prince and his concerns, for it goes on,

“In Geneva in 1977, he established his own private think-tank, the Groupe de Bellerive. Since then, the group has produced numerous reports, particularly on the environment, and the prince has travelled the world in an attempt to make people see sense about the consumption of resources and the destruction of the ecological balance. When I asked him, however, whether any country was behaving in an ecologically prudent manner, he said without hesitation: ‘Nobody.’

“Partly because of his work for the UN, partly because of his wealth, and partly because of his status, he operates an exceptional network of international contacts, high and low, left and right. The other evening in Geneva he saw Greenpeace, the environmental activists who board whalers and are very involved in nuclear issues. His interest, though, is in issues, not personalities, and his small talk before and during lunch touched on the following topics: Mr Edward Heath’s consistent advocacy of the Brandt Commission report; the destruction of Brazilian rain forests; the difficulty experienced by opposition politicians in Europe in getting on TV; Switzerland and nuclear power; the British press; and the pinpoint accuracy of Cruise missiles.”

Sadrudin is known to have settled fines incurred by Greenpeace. We suspect that he endowed very many causes that he judged worthy. He was for example a sponsor of the repaving of the ancient “cité” of Gruyères, and recalled the pleasure he had had from speaking earlier, on the 1993 National Day (1st August) to the Gruyères inhabitants and tourists on the importance

240 *A prince who would save the world from itself*, Michael Davie, Notebook, *The Observer*, Sunday 27th January 1985 © Guardian News & Media Ltd 2016

of preserving the natural and cultural character of the Alps. We know that he saved a number of animals in need – for instance adopting dogs found wandering the streets in Greece, and a horse. Unlike his father and half-brother, Sadruddin did not acquire and breed horses, and he stated early on that he did not approve of horse-racing.

* * *

Sadruddin's pragmatism

The prince addressed the House of Commons, Westminster, on 23rd January 1984, on the theme "Strategy of Hope for a World in Crisis". He said,

"Across the world, in a different framework, an internationally-supported literacy campaign is yielding encouraging results. It does not mean that the hitherto illiterate populations are now sitting down to read Shakespeare or Marx. It means, more importantly, that women can read the price tickets in the local market, or the destination of the buses which go through their village. It means that nutritional programmes can be read and carried out at home; that safety instructions on a new machine in the factory can be understood; that the local newspaper can become a vital channel for communications, lifting the quality of life in the local community.

"There are around the world literally thousands of changes for the better, large and small, occurring all the time. One of our prime responsibilities, once we grasp this point, is to refute the cynicism, the negativism of the eternal pessimists. The purveyors of gloom and doom do a profound disservice to humanity, with their constant carping and negative criticism. Progress and advancement are real, they are not fictitious. It is still within living memory that cholera and dysentery were real health hazards in this great city of London; still within living memory in this country that half the population had neither running water, nor indoor sanitation. All of that for you is now a thing of the past. In saying this, I do not for one moment underestimate the seriousness of our present condition. The world is in a mess, and we have a limited timespan to get it back on course again."

The prince went on to speak of the plans of the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues, and referred to "the wasteful and grotesquely dangerous arms race" and the threat of nuclear war. He then ended his speech by saying: "Let me close by quoting someone we all admire – Mother Teresa, who once wrote: 'The biggest disease today is not leprosy, or

tuberculosis, but rather the feeling of being unwanted, uncared for and deserted by everybody. The greatest evil is the lack of love and charity, the terrible indifference towards one's neighbour who lives at the roadside assaulted by exploitation, corruption, poverty and disease.' Indeed, the time has come for a change, for a new humanity. Change will come if we have a sense of purpose, if we can muster the necessary political will."

Features of a Swiss radio broadcast, 1984 ²⁴¹

The prince spoke openly of his background and his concerns in a Swiss radio broadcast, "*Profil*", already alluded to in Chapter 10. The following text has been translated from the French.

Q. This idea that some big American industrialists had at the end of the last century that when you are fortunate enough to have independent means, you should contribute to society and try to define your vocation, your "niche" if you like, in a way that will have an impact on improving the situation as best one can: why did you get interested in refugees in particular?

A. *"It was first of all because I had travelled a great deal in areas of the third world where the problems of refugees are found, particularly in the Near East, and in certain areas of Africa too, and also because I worked temporarily in 1959 with Ambassador Lindt, a very eminent ambassador who at that time was the High Commissioner for Refugees. He's someone who had worked in the diplomatic field, with Foreign Affairs, and he recruited me at a particular time as a special consultant for World Refugee Year, 1959-60. And actually, I found this work so fascinating that finally, when his successor, Mr Felix Schnyder, asked if it would perhaps interest me to be his deputy, I agreed. And one thing led to another, when Mr Schnyder left the UN General Assembly elected me to the post of High Commissioner."*

Q. But have you always felt that you had a mission to undertake?

A. *"A mission to undertake – that's saying a lot, although what was essential for me was to commit myself one way or another, because in the end, indifference is something I cannot understand at all. You mentioned at the start a life of*

241 *Profil*, RTS Radio Télévision Suisse / Journaliste : Jacques Bofford, March 1984

pleasure and leisure, but nothing is more boring than a life of pleasure and leisure. And actually, we have only to look around us to see what becomes of people who live only for pleasure and leisure; in the end, they are indifferent, cynical, heartless, neurotic, restless and very unhappy. I think that all of us have to try to define what kind of work we can do that will have an impact."

Q. But do you think you are first of all a man of action?

A. "Yes, a man of action in the sense that I consider that it's necessary today to know what are the great problems of the world, and then get involved. One should try to travel, to see what the real situations are, and in taking action, not limit oneself to paperwork and dealing with files in an office, when it's a question of humanitarian work. During the twelve years that I was High Commissioner for Refugees, it would have been very easy to look after files, anonymous files, but what was important was to remember that behind each file, there is a face, a human being, that that person has problems, personal problems, and the only way of resolving them is to try to comprehend them. I believe that in humanitarian work we cannot take care of communities simply with relief, and inevitably that means taking action."

Q. And in the area of humanitarian work, must one be a man of action? Do you need to be a fighter and also a diplomat?

A. "I think it is necessary, yes, if you have an official position, at the head of an intergovernmental organisation, for unlike private organisations, like the Red Cross and non-governmental organisations, we are dealing with governments. And governments, as we know, are very jealous of their sovereignty, they attach enormous importance to their political independence in the field of human rights. And therefore one has to have a measure of tact to understand UN realities, and so as not to clash head on with the sovereignty of a government. Because if that were to happen, the margin one has for negotiating has been noticeably reduced and one can no longer be effective."

Q. In other words, you have to make concessions?

A. "No, I don't think that you have to make concessions or compromise on principles, because human rights and everything to do with humanitarian work rests on

principles, on conventions that unfortunately are not sufficiently applied. We could talk about that later. So one should not compromise these principles. On the other hand, in applying those principles and conventions, one has to exercise some diplomacy, some tact. You have to try to analyse the position of a government or of a region, to determine the nature of the problem that the governments have, and then you negotiate with full knowledge of the facts, to try to get them to understand that it's in their interest and that we can find a solution to those problems."

Q. But Prince Sadruddin, is not all humanitarian work a means of salving one's conscience?

A. *"Yes, there is a little of that too, but there you're going off into a rather different discussion. One could perhaps focus on the motives people have in committing themselves one day in humanitarian work. Others have done it, film directors like Luis Buñuel, Ingmar Bergman, who are more talented than we are. And it is for them to judge, I believe, about people's motivation. But considering that the alternative is indifference, it strikes me that it is not so difficult."*

Q. But at the moment, what is it that perturbs your conscience?

A. *"I can tell you that what perturbs me enormously is for example that in a city, someone can collapse on the pavement, feeling ill, and crowds pass by without paying any attention to him or her. Every day in the city newspapers, and I hope that Geneva is an exception, but in New York and the huge cities, we hear of that kind of case, don't we – people saying "He's had a heart attack", or "He's just a drug addict", or "He's drunk". So they don't do anything about him or her. Just like people who remain indifferent when someone who has been stabbed knocks on their door asking for help. I think this is very, very disturbing. It seems that people who close their eyes to those sorts of situations are very, very guilty. And what also disturbs me is that kind of affective indifference, this sort of egoism that causes people today to live as if we were not all on a very small planet which is, actually, terribly vulnerable with regard to countries that are absolutely interdependent, you see. And despite all the information we get, despite the media, despite you and many others like you, people continue to live in a very small closed world, where what matters is their well-being on every level, and they haven't the slightest idea that their own future depends on the future of everyone on the planet, directly or indirectly."*

Q. You're referring of course to the wealthy countries, and wealthy countries in relation to the Third World.

A. *"Yes, but not only them. I am not talking only about the North-South countries, but I am talking for example about our natural resources, questions of ecology, of environmental protection. I think that it's high time that people thought about the impact on nature and those elements that constitute nature all around us. Man cannot go on destabilising nature as he's doing. It is this egoism that perturbs me, and I think it's really time that people woke up, took stock and that there should be policies to bring about change."*

Q. Don't you feel that despite everything you are doing in this regard, there is no change?

A. *"I don't know. I believe there is change. Yes, I think there is some change all the same. I think that this is why I keep going. And that many others like myself keep going too. I think that one person can make a very great difference, despite everything. Obviously, it's even better if the person is in an important position, like our leaders, above all the leaders of the superpowers, concerned by the East-West situation, the danger of a war, of a nuclear war, and the question of nuclear disarmament."*

At the end of another interview, in which a great deal of ground had been covered with regard to his diplomatic role and his concern for the environment, Sadruddin spoke of how he had come to realise the interdependence of life on the planet.

*"As I was fortunate and privileged enough to be of independent means, I thought I should do something towards improving the situation, even only a little, through the Bellerive Foundation and my association with WWF. However, many people having my kind of background in the broad sense, belonging to the establishment, seem to think because of what I do that I'm letting the side down. It's simply a question of conscience. If your conscience doesn't bother you, there's no problem, but if it does (as was the case with me), it's normal and it's necessary to do something."*²⁴²

242 Olivier Binst, FEMINA, Lausanne, Le Prince Écolo, Défenseur des Droits de l'homme, le prince Sadruddin Aga Khan l'est aussi de la nature, 12th January 1992 ©FEMINA 1992

The UNESCO COURIER

In May 1991, there was a lengthy article on Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan in *The UNESCO COURIER*, of which the following are excerpts.

Q. You have been associated with the United Nations system for many years. Did you feel a vocation to serve the UN?

A. *"I think people are primarily influenced by their family environment. Because of my origins I belong both to the East and the West. Iran is the cradle of our family, but we have never lived there. I was born in Paris, and my mother was French. Through my father, who had a strong influence on me, I came into contact with Islam when I was very young. We travelled widely in the Islamic countries and often visited Egypt. My father was a pioneer in international organisations: he played an active part in the creation of the League of Nations, was its president in 1937, and even inaugurated the Palais des Nations in Geneva. My office is only a few steps away from the one he occupied. That makes for a kind of continuity."*

Q. As well as being a senior international civil servant, you are also known as a man of ideas and someone who is closely involved in grassroots issues.

A. *"I have tried to resist the forces of bureaucratic inertia. In the corridors of diplomacy people gradually tend to lose their capacity to distinguish between what is important and what isn't. A phrase or a comma in a draft resolution suddenly comes to assume disproportionate importance. Negotiations go on for hours, for nights on end, before agreement is reached on what is generally the lowest common denominator. You feel that you have won a great victory. But no one will read the text which was so difficult to draft."*

Q. Don't you find this sort of thing futile?

A. *"History will judge. Perhaps we shall have a more objective perspective on the United Nations when we come to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. Certainly it is a good thing not to always observe the world through United Nations spectacles. That's why I have set so much store on my independence."*

Q. While waiting for the judgement of history, don't you see positive aspects in the work of the United Nations?

A. *"Indeed. It is now widely and rightly accepted that we live in a world which is more interdependent than ever before, and that problems are increasingly global in character. At the risk of stating the obvious, I would say that when governments realise that certain problems are beyond their powers, it is clear that the United Nations has an irreplaceable role to play. At the same time, the world is changing considerably and the United Nations must change too. It must become an instrument which responds to the needs of the international community of the year 2000, which will be quite different from that of 1945. This is very far from the case. We should not delude ourselves into thinking that the United Nations is going to change because a certain role has been restored to the Security Council. The Security Council is an exclusive club with a restricted membership, sensitive to the moods of the moment. Its resolutions only remotely affect the organs and institutions of the United Nations which face the great challenges of today."*²⁴³

* * *

Speech entitled "Spirituality & Science - the Need for Togetherness": European Parliament, Brussels, September 1996

Speaking at a European Parliament Symposium on Trade, Environment and Animal Welfare, the prince expressed his views as succinctly as he always did:

"Modern society is imbued with a tragic lack of self-confidence and is afraid of appearing moralising or oppressive. In this climate, absolute truth is seldom taken seriously. The loss of biological diversity, for example, is acute. It's happening every day, with consequences that are unknown and affect directly the livelihoods of rich and poor alike. Unlike minor pollutions, the loss of species diversity and its genetic information cannot be retrieved or repaired. We are told that 25% of all species may disappear from the planet in the next fifty years - the space of two generations. Unspoiled nature is constantly on the decrease, while the need for it grows ever greater."

The prince went on to suggest that organised religion, together with science, has enormous potential to spark an alternate or deeper consciousness.

²⁴³ The UNESCO COURIER, May 1991

For as he pointed out, democratic values and traditions of social liberation, tempered by a sense of measure and solidarity, are part of the foundation of the ethic of sustainable living. Meanwhile, the disintegration of the biosphere destroys the very foundations of civilisation, he said, while poverty, ignorance, oppression and war are major causes of environmental degradation. The capitalist concept of development justifies our harnessing the biosphere to our own selfish ends, but the ethical and metaphysical underpinning of capital needs to be challenged. Remarking that the old communist bloc's management of the environment has been "spectacularly appalling", the prince pointed out that to power real reform, a wider framework of motives is needed, *deriving from non-selfish motives that include enlightened ideals and a sense of outrage.*

He then went on to say, *"In a world characterised by interdependence and all-encompassing global 'civilisation', as well as by diversity and unique individuality, shared ethical principles governing the interactions of human beings and their world are essential, if the well-being of the larger community of life, upon which all depend, is to be protected. Thus, for instance, a multilateral free trade regime cannot stand alone: it must be integrated with such shared ethical principles. Indeed, the success of such a regimen depends on a symbiosis created by the interplay of free trade principles and ethical foundations."*

As the idea of planetary trust and stewardship was recognised by Judaism, Christianity and Islam as well as by many other religions, and was also explicit and implicit in major instruments of international law, it had some claim to universality, the prince said, and he went on, *"Ancient wisdom, Taoism, Zen Buddhism, Meister Eckhart, St Francis of Assisi, Ibn al Arābi and mystics of all faiths speak of the family of man as a link in the chain of all beings on this earth. This intertwined world of the improbable and the unrepeatable provides a habitat for millions of species of flora and fauna, animate and inanimate nature existing in complex symbiosis. Each life has its own sense, its own role, its own purpose; all is linked together, there is no superior, inferior or useless. In this infinitely diverse system, each life form is needed, each one equal in value for the whole."*

Turning to "animal welfare", that he said he preferred to call "animal dignity", Sadrudin said that whether or not it was justifiable for human beings to kill or injure a member of another species, the immediate moral challenge was the associated hardship, unnecessary suffering, injury and stress rather than the act of killing in itself. He referred to the then recent *Mad Cow* horror, a result of ineptness and lack of foresight and morals of governments that

had shown how by overstepping nature's thresholds, by turning vegetarian sentient beings into carnivorous ones, we could very rapidly endanger our own health. A sense of ethical responsibility was essential in our world, he affirmed, and he listed eight imperatives for sustainable living, that he believed were already very well known:

- Approach nature with awareness and humility.
- Conserve the Earth's life support system, biodiversity and beauty.
- Treat all creatures with respect and protect them from unnecessary suffering and killing.
- Minimise depletion of non-renewable resources and ensure sustainable use of renewable resources like water, soil and forests.
- Develop and employ efficient, environmentally benign technologies for the generation and use of energy.
- Adopt strategies of pollution prevention, waste reduction, and recycling.
- Stabilise human populations at levels consistent with their quality of life and the carrying capacity of the earth.
- Reaffirm the protection of human rights.

The prince suggested that in the direct context of the World Trade Organisation and the clash between trade issues and the environment, the European Union should be the first to promote these principles as imperatives. However, *"the track record in this respect is, bluntly, no cause for elation,"* he said, and he went on to speak of the trade and environment/animal welfare debate raising dilemmas that penetrated to the core of life on the planet – biodiversity issues concern *fauna* and *flora* but do not exclude the human animal. *"Thus, to extract an example from my own direct experience: the refugee problem so often derives from the degradation of habitat, the shrinking of biodiversity or the indiscriminate infection of the environment. Ever increasing numbers of people fleeing their homes do so because life has become insupportable at home. Some are the victims of genocide and ethnic-cleansing. Others may not be pushed out at the end of a rifle or with the threat of execution looming over them, but population pressure, regional conflicts, desertification and absence of work opportunities combine to encourage, if not force them to leave. However, the short-sightedness of Western leaders is breath-taking... the politicians have failed to clearly articulate, let alone initiate, policies that address the causes."*

Sadrudin ended his speech by pointing out that the need for togetherness had never been greater. *“As we enter this radically changed environment of technological possibilities, we must remind ourselves, again and again, that ethics concern us all as individuals, for the individual, not the machine, is the carrier of life and civilisation. Each of us must rethink our underlying assumptions and goals, and demand the highest standards of ourselves.”*

Spiritual issues – Batumi, Georgia, September 1997

The following September, Sadrudin spoke at a conference on “Religion, Science and the Environment”, addressing an audience in Symposium II: the Black Sea Crisis. His opening remarks set the tone:

“One of the greatest moral and spiritual issues of our day is the massive and increasing destruction of Creation. It occasions perhaps the greatest spiritual crisis in our world today. The root of the problem is, as Sartre put it, ‘Man’s fundamental desire to be God’”.

The prince expounded Islam’s values at some length. He said that for the Muslim, humankind’s role on Earth is that of a *khalifa*, vice-regent or trustee of God. *“We are God’s stewards and agents on Earth. In the words of the Prophet, ‘the world is green and beautiful and God has appointed you his stewards over it.’ ‘The khalifa is answerable for his/her actions, for the way in which he/she uses or abuses the trust of God. Each generation of humankind is ethically bound to leave behind a wholesome, sustainable environment.’ ‘He it is who has made you inheritors of the Earth’, says the Qu’ran, and warns against squandering its resources.*

*“Islam teaches us that we have been created by God and that we will return to God for judgement: that we are accountable for our deeds as well as our omissions. The khalifa will render an account of how he treated the trust of God on the Day of Reckoning. The notion that describes the accountability of the khalifa is *adhirah*. Islam is the guidance of how to live today so that we can face the *akhirah*; it is the message which informs us of what will be involved in that reckoning. The Qu’ran states specifically that the responsibility of vice-regency will be checked by God himself to see how it has been performed.*

“Unity, trusteeship and accountability (tawheed, khalifa and akhirah), the three central pillars of Islam, are also the pillars of the environmental ethics of Islam.”

Sadrudin mentioned that Muslims had formulated a bill of legal rights of

animals as early as the 13th century, and he explained that in Turkey, Muslims had established environmental and cultural associations and initiated work on the environment, long before any Ministry of the Environment existed. He went on,

“Islam should be a complete way of life, an ethical system providing the bearings for all our actions. We must integrate true Islamic values into our very being. We must judge our actions by them. It is my heartfelt hope and belief that Muslims will yet create a true Islamic alternative, a caring and practical way of being, doing and knowing, to the environmentally-destructive thought and action which dominate the world today.”

Regretting that globalisation is the opposite of bio-diversity, bringing in its wake the dangers of discord and disparity, as he said, the prince observed that true happiness was based on spiritual as well as material values, and in this connection, it was paradoxical to note that the country that had “the pursuit of happiness” enshrined in its constitution was also the most committed to consumerism. He said that only if economic interests could be counterbalanced with parallel emphasis on the social, environmental and ethical perspectives could *progress be equated with the advance of civilisation in any true sense of the term*. He ended his speech after contributing ten points that might be considered for incorporation in an annex to the Black Sea Strategic Action Plan.

* * *

Prince Sadruddin and Princess Catherine offered warm hospitality to very many people from around the world, including (as we learn from various press reports) friends from the United States – and the Dalai Lama. One can imagine some of the fruitful, thoughtful conversations that would take place around their table, or out in their beautiful grounds.

One of their visitors, June Ducas, was able to conduct an interview with the prince in January 1998 to talk principally about the exhibition of Sadruddin’s collection of Indian and Islamic art, then due to open within a few days at the British Museum. As mentioned in chapter 2, she sketched a portrait of Sadruddin and his home, first speaking of the Château de Bellerive, then writing:

“Unostentatious, with conker-brown eyes that twinkle when he smiles, the prince is dressed in grey flannel trousers, checked shirt and tweed

jacket. He appears every inch a Westerner. Yet as I sit in the château's library dominated by Sir Oswald Birley's portrait of Sadrud-din's portly Persian grandmother, it only takes a small leap of the imagination to visualise the prince with his tapering fingers clad in Arab garb. Indeed, for small dinner parties with his wife Catherine and close friends, he likes to wear a djellaba.

"But looking down on us from the wall, it is the imposing image of the Begum, veiled in white with a hubble-bubble by her side, that underlines her grandson's heritage. She was the granddaughter of Fath 'Ali Shah, the imperial ruler of Iran from the ancient Qajar dynasty that was overthrown by the more parvenu house of Pahlavis. For most of her life, the Begum lived in Bombay surrounded by Persian courtiers, bejewelled Ismaili dignitaries in turbans and the classical poets of the day."

Sadrud-din told his visitor how his grandmother used to recite to him the great epic poems of Persia's turbulent history. *"I loved the musicality of them, even though I could not understand the words. She left my father a library of Persian books, mystical texts and astrological treatises, and it was through them that I became interested in Islamic art."*

Was the quest for Islamic art also a way of delving into his origins, a search for lost roots? the visitor enquired; and the prince replied, *"My father was a great Muslim leader and my French mother was steeped in her own culture. I have a foot in the East and another in the West."*

June Ducas went on to say that Sadrud-din attributed his love of nature and gardens to the time that he spent with his mother in a small country house in the mountains of Haute Savoie, and that his fondness for animals he shared with his wife. "In a field by the château, they keep a horse that they saved from the knacker's yard. On the morning of my visit, he was awaiting delivery of a pony to keep the horse company. In all, they have nine dogs, including a Belgian Shepherd called Playboy."²⁴⁴

Certainly Sadrud-din loved gardens (and animals) very much. He spoke to me once of his longing to visit English and Scottish gardens, both those of individuals opening their gardens to visitors, and those of the National Trust.²⁴⁵ His own gardens were superb, and it could well have been in them

244 June Ducas of *Telegraph U.K.*, *Hidden secrets of the Universe*, Saturday 24th January 1998, found on <http://www-qajarpages.org/aghakhanart.html> © The Telegraph

245 I sent him some National Trust catalogue material, but fear that he may never have had the chance to use it.

that he meditated a great deal, as one can be quite sure, knowing how important meditation was to him, that he did within the walls of his beautiful home.

* * *

A former colleague, Jean-Noël Wetterwald, describes a Round Table that his supervisor, Sergio Vieira de Mello (earlier one of Sadruddin's recruits), asked him to organise, with the idea of bringing together all the previous UN High Commissioners willing and able to respond to the invitation. He writes, "It was such a moving event, having brought together MM. Auguste Lindt (1956-1960), Félix Schnyder (1960-1965), Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan (1965-1977), MM. Paul Hartling (1978-1985), Thorvald Stoltenberg (1990) and Mme Sadako Ogata (1990-2000). The closing of the last camps in Europe for Second World War refugees, decolonisation and geographic enlargement of UNHCR's activities, massive displacement resulting from the partition of Pakistan, boat people, crises in Africa and in the Middle-East: we had a masterly concentration of forty years of contemporary history presented by the key actors of humanitarian action."²⁴⁶ The Round Table was chaired by William Shawcross, the British author famous for his writing on Cambodia and humanitarian assistance (and incidentally, the son of Lord Shawcross, the Chief British Prosecutor at Nuremberg).

Jean-Noël has told me how moved he was to see Sadruddin taking care of the older men that day. Mr Lindt and Mr Schnyder must both have been in their late eighties then. Sadruddin was true to form: courteous, respectful, helpful and kind. He too was probably moved to spend a day with his two former superiors. It was a unique day for everyone.²⁴⁷

Prince Sadruddin loved music, and he and his wife were often seen at concerts. And of course he retained his passion for sailing. George Gordon-Lennox has given me two more of his anecdotes on the prince: "I could also mention that somehow the prince learned that I played banjo in an amateur New Orleans jazz band in Geneva, *Le Vieux Carré*. He asked me about it, saying he was a great jazz fan. As the band had just brought out an LP, I signed a copy for him and he let me know he was thrilled.

"We also shared a love of sailing. I often sailed in our small Corsaire

²⁴⁶ Jean-Noël Wetterwald, *Déxils, d'espoirs et d'aventures*, 2014

²⁴⁷ Personal communication earlier this year (2015)

with my family past the Château de Bellerive on weekends and would see Sadruddin's lovely classic sailboat on a buoy just off the grounds, covered with a tarpaulin. I wondered how he ever found time to go sailing. He did get a daily chance to enjoy Lake Geneva, however, as to come to work, when weather permitted, he crossed from Bellerive to a landing stage on the south-west side of the lake in a motorboat, thus avoiding rush-hour traffic. He then drove to the office in a blue Volkswagen 'Beetle' that his chauffeur had driven round through the city, and the chauffeur took charge of the boat!"²⁴⁸

Over and above his heroic commitments in carrying on voluminous correspondence with people all over the world, and speaking on a broad range of subjects in widely different places, Prince Sadruddin found time to write in support of authors. For example he wrote the preface to Anders Wijkman and Lloyd Timberlake's "*Natural disasters: acts of God or acts of man?*", Earthscan, 1984; the Avant-propos of Mohammed El Kouhane's "*Les garanties fondamentales de la personne en droit humanitaire et droits de l'homme*", Martinus Nijhoff, Dordrecht and Boston, 1986, the Preface of Hélène et Jean Bastaire's "*Chiens du Seigneur: histoire chrétienne du chien*" Ed. du Cerf, Paris, 2001, and the Preface of Bernard K. Martin's "*Les enjeux internationaux du compostage: nos ressources alimentaires et en eau, climat*", Ed. l'Harmattan, Paris, 2000.

He even started on plans to organise in 2004 another high-level colloquium...

*Yes, he was a very parfit, gentil knight –
And how proud his parents would have been of him!*

²⁴⁸ Personal communication, 30.09.15

22

Art collection

It is good to love many things, for therein lies the true strength, and whosoever loves much performs much, and can accomplish much, and what is done in love is well done.

Vincent van Gogh

In 1950, Prince Sadruddin, as a seventeen-year-old student at Harvard, started to be passionately interested in Islamic art, as a result of which, over the following forty years, he came to assemble one of the finest private collections of Islamic art in the world (if not the finest!).

A great deal has been written about Prince Sadruddin's truly remarkable collection, and on how he initiated it. Early in his Harvard years, Sadruddin met Stuart Cary Welch, a 1950 Harvard graduate in fine arts who went on to do graduate work in classical art, with a focus on Indian and Islamic art. The university ran no appropriate courses in those areas at that time, but S.C. Welch became honorary assistant keeper of Islamic art at the Harvard's Fogg Museum, gradually developing one of the first curricula for Islamic and Indian art. He and the prince soon started to prospect for works of art, and as he explains in some detail in his Preface to the British Museum's 1998 catalogue written for the exhibition of Sadruddin's collection (Annex III), the two companions found some remarkable pieces throughout the period that Islamic art had fewer enthusiasts than in former years. "During the 1950s, when Prince Sadruddin began to collect Islamic material while at Harvard University", Stuart Cary Welch writes, "excellent pictures, calligraphies and objects could be found in the hands of dealers in New York City, whose cupboards were rich with neglected works of art. Because the field had been in the doldrums for decades, new enthusiasts were warmly received. The

great collectors in our field had either died or lost their acquisitive spark. Prices continued to be low and buyers rare.”

Sadrudin explains in his Foreword (Annex III) how it was that, as a small boy, he became aware of art from the Islamic world. As his Foreword speaks for itself, it would seem a pity to quote extracts in the body of this chapter. We can surely imagine Sadrudin’s joy and exhilaration when, in the company of Stuart Cary Welch in those early years, then in that of his wife from 1972 onwards, he managed to secure a particularly exquisite piece! He told June Ducas, the British journalist and art historian whose visit is mentioned in a previous chapter, that his first acquisition when he was a student at Harvard had been a folio from the 14th century Mamluk Qur’an, the work that had really fascinated him in his early years and that his father used to quote.

“In those days”, the prince told June Ducas, “it was a neglected field so you could pick up a good page of Kufik calligraphy, an Islamic script, for less than \$100.” By the 1960s and ‘70s, orientalism was becoming fashionable again. *Many great collections surfaced, including some Louis Cartier and Rothschild material.* At the time, he thought the pieces that he bought were extremely expensive – now they would fetch ten times what he paid for them. *“I never went about collecting in a systematic, didactic way. I was drawn by the beauty and the symbolism of a picture rather than the chronology or the artist. Behind each illustration, there is a hidden meaning – the struggle between good and evil, the secrets of the universe, the meaning of life and death. Interpreting each picture requires considerable knowledge and concentration. If you look at it quickly, you miss most of the true dimension of the picture.”*

June Ducas wrote, “Certainly, this is a supremely contemplative art, and one where nature is acutely observed. As such, it reflects the prince’s work for conservation and environmental causes, and his devotion to animal welfare. *‘This is Paradise before the Fall, where man and beast were living in harmony and nature was respected’*, Sadrudin said, looking at a prized possession, a water colour entitled *The Court of Gayumars*. From the famous 16th century *Shahnama* or *Book of Kings* created for Shah Tahmasp, it was painted by the Safavid master, Sultan Muhammad, whose work was so exquisite that it caused fellow artists ‘to hang their heads in shame’.

“For that matter, though, who is to know whether the myths and legends so exquisitely depicted in the prince’s collection are strictly true? Where art is concerned the aesthetics are paramount. Preserving such treasures is a particular

pleasure to the prince. ‘*Fate uprooted my family from Iran over 130 years ago*’, he says. ‘*I liked the idea of trying to get some things back and taking care of them.*’

“He leads me into the room that was specially designed for his collection. Alongside 11th and 12th century ceramics, it is displayed in velvet-lined cabinets made from Moorish choir-stalls. Much to his sadness, the paintings – highly sensitive to light – are too delicate to be on show for long periods.” Sadrudin told June Ducas that each month he would visit the bank vaults where they were held, to choose an alternative selection. “‘*To see 140 grouped together and exhibited at the British Museum is*’, he says, ‘*a very real excitement.*’”²⁴⁹

Exhibitions of parts of Sadrudin’s collection

Prince Sadrudin lent parts of his collection to several exhibitions before the one initiated by the British Museum. There was, for example, one at New York City’s Metropolitan Museum of Art. Then a wider selection was mounted at the Asia Society, Manhattan, in 1982. The *New York Times* ran a feature on it by John Russell on 8th October, entitled “‘*Art of Islamic Book*’, *A Princely Selection At Asia Society*. The exhibition is of the highest and most varied curiosity. How could it be otherwise when the art in question ranges in time from the late 9th to the early 19th century and in place of origin from Kairouan in Tunisia to Córdoba and Seville in southern Spain, and from there all the way across to Turkey, Iran, the Arab lands and the subcontinent of India?”²⁵⁰

The article goes on to suggest that we could be dazed and winded by the rapid succession of changes in the exhibition. “If we feel that one particular person has been guided by his own inmost inclinations... we are delighted to let him guide us – arm in arm, as it were – from one age, one place and one intellectual and emotional climate to another.”

Referring to Prince Sadrudin’s distinguished career (“He was a favoured candidate not long ago for the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations”), we read that the prince had always found time to collect in a wide range of fields, as if nothing of real quality were alien to him. “Given the strong local character of much that is on view, we sometimes have to make the visual equivalent of the Olympic long jump to get from one part of the

249 June Ducas of *Telegraph* U.K., *Hidden secrets of the Universe*, Saturday 24th January 1998, found on <http://www-qajarpages.org/aghakhanart.html>

250 *New York Times*, October 8th, 1982

exhibition to another. Looking at the early and unornamented pages of the Koran, for instance, we breathe holy air.”

John Russell spoke of the reverence Moslem communities had for the reed pen, “the earliest of God’s creations”, calligraphy often having been considered the highest form of art. “From the sublimities of Kufic script to the all-seeing portrait of Sultan Selim II is as abrupt a change as from Gregorian chant to Mozart’s *Abduction From the Seraglio*.” We learn that that it was under that sultan’s aegis that the great Selimiye Mosque was built in Edirne, that he fostered music, poetry and the arts at his court in Constantinople.

The writer, moving us on to 15th century Persia, “where the art of literary illustration had both a labyrinthine dexterity and a rare degree of sophisticated allusiveness”, we read that the concept of the illustrative book reached a very high point in 16th century Persia. Prince Sadruddin’s page from a book commissioned in the 1570s is one of the most brilliant examples, we are told. “It is difficult, in fact, to imagine that handwritten text and image could be more resourcefully intermingled than in this account of how ‘Isfandiyar Kills the Simurgh.’” In John Russel’s opinion, the painter, Siyavush, deserves to rank with the finest of our Western illustrators.

The catalogue for that exhibition was prepared by Anthony Welch and Stuart Cary Welch (the two scholars are unrelated), and published by the Cornell University Press. “Armed with this, we shall be well able to deal with the Indian section of the show, which has an exceptional richness, variety and complication.” The Asia Society exhibition in Manhattan in the autumn of 1982 travelled to the Kimbell Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, and the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, in the course of 1983.

Sadruddin had also made a collection of African art. After a number of years, he decided to sell it and focus on his larger collection of Islamic and Indian art.

In 1984, the *Arts of Asia* magazine devoted several pages to Prince Sadruddin’s collection. The author of the article, Mr Shehbaz H. Safrani, under the title *The Arts of the Islamic book: The collection of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan*, listed thirteen of the pieces, and wrote an exposé of some 2,500 words which he allows me to reproduce almost *in extenso* as Annex IV. Mr Safrani dedicated his Article to the Scholar-Painter Ambassador Abid H. Safrani (1911-1984).²⁵¹

* * *

251 Reproduced with the kind permission of Mr Shehbaz H. Safrani

In 1998, as Prince Sadruddin relates in his Foreword to the exhibition catalogue, he was invited to make his collection available for an exhibition at the British Museum. This was a rare honour, but one that was really deserved, for the prince had become a knowledgeable and respected collector, accumulating a priceless collection of paintings, drawings, manuscripts and miniatures. The exhibition, entitled *Princes, Poets and Paladins*, ran from 22nd January to 13th April 1998. The British Museum catalogue, by Dr Sheila Canby, art historian and author of several books on the art of the East, describes Iranian, Mughal and Ottoman paintings from the collection that totals some 140 works of unequalled rarity and quality.²⁵² This catalogue is really a work of art in itself: in its 191 pages, after Prince Sadruddin's foreword and the preface by S.C. Welch, we are given several introductory pages equipped with maps. The author then gives us authoritative information about each period, interspersed with reproductions of individual paintings, each described in detail.

In her introduction to the catalogue, Dr. Canby explains how the prince began in the 1950s to collect "Islamic and Indian paintings and drawings, including one by the Safavid artist, Sultan Muhammad. Published to accompany a major exhibition at the British Museum, this title features 145 works, including many from the period when the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal dynasties were all at their height. The introduction reviews how Islamic and Indian paintings have been collected in the latter part of the 20th century, focusing on this collection. It looks at the context in which the paintings were produced in the courts and cities of Turkey, Iran and India, and investigates the nature of imitation in Islamic and Indian paintings. Finally, this text considers the content of the works catalogued and examines how the artists have given visual form to mystical ideas and principles."

The preface to the catalogue, written by the prince's distinguished friend and art professor, Stuart Cary Welch, begins with the following two paragraphs.

"Art collections sometimes reveal so much about their acquirers that the merest peek at their walls or vitrines causes blushes of embarrassment. In the case of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, responses are entirely reassuring, for this public-spirited man's inclinations as a collector match the rest of his activities.

252 Canby, Sheila R., *Princes, Poets & Paladins – Islamic and Indian paintings from the collection of Prince and Princess Sadruddin Aga Khan*, The Trustees of the British Museum, London, 1998, and Canby, Sheila R., *Princes, Poètes & Paladins – miniatures islamiques et indiennes de la collection du prince et de la princesse Sadruddin Aga Khan*, Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva, 1999

He is well known for his work as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as UN Co-ordinator for Special Operations in Bangladesh, Uganda, Sudan, Chile and Cyprus, and for many other humanitarian activities, as well as for his intelligent, generous and sensitive response to ecological problems through his Bellerive Foundation, his 'Groupe de Bellerive' and one of his most recent projects, saving the Alps. He has also written many articles, received countless decorations and distinctions, and funded and directed numerous academic institutions, associations and councils.

"Prince Sadruddin's art acquisitions parallel his good works, supporting the words of a wise polynational and polycultural friend in New York City, a curator in a major museum: 'Collectors get what they deserve.' Prince Sadruddin's pictures and objects are a splendid harvest, chosen with both his heart and mind. Although his works of art range widely and include African, Native American, Inuit, Tibetan and even avant-garde European and American pictures and sculptures, the choices all reflect developments in his own life."

Stuart Cary Welch in his preface takes us through the British Museum exhibition, sharing with us many of the circumstances in which Prince Sadruddin – and probably he too – found that purchases could be made, while describing beautifully many of the items in the catalogue that we would love to see ourselves. It is my hope that readers will turn to Annex III to read the whole preface as well as the prince's foreword.

Princes, Poets & Paladins became a travelling collection. On leaving the British Museum it was on show from 20th May to 6th August 1998 at the Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge MA (USA); then it continued on its travels to the Musée Rietberg, Zurich (Switzerland), where it was on show from 26th September 1998 to 10th January 1999, finally being received at the Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva from 7th October 1999 to 27th February 2000.

In the French version of the British Museum catalogue by Dr. Sheila Canby, several additional pages are written, under the title "Exorde et remerciements" by Cäsar Menz, Directeur des Musées d'art et d'histoire and Claude Ritschard, Conservateur du Département des Beaux-Arts, Geneva.

These distinguished gentlemen write of their eagerness, on hearing about the exhibition planned by the British Museum, to acquire this unique collection for Geneva, "after leaving these priceless paintings to rest for several months away from the light". They explain that "the links between Prince Sadruddin and our museum are not merely geographic, for on several occasions we asked

him to lend some of his works for exhibitions organised over the previous 20 years.” They specified these as “*Céramiques islamiques dans les collections genevoises*” (1981), “*Islam et art figurative*” (1984) and “*Trésors d’Islam*” (1985), an exhibition that the prince was partly responsible for initiating.

The interest aroused internationally by the 1985 exhibition was so great that another was organised in 1988, “*Calligraphie islamique*” that travelled on to London, Dublin, Zurich and Amman. Then came “*L’Orient d’un collectionneur*” (1992), that included works donated by Jean Pozzi as well as many lent by Prince Sadruddin, who also made a generous donation. Messrs Menz and Ritschard said that in the planning of the 1999 Geneva exhibition *Princes, Poets and Paladins*, Prince Sadruddin’s inputs were very greatly appreciated – as had been the case in London – not only for his very great understanding of Islamic and Indian art but also for his tireless support throughout the proceedings.

Sadruddin lived only a few more years to enjoy his unique collection. It is now housed in the new Aga Khan museum, Toronto, opened by Prince Sadruddin’s nephew, the Aga Khan, in September 2014.

23

Prince Sadruddin's gift for relationships

"The glory of friendship is... the spiritual inspiration that comes to you when you discover that someone else believes in you and is willing to trust you with a friendship."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Prince Sadruddin had a remarkable gift for friendship, and it is certainly not for me to say, or even to know, who all his principal friends were – people who called him “Sadri” – though it was clear from many reports that the philosopher Denis de Rougement, mentioned earlier, was very dear to him and that George Bush Snr and his wife were among their friends, as were Edward Kennedy, Maurice Strong, art historian Stuart Cary Welch, the Crown Prince of Jordan, H.H. Hassan bin Talal and Yehudi Menuhin and his wife. Sadruddin spoke at the Service of Thanksgiving for the life and work of The Lord Menuhin in Westminster Abbey on 3rd June 1999. I recall the moving words that he spoke at the funeral of Audrey Hepburn, as reported by the media the following day. As an ambassador of UNICEF, the film star adulated by countless thousands of fans had devoted much of her time to campaigning on behalf of stricken children, and the prince said, “She reached out to the children with her smile, her hands and her heart.”

Otherwise, I can only write of the fact that interacting with people in many different contexts, the prince initiated and often went on to foster relationships that I imagine were equally meaningful to all concerned. For the staff of UNHCR, it almost felt as if we were one large family! Although this chapter may have only very limited interest for many readers, who are therefore invited to skip to the last chapter, I venture to write about the relationship that I was very privileged to have with Prince Sadruddin from the 1960s onwards. It sometimes happened that after we had met, I would

scrawl a few notes, because of the emotion of having been in his company, because of his aura, because of the memorable things he would say, because of the laughter we occasionally shared. And it happened fairly frequently that there was an exchange of letters and cards. Of course, after the prince married Mrs Catherine Sursock in 1972, my relationship was with them both.

To go back to the beginning, I was standing on Gstaad railway platform one winter evening early in 1962 waiting for the little "MOB" mountain train that links the Bernese Oberland to Montreux, and saw that our recently-appointed Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees was waiting for the same train in the company of several friends. I could never have imagined then that had I dared to greet him there and then, for he turned out to be travelling alone, we would almost undoubtedly have made the journey back to Geneva together, and would have had the first of the many enriching conversations that I was later so privileged to have with him. He would perhaps have told me then that the majority of his school years had been spent in Gstaad, and that he had got to know the area intimately from when he was seven. It was purely by chance that within two months of my starting in mid-October 1960 to work with UNHCR, through checking into a very old Youth Hostel in Turbach Valley for the four Christmas days' leave, Turbach had become my favourite weekend destination.²⁵³ Frequently walking up to Turbach from Gstaad, I would pass by the chalet that local people told me belonged to the prince. I realise that most or probably all of the mountain footpaths that friends and I used over very many years from 1960 until recently were the very same ones with which the young Sadruddin had become very familiar from the age of seven.

It was at the end of the following year that I was asked to join the small team manning the very new UNHCR Regional Office for Africa, and left Geneva as soon as the various vaccinations required at that time for life in central Africa were valid. Within a few months Prince Sadruddin came to spend a few days with us in Bujumbura, following the shocking, harrowing events in nearby Congo that took the life of our colleague François Preziosi and his brave companion from the ILO, Jean Plique.

He walked unexpectedly into the little back office where I was dealing

253 It really **was** by chance that I spent Christmas at Turbach (and absolutely fell in love with the area), for I had been expecting to accompany two elderly Russian refugees from Geneva to Nice on behalf of a hard-pressed NGO; but at the last minute the old couple were not given the expected seats on the Swissair flight from Hong Kong.

with travel claims, and sat as informally as could be on the corner of my desk. “How do you like working with Jacques, Diana?” he enquired pleasantly. I remember, of course, how relaxed he made me feel despite the awe in which I held this high-born prince, the Deputy UN High Commissioner for Refugees. We talked for several minutes, his warm brown eyes on my face, before another question came. “You have a splendid dog, Diana. Are you planning to take him back to Europe with you?” My dog was a Belgian Shepherd that I had taken over when he was still a handsome three-month-old puppy from a young Frenchman who no longer wanted him. Used to respecting the hierarchy in UNHCR, I would not have dreamt that anyone as senior as the Deputy High Commissioner could care about how I felt, and whether my dog born in Bujumbura would continue to be part of my life once this assignment was over. The days of his visit to us remain a vivid memory.

The short but very memorable conversations we had then would be only the first of many that I was privileged to have with Prince Sadruddin over the next thirty or so years.

A year later, I was just back from Africa when, having gone to the Delegates’ Lounge for a cup of coffee as staff were used to doing when there were no major meetings in progress, I met Prince Sadruddin coming the other way. He stopped and asked, “How do you feel about being back in headquarters, Diana?” and “I hear you’ve brought Chiki back with you!” So he even remembered the dog’s name – incredible! Who was this amazing man? He wished me to return to the delegates’ lounge with him and again we talked. And again, I was slightly in awe of him but felt reassured by his informal manner. Then as we walked back to the UNHCR part of the huge building, through the Salle des Pas Perdus and along several corridors, everyone the prince recognised came in for a cordial greeting.

UNHCR headquarters had for me a post in statistics. Unfortunately, all the statistics I could get hold of in that post took less than half an hour a day to deal with, and I resolved to leave if there was no real alternative, and it seemed that there was none. Jacques Cuénod had tried to get my “general services” recruitment adjusted to “professional”, recommending me for future field assignments, but my British nationality ruled that out. So it seemed best to do something else for at least a couple of years until there would perhaps be fewer British passport-holders on the staff. However, quite unexpectedly I was called to Prince Sadruddin’s office, and heard him say something to the effect that UNHCR did not wish to lose me! I explained that given my lowly

grade, there seemed to be nothing much for me to do if I stayed, and saw that he understood perfectly – but he asked if I would be willing to join Mr “Kees” Brouwer in The Hague, to work on a Europe-wide fundraising campaign being organised principally to raise funds for the Tibetans stranded in the mountains of India. Of course, I agreed. The Administration was instructed to give me a professional “Special Service Agreement” to sign for the year (1966). As I could not be given a staff contract, here was a wonderful solution for a year!

That autumn, the General Assembly unanimously elected Prince Sadruddin, who was only thirty-two, to the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. And a few months later, with twenty countries participating in the “European Refugee Campaign 1966”, and with meetings chaired by Prince Bernhardt of the Netherlands, as mentioned in chapter 7 we received his visit. Everyone assembled in Amsterdam, we had our co-ordination meeting, and lunch at Soestdijk Palace. Later in the day, back in The Hague, Mr Brouwer said, “At the airport, the prince asked me to convey his apologies to you for not having been able to say goodbye.” Naturally I was as pleased as I was astonished at this extreme courtesy.

Most of the twenty-country European Refugee Campaign committees (though unfortunately not Britain) did a good job. A lot of money was raised; Mr Brouwer was satisfied. And while preparing to leave for England I wrote to the High Commissioner:

“Dear Prince Sadruddin,

“It seems unlikely that there will be any possibility of seeing you to say goodbye in person before my return to England at the end of this month.

“May I therefore say now how happy I have been to work with UNHCR these past six years, and how very much I appreciate the kindness and encouragement you have expressed on various occasions, particularly last autumn after my return from Burundi.

“It is of course not without regret that I take leave of UNHCR, but neither is it without hope that at some future date I may be able to serve the Office usefully.

"I have had the good fortune to be offered a post at the new University of Warwick.

"With kindest regards and all good wishes for the work of your Office which will continue to hold my interest.

"Yours sincerely, Diana."

And I received a wonderful letter dated 10 November 1966 a few days later:

"My dear Diana (the initial greeting was always in his own hand),

"I was very happy to receive your letter of 3 November and to know that you have been offered such an interesting post at the new University of Warwick.

"I cannot let this occasion go by, however, without expressing to you my appreciation of the excellent work you have accomplished during your term with UNHCR and especially of your devoted efforts during your assignments in Burundi and at The Hague.

"I wish you every happiness in your future activities and hope that you will find great satisfaction in your work with the University."

And then by hand: *"Hope to see you in England. Come and see me if you should ever pass through Geneva.*

Yours sincerely,

Sadruddin Aga Khan"

From that time on, I received every December Prince Sadrudin's greetings and best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. Twice UNHCR contacted me about a field assignment, once for Southern Sudan, once for Bangladesh, but however much I longed to accept, I couldn't get away from my job in England rapidly enough.

In December 1972, I received the *"faire part"* that stated:

*Sadrudin Aga Khan
Madame Catherine Aleya Sursock
ont l'honneur de vous faire part de leur mariage
qui a été célébré dans l'intimité
le 25 Novembre 1972
Château de Bellerive
Collonge-Bellerive
Genève, Suisse*

And again, Christmas greetings, this time in the prince's hand, "*with warmest good wishes – hoping to see you again. Sadrudin Aga Khan.*"

I took it into my head to choose the prince and princess a wedding gift (a cut-glass wine decanter), and took it to Geneva on 23rd February 1973, driving down from Turbach where I was on holiday with friends. The prince seemed always to be accessible, for although he was very rushed he welcomed me warmly. He said that he enjoyed our correspondence, and thanked me generously for the gift, and asked my advice on public opinion in England about the Asian refugees from Uganda. He was just back from London where he had persuaded the Government to take family members separated from their dependants because of their lack of UK citizenship. We had about eight minutes and he had to dash home to entertain some Turks, but asked if I was returning to England via Geneva, and he would like to see me for longer in Geneva or in England. "I haven't looked you up in England yet," he said. I suppressed a gasp of amazement!

As for "our correspondence", I have no record of it up to that point, except that concerning a nation-wide fundraising campaign for African refugees that I had started to set up all across Britain, with the very strong support of the UN Student Association: "SARA", Student Appeal for Refugees in Africa. We had been given offices free of charge within a stone's throw of Buckingham Palace, thirteen new Hillman cars had been generously loaned by the manufacturer, Rootes for the use of our regional organisers (mostly students, of course), and a volume of specially printed material had come from UNHCR. Both the English union of students, NUS and the Scottish Union of students, SUS, had been behind the effort, and we knew that we had television time and Peter Ustinov for the appointed day. But unfortunately the whole endeavour came to be quashed by two senior UNHCR representatives (including the hyper-efficient Ole Volting), who persuaded our distinguished Advisory Committee, chaired by Christopher Chataway, who, as mentioned

in chapter 4, had sparked off the World Refugee Year initiative, that our plans were insufficiently developed...

Sometime after 1962, I suggested to *Who's Who* that they include Prince Sadruddin, who so far did not appear to feature in that well-known register of notable people. Somehow the prince learnt that it was I who had made that suggestion, and years later he referred to this, laughing. A few years on, Prince Sadruddin and his wife actually wrote to me from Mombasa, when they were there on holiday. I was bemused, how come they could be so wonderfully friendly?

In January 1975, I shook myself free from commitments in England just as Jacques Cuénod asked UNHCR Geneva to recruit me for the new Regional Office for Indochina. At last I was back! Prince Sadruddin and Princess Catherine came on an official visit to the Governments of Laos and Viet Nam, and of course were very soon alongside the handful of members of the very small RO staff. It was a great honour to be in the presence of them both, and I remember succinctly some of the conversations that we had there, for example about food! They spoke of what they enjoyed eating, explaining that they liked rather small portions, and asking what fruit and vegetables we could get in Vientiane. We particularly enthused about bean sprouts! Sadruddin enquired about my dog, actually remembering the dog's name – after ten years! and expressing his sympathy on hearing that Chiki had recently died.

The prince and princess visited us twice during the year I was in Laos. On the second occasion, which was within weeks of the end of my assignment, Sadruddin enquired about my return journey to Europe, warmly urging me to consider going to Peking and taking the trans-Siberian express. "It'd take three weeks – but it would be a great experience," he said enthusiastically, telling me how he would love to do it himself. I did not take up his recommendation mainly because UNHCR notified Jacques Cuénod that there would be no other assignment for Miss Willday after the end of this one. That came as a tremendous blow, for I had counted on remaining in the international sphere, and I preferred to get back to Europe to see what I could and should do. Three months later, UNHCR telephoned me in England asking me to take over as a matter of great urgency the post of Head of Sub-Office in Kivu, Congo (then called Zaïre). Just before leaving, I was honoured to be invited to the Château de Bellerive for a luncheon, and met Sadruddin's mother, Princess Andrée.

Knowing that I would be bound to spend a lot of time alone in Bukavu and a lot more time travelling on roads to North and South Kivu, I took

knitting needles and enough Aran wool to make up two Aran cardigans. It was a help to have something constructive to do on those murderous roads! Half way through the assignment, having travelled to Geneva to try to get a contract issued to my temporary assistant, an Italian academic keen to start a career with UNHCR and whose help was desperately needed, I was once more invited to the Château and was actually driven there by the High Commissioner in his VW 1300. Of course we talked all the way, of Congolese rebels, of family and of dogs. The concern the prince felt about my safety was obvious in his questions about the rebels, who after so many years were still in the area. Sadruddin had just the day before (17th January, his birthday) collected a three-month-old Belgian Shepherd puppy and called him Arak. Young Arak was exactly like my dog of Burundi days, and my first dog's successor, recently adopted in Bukavu. Midway through lunch, the prince felt he should take his adorable puppy outside, "just in case". It was marvellous to have in common our love of dogs, and of Belgian Shepherds in particular.

It was not very long afterwards that the sad news came that Princess Andrée had died. I wrote a letter of condolence, and received by return a printed acknowledgement, to which the prince added by hand, "Dear Diana, thank you for your thoughtful letter."

Back from Africa, I was invited to the Château yet again, and as my mother was over from England she was invited too. How thrilled she was to meet the prince and princess! I had taken the result of my knitting efforts and presented the two garments. Prince Sadruddin, in thanking me warmly for the two cardigans, enquired where they had come from. "The pattern from Ireland, the wool from the UK. I so enjoyed making them!", I replied, and he said, "*I had just a faint idea that you might have made them yourself!*" And later, before he had to rush off, he thanked me again and asked, almost coyly, "*Which of our pullovers did you knit first?*" At lunch, my mother had been seated next to the prince, I next to the princess. To my poor mother's intense embarrassment, a cherry tomato somehow leapt from her plate onto her cream skirt. Sadruddin, with his inimitable aplomb, indicated to an attendant what needed to be done. I believe that on that day, or it may have been on another occasion, the prince was fasting, while sitting at table with his guests.

The time came, of course, that Sadruddin left as High Commissioner, and he was greatly missed. A former Danish prime minister, Poul Hartling, was appointed in his place.

Now here comes the part it is difficult to relate. It had been foreseen

that the prince would take me on at this juncture. He had confided in me much earlier that he wished to take on different activities after leaving as High Commissioner in December 1977, including the writing of a book about his father. He suggested that our writing styles were very similar, and believed that we would travel and work well together. I had been simply mesmerised by this totally unexpected approach. How could I decline such an opportunity? although while harbouring serious doubts as to my ability to live up to his expectations, I had just hoped he was right. I had tried to push these doubts to the back of my mind for some time but they resurfaced: did I have sufficient ability, sufficient culture to function effectively at his side? Nevertheless, I duly resigned from UNHCR in March 1978, the resignation to take effect in June, to give time for a work permit to be obtained for me.

At this point, UNHCR suddenly sent me to Argentina on a mission to work with an NGO in Mendoza, at the foot of the Andes, to document for resettlement Chilean refugees whose names featured on the junta's black list. I was simply stricken to find that a majority of them, including children, were traumatised. Observing my work methods, the head of the agency, a woman lawyer, told me – out of the blue – that she saw that I had a real vocation for this work. Shocked to hear that I was soon due to leave UNHCR to join Prince Sadruddin, she earnestly entreated me not to leave, then unfortunately when I returned to Geneva in June, a senior director of UNHCR took the same line. Then I learnt that the Geneva authorities in my absence in Argentina had turned down the prince's application for a work permit for me. When telling me this on the telephone, Princess Catherine said, "If the worst comes to the worst, I suppose you could stay with UNHCR." I was now in the most agonising quandary. The UNHCR director even went to see Sadruddin about me, and was told that "Miss Willday must decide for herself."

Eventually – and shamefully – I gave in to the intense UNHCR pressure to withdraw my resignation, knowing that whatever happened in regard to UNHCR duties, thanks to previous experience I should be able to cope, but realising that I was letting a most wonderful person down very badly by not remaining free to join him. Prince Sadruddin, magnanimous beyond belief, accepted my very painful decision. Obviously the respect and even friendship that the prince and princess had shown me were far from deserved. Nevertheless, many years later Princess Catherine, who over the intervening years would remain in fairly close touch by telephone and by post, wished me to know that her husband had said, "*Diana was right not to come to work with*

me. She doesn't need a boss, she is a boss herself." What a truly *amazing* man!!

UNHCR HQ put me, with totally inexperienced general services staff needing training, in charge of the resettlement of Indochinese refugees, at a time when a major crisis was looming: Vietnamese "boat people" were starting to arrive in increasing numbers on the shores of South East Asian countries, while Laotians and traumatised Cambodians were crossing into Thailand. In place of five or six countries willing to accept some of them, there would soon be thirty. Urgent telexes began to arrive in sheaves, my telephone started to ring throughout the day with calls from all over the world and young people snatched up almost from the road in front of the building to go out to South East Asia were pushed through my door for such briefing as I could offer, in a situation in which not one of them could be advised as to the possible nature of their future post. One of the many is now Lord (Mark) Malloch-Brown, who found himself having to set up an emergency camp in Thailand for hundreds of thousands of Cambodians – a task that no one in headquarters had been in any position to advise him on beforehand.

Through circumstances beyond anyone's control, or so it seemed (for the UN bureaucracy moved slowly in those days, and perhaps still does), I – like many or most of those young men and women field staff – was faced for very many months with having to work fifteen-hour days almost without a break and on far too little sleep. Burnout had never yet been heard of, though we soon began to hear that some of the young people sent out to duty stations like Bangkok were breaking down after only a few weeks in jobs for which they had had no real training and no psychological preparation. I was holding up as well as possible, but my Greek woman boss (who was not working 15-hour days) accused me of "being theatrical" when finally some tears began to flow. There were other insults so out of place and so baffling that when after endless months of coping on my own, not one but *five* additional professionals came to be assigned to that work just as the crisis was gradually dying down (all provided with adequate general service staff), I took leave, thought about the future and felt I had to resign. Little did I imagine seeing anything of the prince. However, Sadruddin, learning that I was free and without asking a single question, very gallantly took me on as his editorial assistant to help prepare his report for the UN Commission on Human Rights on the "connection between gross violations of human rights and massive exodus".

What a difference in atmosphere! Accompanied by a bilingual secretary,

we were once again working in the magnificent Palais des Nations, though that year, Prince Sadruddin was absent in New York a great deal while the question of Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim's successor was being debated. The prince sent me a very friendly postcard, in which he mentioned that he was missing Arak! When the time came to deliver the report to the translation services, we were barely ready and had to be granted a short extension. Needless to say, throughout those months the prince showed me the greatest consideration despite the pressures he was under. Then knowing that the International Red Cross had a post for me to go on to, he said with his accustomed grace and generosity, "*The UN's loss is the Red Cross's gain.*"

How magnificently he dealt with people – with magnificence in line with his unique origins and his princely upbringing! How kind, thoughtful and generous he always was! The time came that I got married. My husband André and I received a splendid silver tray, inscribed with a message from Prince Sadruddin and Princess Catherine. The following year our daughter Claudia was born. We received from Their Highnesses a most beautiful dress for her. On returning to work, I received a letter dated 10th April 1985:

Dear Diana (in his own hand)

Thank you for your very kind message of 4th April. It is always good to hear from you and I was delighted that you had gotten back into the fray.

(and in his own hand): *Katy and I missed you when we had the HCR reunion at Bellerive! We hope that you and your husband as well as the baby are thriving and we send belated Easter greetings and much love, Sadruddin.*

18th February 1986

Dear Diana,

(...) I have not heard from you in a long time and I hope that your husband and the baby are well. I look forward to seeing you soon.

(In his own hand): *Kate joins me in sending our love, as ever, Sadruddin*

Of course I always replied to all Prince Sadruddin's letters (as he replied to all

mine). Sometimes my mother was again staying with us. Her birthday was on 28th January, as was Princess Catherine's.

19th February 1986

"Dear Prince Sadruddin,

"How wonderful to hear from you!

"Hardly a day goes by without my thinking of you, and my mother and I so often speak of you and Princess Catherine. It is always tempting to send you a card respectively on 17th and 28th January, but in the interests of respecting the innumerable calls on your time, for you always acknowledge the least message, I have desisted for some years, and just celebrate the dates in my heart. Last week it was an especial joy to see you at what was for all of us I think an enjoyable and most informative meeting."

Again I was invited to Bellerive, this time with Claudia, just a toddler. How could I ever forget what Prince Sadruddin said in front of everyone, during lunch: *"I do congratulate you on Claudia, Diana. She's a lovely little girl. Everything you have ever done you have done well."*

Throughout all those years, I felt deeply indebted to them both. I knew I did not deserve the respect and affection they gave me. The best I could do was to show my appreciation as best I could. The prince and princess surely had myriads of friends from around the world and from many walks of life, all of whom must have felt the same tremendous enrichment at being part of their circle. I know that this is the case with former colleagues of mine. In a sense, we stood in awe of a very great personality and his princess.

As soon as possible, with quite some support from within the Red Cross Movement but also from outside it, I organised in October 1987 on the shores of Lake Lucerne a five-day international workshop on trauma. It turned out to be quite a breakthrough, for astonishingly enough, in the 1980s even psychologists in Europe seemed collectively in ignorance of the reality of trauma. Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was a term simply about to be "discovered", I think in the USA. Practitioners and some government observers came from seventeen countries to the Hotel Terrasse in Vitznau.

About the book that came out of our intensive work at Vitznau in English and French, sent by our Secretary-General to the prince and of course immediately acknowledged, Prince Sadruddin wrote to me, on 13th January 1989,

Dear Diana,

Pär Stenbäck has just sent me your book. I was delighted to see your name on the cover and all of us here at La Pelouse look forward to reading it. I glanced at the case studies and found them most telling.

Congratulations for having put all this excellent material together.

And by hand: We think of you often. Kate joins me in sending you our fondest love.

Sadruddin.

And there were other letters, for example, in early 1989,

How did you find “Trente Millions d’Amis”?²⁵⁴ Arak and Uzbek certainly looked better than Katy and I.

Kate sends her love to you and the family, as I do.

Yours ever, Sadruddin

And in 1991:

(by hand): Thank you, dear Diana, for your thoughtful note following the Red Cross/victims of war meeting.

What do such meetings achieve?

I may be getting cynical. Just old age creeping up I guess.

254 A long-running French TV programme on animals. Princess Catherine had also chosen to have a Belgian Malinois

*We think of you, Claudia and the family and send our fondest love.
Catherine and Sadruddin A.K.*

In September 1993, Prince Sadruddin's dog Arak, died and after consulting a member of the prince's private staff, I wrote on 15th September:

Dear Prince Sadruddin, dear Princess Catherine,

In a short note of condolence, I should simply like to say that no dog could have been more loved or better understood. Arak lived a long life because he was so blessed, I am sure, from the day you fetched him, on 17th January '77 to seven days short of his seventeenth birthday.

Christine urged me to send you this card. Arak was like this when you first introduced us.*

Much love, Yours, Diana

*It was of a Belgian sheepdog puppy

And on 22nd September 1993, I wrote:

"Dear Prince Sadruddin,

"You once urged me to write a book. I started when Claudia was born but had to lay it aside for nearly nine years, and now I've taken up your idea again.

"But of course no account of mine is thinkable without your featuring in it. The enclosed is a first rough shot.

"I wonder what you will think? Perhaps you will think it best consigned to some shelf and forgotten until Claudia is of age to read it (a sufficient justification for having made the attempt). Or perhaps you might think I am "in with a chance"; in that case, ought we to try to discuss it somehow, if you could give me time, in Geneva one day or over the telephone. It is so important to be true to you in this. Or might you prefer to ask a member of

your staff to pass on your comments, and I would send an amended draft? "Naturally I am not feeling at all comfortable about presuming upon your time like this."

Sadrudin replied, 30.9.93:

Dear Diana, Your sweet note about Arak is very much appreciated. He was my best friend and I miss him terribly. I also loved the card. Who knows, I may even feel like having another dog one day.

I would like to read your material and reflect upon the project before writing you again shortly. With every good wish,

Sadrudin A.K.

In January of the following year, I had written:

"You are both frequently in my thoughts, and I hope that this year will bring you much that is encouraging, uplifting, and amusing even – and that you are happy and in good health.

"Meditating, as I often do, on all your accomplishments, dear Prince Sadrudin, it came to me with some force that it is (surely) high time some responsible person wrote your biography. What you have done so far, and the spirit in which you have done it, could inspire a lot of people around the world.

"Someone of considerable maturity, with proven intellectual and moral stature, having a sound grasp of the political and humanitarian issues of our time, would be needed. But perhaps you have been approached, and if not, perhaps a reputable publisher could provide some ideas."

After a little further correspondence, the prince received me in his office at the end of the first week of February 1994. We talked about Devon, where my family was still living for a few months after the death of my mother. The prince had already sent me condolences in a letter of 13th January. I said I would love the prince and princess to come over, and he said that they would

really love to, they would love to come and look at individual people's gardens that are open to the public.²⁵⁵ He asked about our former colleagues. I said I had seen Jacques Cuénod the previous evening. We talked about many of the others, about Mrs Ogata (now High Commissioner for Refugees), about the Stoltenbergs, about Bernard Kouchner. The prince spoke of his involvement in Bosnia, a Peace Committee. *"Katy gets cross because I say we ought to go and live in Sarajevo – be with people who are suffering. Here we are living in luxury."* He had been in and out of Bosnia several times recently.

He said that he would like to see the whole book I had been writing, and though I protested, saying that of course he had far more important things to do, he said that it would bring back pleasant memories. He would not seek to offer criticism, he assured me, but perhaps he could think of elements that I had overlooked or ignored. He seemed pleased about my departures into the years of Stanley, Baker, and other great explorers, and about the slave trade. We spoke about the elderly Russians who had had to leave China, and Mrs Vavilova who I used to visit at Zollikofen for over twenty-five years, after she and I had first met in the Saanan retirement home for Russians.

At that meeting, we spoke of the need for a biography to be written about him. He said he would leave it until he was about seventy, he felt there wasn't much to say now. *"I haven't done much yet"*, he actually said!! But he admitted that several people had been urging him to talk into a recorder.

Twice the secretary looked in, twice the prince said that she should ask people to wait. When I left his office, he came out onto the landing and held his arms out very wide and enfolded me. *"Wonderful to see you, Diana!"*

This was the last time that we met, although I had been invited to try to go with Claudia before long (but alas, we now lived nearly a thousand kilometres from Geneva, for health reasons), although our correspondence was certainly not at an end. On 4th September 1995, Prince Sadruddin wrote,

Dear Diana,

I was delighted to receive your book. Congratulations for a courageous achievement. Your testimony comes from the heart and

255 I remember having once sent them a National Trust catalogue on gardens.

that is a rare quality especially around the UN these days. It also makes for particularly poignant reading.

Kate and I greatly look forward to reading it in detail – not only the parts of direct concern to me when we were together in UNHCR!

You must inscribe my copy when we meet. We have been frequently away from Geneva during the last year and my health has caused some problems. But I am much better and we will be spending more time at Bellerive in the coming months.

The picture of Claudia holding Kimmy II is quite lovely. I know that you wanted me to get a new Malinois – though Arak is irreplaceable.

You will be happy to know that he has just joined the Bellerive menagerie. He is seven weeks old and since the litter was born under the letter P his breeder called him “Playboy” which we decided to keep.

We are coping with his tremendous energy and sharp teeth. He certainly is an armful and I look forward to introducing him to you.

Kate joins me in sending much love to you and the family.

As ever,

Sadrudin

Sarajevo, 14th October 1996

“Dear Princess Catherine, dear Prince Sadrudin,

“You have been in my thoughts countless times since I came here two months ago, invited by UNHCR to set things going for the ‘Bosnian Women’s Initiative’ announced by President Clinton in Florence on 27th June. Today was the case even more than usual, for Phyllis Oakley is here and we were together all day, and of course spoke very fondly of you both (and isn’t she a fine, gracious lady?) Not only that, but Martin Barber*

* Under-Secretary of State, Washington

has been to have dinner here this evening. As you may know, Martin is Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (since July). We spoke of you, of Zia who is also in Sarajevo, of Laos, Afghanistan and London, and of our children (Martin's first boy and Claudia were born on the very same day, 27.9.'84!) Claudia got through on the 'phone only to be cut off after 5-6 seconds. It has been hard for us to be apart, but we have only eight days more to go, for I shall be in Geneva on 21st and home on the 22nd, thankfully. Meanwhile, she has conducted herself "manfully", celebrating her birthday with Papa and friends, concentrating on her work (20/20 in Latin, 10/10 in music, 18/20 in French half-term tests, earning her father's admiration, too, of course).

"The Americans have been most supportive of my efforts here, and I've been made to feel that the decision to agree to this mission was the right one.

"I do so wonder how you are, and Playboy too. I have tried to ring you from here, but it is impossible to get through, it seems. You know anyway that you remain greatly cherished by me and that I remember you in my prayers.

"Tomorrow it will be thirty-six years since my first day in UNHCR! But I guess we are as young as we feel, and the two or three daily climbs to seventh-floor offices helps the physique.

"Love, as always, Yours, Diana"

I wrote again days later, from Sarajevo Airport, having thought up a possible project to promote reconciliation through the women. Prince Sadruddin wrote me the following, all by hand:

3rd December 1996

Dear Diana,

Thank you for the wonderful letters from Sarajevo. Your dedication and enthusiasm are as inspiring as ever. You are the right person in the right place.

Your project with your friends of ZENA 21 on the role of women is very convincing and Kate and I would be happy to help. What we cannot do is to take a leading role or take on organisational responsibilities.

We have too much on our plates as it is and it became imperative to weed out and delegate many activities and commitments.

Also, this should be a women's initiative (like Ireland) and men shouldn't have a high profile.

We will be absent from Geneva from 11th December to 7th January '97. Let us try to meet when you are here.

Kate joins me in sending season's greetings to you and Claudia and the family. Playboy is fifteen months old and in splendid form.

*With lasting affection from Kate and
Sadrudin A.K.*

Unfortunately, I was told later from Sarajevo that the women could not agree to work together. So there was no meeting, no working together any more.

There were more letters. There was one from Prince Sadrudin, handwritten and dated 11th February 1997 in which he wrote:

Dear Diana,

I loved your card. Thank you for remembering the 17th and 28th of January. Katy and I are sometimes tempted to forget birthdays as time passes too quickly.

The picture of Claudia with a happy cat is wonderful. I hope it found a home. We have already adopted several stray dogs and two are still with us (both Greek). Cats, I fear, would be severely stressed at Bellerive, where we have a total of ten dogs at the time of writing.

This is being written prior to our departure for the U.S. where we shall be travelling between New York and Washington – and further points west.

We send our warmest thoughts to you and the family.

With affection, Sadruddin A.K.

There was an occasion on which Prince Sadruddin talked to me about a forthcoming exhibition of part of his art collection, and gave me the catalogue.

There was yet another letter I wanted to write to Prince Sadruddin “to say some of the things that have been on my heart for years without their having found adequate expression”:

“Firstly, I wish to thank you for being such an inspiration to me, and, I am sure, to very many people. From the time you joined the Office in 1962, one was aware of the tremendously high-minded example you were setting.

“Thank you for the support you gave me personally. It came most unexpectedly, and in many different ways. Thank you for demonstrating such concern for me after some of the events in Laos, and in the Kivu which was still unstable at that time, though this was of course nothing compared to subsequent events in the region.

“Thank you both, so much, for wishing to associate me with your work longer term. I was overwhelmed by your interest. Had UNHCR not sent me to Mendoza, where while documenting traumatised Chileans for resettlement I was simply devastated to realise the extent of the suffering of people who had survived torture or other forms of repression, and where non-UNHCR staff begged me to remain in work with refugees, everything would have been very different. This is a painful time to remember. Standing as it seemed at a crucial crossroads, I felt torn apart for weeks. Your magnanimity over the difficult decision I eventually took will of course never be forgotten.

“Thank you for taking me on all the same two years later when you agreed to act as a Special Rapporteur to the Commission on Human Rights.

“Thank you for your several wonderful invitations to the Château de Bellerive, which sometimes included my dear mother, and later,

Claudia. Thank you for your gracious replies to many cards and letters, for your congratulatory letter on the book on refugee trauma – and for all the other wonderful ways you shared thoughts with me. I treasure everything, including of course some photographs.

“With lifelong gratitude and affection, dear Prince Sadruddin, to you both,

“Yours, Diana”

Of course Prince Sadruddin replied, and he did so in a full-page letter written in his incomparable hand:

10th December 2000

Dear Diana,

Thank you so very much for your kind and thoughtful letter of 29th November which I found when we returned to Geneva recently.

You are a warm and compassionate human being and I will not forget your contribution to refugees and humanitarian work. You were in hardship posts and you never wavered. I was happy to have you at UNHCR, to read your seminal book and I always admired your dedication and loyalty.

It was good to get your news. Claudia has certainly grown into an attractive young lady. Time certainly flies...

We would love to meet her again when we return from a forthcoming trip with my nephew Karim over the holidays. You must bring her of course.

In the meantime Kate joins me, as do the boys, in sending you and the family our best wishes for Christmas and the New Year,

As ever, Sadruddin

I still have a short letter from the prince dated 21st January 2002 in which he wrote:

I was touched to receive your message on the occasion of my birthday. Your warm wishes are greatly appreciated and I thank you for remembering this date. By hand: The panda is beautiful and I can't think of a better messenger!

With love from Catherine and Sadruddin

Because of distance (the family had moved some years earlier to Vendée, on the Atlantic seaboard) and my daughter's involvement with school exams, only in February 2003 did I write to see if a meeting might be possible. For the first time, the response came from the town office, informing me that the prince and princess were absent and would no doubt contact me on their return. Little did I dream that Prince Sadruddin was very ill in hospital in Boston and that none of us would ever see him again.

* * *

Throughout those forty years, I found Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan to be an extremely altruistic, brilliant, modest and endearing man, a man of great magnanimity, charisma, dignity and insight, of infectious humour and deep concern for humanity and for our environment. As a passionately keen collector of art, mountain hiker, kite flyer, yachtsman and concertgoer, he fitted so much into an all-too-short life. Alas, the world has no one quite like him – and perhaps never will have.

I count it as a tremendous privilege to have been persuaded by people I greatly respect to write about Sadruddin. I thought the task would be beyond me. But it has been the very least I could do, and my hope is of course that people who never had the good fortune to meet this extraordinary man will learn about him through these pages, and realise what a tremendous blessing he was for humanity and for the natural world.

Riaz, Switzerland, 19th December 2015

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The end of a great life, May 2003

Prince Sadrudin, undergoing treatment for cancer in a Massachusetts hospital, died on 12th May 2003, and was buried in Bellerive, Switzerland. The “Tuesday’s child full of grace” left us far too soon. He was survived by his wife of thirty-one years, Princess Catherine; his three stepsons Alexandre, Marc and Nicholas Sursock; his nephews and niece Prince Karim, Prince Amyn and Princess Yasmin; and his cousin Mme Françoise Carron.

It was Prince Sadrudin’s and Princess Catherine’s wish that their mortal remains ultimately be laid to rest in Muslim soil in Egypt.

The Secretariat of H.H. the Aga Khan made an announcement on 14th May concerning the funeral ceremonies for Prince Sadrudin Aga Khan to be conducted in Geneva, Switzerland:

“Arrangements have been made for members of the diplomatic corps, government officials and close friends to pay their last respects to Prince Sadrudin at the Chateau de Bellerive, 25 Chemin du Milieu, 1245 Collonge-Bellerive between 3 pm. (1500 hours) and 8 pm. (2000 hours) on Thursday, 15th May, 2003.

“Interment will, in accordance with Prince Sadrudin’s wishes, take place in a subsequent private ceremony in the strictest intimacy, attended by members of his family.”

Books of Condolence were opened at specified dates and times at the Chateau de Bellerive, Geneva, the Secretariat of Prince Sadrudin Aga Khan, 4, rue Munier Romilly, 1206 Geneva, 1, Rue des Ursins, Paris 4e, France, the Secretariat of His Highness the Aga Khan, Aiglemont, Gouvieux, France, The Ismaili Centre, 1-7 Cromwell Gardens, London SW7, UK, The Ismaili Centre, Rua Abranches Ferrao, Lisbon, Portugal, and the Ismaili Centre, 4010 Canada Way, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada. The obituary included the following paragraphs:

“A rare combination of reflective wisdom and outspoken activism, Prince Sadruddin brought to each of his endeavours a commitment of intellect and passion. Known for a sharp analysis of contemporary affairs, Prince Sadruddin’s contribution to diplomacy as well as to the preservation of the environment and cultural heritage drew on deeply rooted ethics. Proud of his Muslim heritage, Prince Sadruddin has said that ‘the true message of Islam is about brotherhood and solidarity, as well as care for nature.’ Ever conscious of his Persian roots, Prince Sadruddin often saw the blend of the two worlds in which he lived – that of the East and that of the West – as a means ‘to contribute to a better understanding of problems of a global nature, which know no borders.’

“Widely known for his generosity and warm personality, Prince Sadruddin was highly regarded and greatly respected by family and friends and held in deep affection by the Ismaili Muslim Community around the world. His support for the community and for the work of the Ismaili Imamate in improving the quality of life for people across the developing world was unfailing.”²⁵⁶

Prince Sadruddin had received several honorary doctorates and national decorations from States as diverse as Pakistan, Poland and the Vatican, as well as the United Nations Human Rights Award. He was elected a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1991. He was made a *Bourgeois d’Honneur de Geneve*, made a *Commandeur* of the *Légion d’honneur* of France and a Knight Commander of the Order of St. Sylvester (KCSS) of the Holy See, and was a recipient of the Order of the Nile of Egypt. Furthermore, he was made a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE), this for his services to humanitarian causes and the arts. He was an honorary citizen of Patmos, Greece, where he owned a house.

* * *

Tribute of the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan

The following statement was issued on 13th May by the Spokesman for Secretary-General Kofi Annan:

The Secretary-General is deeply saddened to learn of the death of Prince

²⁵⁶ Press release of the Aga Khan’s secretariat, <http://www.amaana.org/agakhan/sadruddin3.htm>

Sadrudin Aga Khan, the former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, philanthropist and lifelong friend of the United Nations. For more than three decades, Prince Sadrudin was engaged in the work of the United Nations for human rights, humanitarian, environmental and cultural causes. He led the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) at a particularly challenging time, during the war that led to the birth of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Prince Sadrudin served the United Nations in many other capacities, including as Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for Humanitarian Assistance during the 1990-1991 Iraq-Kuwait crisis. Through his own Foundation, he worked tirelessly for the protection and improvement of the environment, for cross-cultural understanding and for disarmament. The Secretary-General extends his deepest condolences to Prince Sadrudin's widow, Princess Catherine Aleya Aga Khan, and to the rest of his family. He joins the Prince's many friends around the world in giving thanks for the life of this remarkable and deeply generous human being.

Obituaries were written the world over –

by heads of States, by titled friends, by people eminent in international affairs and so on. The selection from those published emphasise how Prince Sadrudin was appreciated in Switzerland, his home for almost his whole life.

Geneva's tribute

The *Feuille d'Avis Officielle de la République et canton de Genève* devoted its front page on 19th May to *Sadrudin Aga Khan, le prince qui voulait un monde meilleur* (Sadrudin Aga Khan, the prince who wanted a better world). Monsieur Robert Hensler, Chancelier d'État, wrote a long tribute that many will be glad to see in its entirety:

“His Highness Prince Sadrudin Aga Khan left us last week. As with all strong personalities, he leaves a void which will become evident only with the passage of time. For the time being, those who knew him mull over all their recollections of him, and still have him with them in that way.

“How indeed can anyone forget his firm handshake, the twinkling eyes,

the dignity in his bearing and his obvious intelligence? How could one avoid feeling like the pupil before the master when confronted by his simplicity of manner, the attention he gave one, his warmth, even on the first encounter? This openness was the counterpart of very great discretion that he maintained on his life. After the prince died, someone who had worked very closely with him said, 'Our destiny is in God's hands. Now his soul is free.' I am sure that the simplicity and humility in that expression would have pleased him, as I am convinced of the deep spiritual measure of this man who had everything to occupy a prime place on the world scene, and who chose, on the contrary, to devote himself to defending the values he believed in. These values could be encapsulated in a single expression: human dignity.

"The life of Sadruddin Aga Khan, until he breathed his last, abounded in paradoxes and coincidences. He actually died forty-three years to the very day from the death of his half-brother, Prince Aly Khan – famous for having married Rita Hayworth. Where most Western minds would see in this nothing more than an odd coincidence, I see it on the contrary as the sign of a higher dimension, the mark of a man chosen by destiny as if he was someone from a Greek tragedy.

Not an easy destiny

"Though born in France, Sadruddin was pursued by the war. So his family came to Switzerland, where his father, Mohamed Shah Aga Khan III, had presided over the League of Nations. Sadruddin's whole career was at the heart of the United Nations Organisation, the successor to the League of Nations, even being elected Secretary-General in 1981, with more votes than Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. But he had to accept the facts when a Permanent Member of the Security Council vetoed him, for unknown reasons. It seems probable that a man without strong ties to any nation didn't please them, or maybe he was considered too independent, or was thought to be aligned to the big powers. On this point, nothing was further from the truth.

"War and peace, exile and roots, national and international belonging, the life of Sadruddin Aga Khan oscillated between those two poles. The family adhered with fidelity to the path of its forebears. Exiled from Iran, the family learnt the hard way about conflict, and created several humanitarian organisations. Deprived of national roots, they developed international

roots, both through belonging to the Muslim Ismaili Shia community that lives in many different countries, and through belonging to international organisations.

“The disappearance of Sadrudin Aga Khan fulfils this special destiny of his, on the one hand reuniting him with those who have gone before, especially his parents, and on the other closing the cycle of his activity on this earth, so very rich, enabling us to grasp the extent of it all, and see the continuity in relation to his forebears.

A nobility of character

“Rarely has there ever been as discreet but as radiant a personality as was Sadrudin Aga Khan. This prince of a noble bloodline was also, and above all, noble by the way he led his life. He had chosen to join his life to that of our canton, living freely in his own way, without ostentation. Once he was no longer committed to the UN, he founded Alp Action. In this NGO, his attachment to our country and his awareness of the importance of nature for the survival of human beings and for their enjoyment and well-being were linked with his vision for nature and for culture. Alp Action restored medieval churches and traditional chalets, paid for the training of young men on roofing with the traditional wooden tiles – know-how which had been getting lost – planted trees and reintroduced the bearded vulture. Seeing Sadrudin Aga Khan dressed for the mountains holding a discussion with the mayor of a Fribourg village or a guide or an ornithologist, it was difficult to imagine him as working indefatigably in the corridors of power as if in a royal palace, or looking after the poorest of the poor. Everywhere, he remained the same. Unique and universal.

“We are grateful to have had the privilege of having within our walls someone of his quality, while being very sad today that he has gone. If we had to find someone embodying the spirit of Geneva, made of universalism, attachment to one’s origins and with respect for others, His Highness Sadrudin Aga Khan would be that person. He will never be replaced.”²⁵⁷

Hommage à Son Altesse Sadrudin Aga Khan, publié dans la Feuille d’avis officielle de la République et canton de Genève du 19 mai 2003 par Robert Hensler, Chancelier d’Etat de 1993 à 2009. Reproduit avec l’aimable

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* * *

Dr Philip Roch, former Directeur de l'Office fédéral de l'environnement, des forêts et du paysage avec le titre de Secrétaire d'Etat (Dr. Roch was formerly Director of the Federal Office of the Environment, Forests and Countryside, with the title of Secretary of State)

He was really a great man

“When we first met, I was much younger than the prince, but he put me at my ease. He seemed so modest, despite his unique background. I liked him very much indeed. He was a charming, endearing man. It was touching to see how he was with people, how he treated everyone with great respect. He was really a great man, charismatic and full of human qualities. He had “la grande classe” and put it at the service of ecology at a time that few people of note were concerned about the environment. He really was a pioneer.

“I knew for a long time that he was ill. I was at his home with others one evening, and he gave the impression that he was really well, talking as he always did with everyone. I had very great respect for him and have missed him a good deal.”²⁵⁸

* * *

The following, appearing in the *Tribune de Genève* on 14th May 2003 under the heading *Sadraddin Aga Khan, the prince who fought for the poor*, is reproduced in translation, with permission.²⁵⁹

“The prince had lived in Geneva since 1959. He died on Monday in Boston after a long illness.” The article spoke of Sadraddin’s beautiful

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259 Serge Bimpagne, *Tribune de Genève, Mort d'un prince idéaliste*

Château de Bellerive and his town office, of his “*élégance britannique*”, of his dozen or so employees with whom he worked on the ‘various foundations and commissions’ that he had founded on human rights, refugees, nuclear questions, assistance to the Third World. When people visited him, he invariably had his Belgian Shepherd with him. He wished to have no questions either on his fortune or on his private life. “This discretion was respected by the people of Geneva. He used to say that their main quality was their discretion. It’s true that the Geneva authorities did not reveal the identity of the main lender of works for a sensational exhibition of Islamic Art in the Musée d’art et d’histoire. Just as we never bothered him with income tax. Such was his nature that he gave rise to spontaneous allegiance.”

The article covered the prince’s distinguished service with UNESCO and UNHCR. Speaking of his not being appointed to the post of UN Secretary-General, the *Tribune de Genève* reporter says, “The international world was somewhat thrown by a prince with numerous nationalities. He was not really a capitalist Westerner or an Arab. In the UN realm of ‘yes men’, what policies might this maverick end up adopting? His was a strong personality. An ecologist before everyone else, Don Quixote assaulting nuclear arms and power stations, he lambasted the poverty of the Third World. An idealist, a virtuous man, as his circle emphasised.”

The article suggested that the prince never quite got over not being elected Secretary-General of the United Nations, and said that he was very disappointed at the international community’s lack of eagerness to act when he was “available” at the end of the 1980s to succeed M’Bow at the head of UNESCO.

Speaking of the prince’s “global conscience”, the article listed his impressive achievements. “His numerous reports on deforestation, desertification, armed conflicts or refugees frequently made the vast meeting rooms of the Palais des Nations tremble.” If he was challenged about covering so much ground, the prince would reply, amused, ‘One has to raise global consciousness. Too many people are intellectually provincial. All these problems are inter-connected.’ “This immensely cultured man, a close friend of the Bush family to whom he gave hospitality, had the art of negotiation in his veins.

“What a man!”

* * *

“He gave brilliance to Geneva”

Antoine Maurice, of the *Tribune de Genève*, paying tribute to the prince, in an article entitled *Stock full of talent*, said that his chances of being elected to the post of Secretary-General had been in inverse proportion to the esteem in which he was held throughout the world. “The prince’s intellectual elegance, ease in speaking several languages and running high-level colloquia on the environment, nuclear questions, refugees and human rights impressed his guests and gave brilliance to Geneva. He loved this city and had good Swiss friends. He especially loved the lake, and it gave him a great deal back. He was one of the first to launch out into windsurfing, at the very beginning of the 1970s.”

* * *

Other reactions published in the *Tribune de Genève* of 14th May under the headline:

“Really, he was a great man.”

Ruth Dreifuss, former President of the Confederation:

“I’m terribly sad. I knew that he had been ill for a long time. He wrote to me only recently to talk about meeting. Throughout his whole life, he was someone who made himself available to reduce human suffering and promote the United Nations. I heard about him at first when he became United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. People thought he was a dandy, but he was in fact a militant.

“We should place emphasis on the role he played in transmitting Islamic culture. He had a marvellous collection of *objets d’arts*. I remember how, two or three years ago, he got me to visit the collection of paintings shown at the Musée d’art et d’histoire de Genève.”

Micheline Calmy-Rey, Federal Councillor:

“What you tell me is really moving. Our many contacts were mostly by correspondence, especially those connected with the various events connected to my political career.

“Sadrudin Aga Khan was a magnificent person, with high moral stature. A personality out of the ordinary, committed to the causes that I am also concerned with: looking after our environment, defending human rights.

Robert Cranmer, Geneva State Councillor:

"I'm extremely sad. He was a most remarkable man. What first comes to mind is an article he wrote that was published fairly recently in the *Monde Diplomatique*, that I distributed to my colleagues. In only a few words, he managed to explain sustained development and to bring to this concept a very original viewpoint. He was very committed.

"I was with him several times, for example when we were combatting the Superphenix fast breeder reactor. I was the lawyer of the opposing party and he was organising events. He was always very warm towards me. Yes, he was reserved but at the same time he was a warm-hearted, excellent listener.

Jeanne Marchig, Chair of Cadap, painter:

Mme Marchit worked with the prince over thirty-four years in several areas of work in defence of nature and animals.

"He was a brilliant ("lumineuse") figure who radiated love and compassion for human beings and for animals. This exceptional man was one of the first to intervene in the campaign against the fur trade. I met him in his High Commissioner for Refugees office, to ask for his support. He responded warmly. He also played an important role in the campaign to outlaw hunting in Geneva in 1974.

"Alp Action was one of his most important initiatives, raising consciousness in the countries of the Alpine mountain range of the rich diversity of their environment. Perhaps it was this part of his activities that gave him the greatest satisfaction. I should like to say that Sadruddin Aga Khan was a brilliant humanist with whom it was always a great privilege to work."

Andreas Weissen, President of CIPRA (International Commission for the Protection of the Alps):

"I felt very close to him, in his perception of the Alps, that is at the same time natural and cultural scenery – that is to say with man's imprint upon it." For Andreas Weissen, vice-President of the Alps Initiative as well as President of CIPRA, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan allied simplicity and determination. They met in 1992. He remembers "a very dynamic personality, very clear in his political positions". We went straight to the point, he says, speaking of the appeal to the European Commission made

by Prince Sadruddin, the Mayor of Chamonix Michel Charlet and himself against the return of heavy lorries to the Mont Blanc tunnel.

Ruud Lubbers, High Commissioner for Refugees:

“Sadruddin’s name became synonymous with UNHCR”, the High Commissioner for Refugees said yesterday, speaking from West Africa where he was on mission. He made a great mark on the organisation with his unforgettable style, in charge of UNHCR throughout one of its most difficult periods (1966-77, ed.). Ruud Lubbers, like his staff, is very sad at the news. Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, at thirty-three, was the youngest High Commissioner in the life of UNHCR.

Claude Martin, Director-General of WWF International:

For his part, Claude Martin recalls “the extraordinary understanding Prince Sadruddin had of the international humanitarian context”. At WWF, of which he became vice-president in the 1980s, he stood out as someone with both “a quite radical way of thinking” and a strong will to provide WWF with a global policy in relation to the environment, including the management of natural resources and sustainable development to include the social aspects; an ambition which, back then, was far from usual.

Étienne Dumont, art critic and writer

“One prince can hide another – this is how it was for Sadruddin Aga Khan. Behind the man of peace, the protector of the Alpine range and the animal protector, capable of attacking the Knie family for a grim question of wild animals, there was an art specialist.”

Mr Dumont wrote at some length about the prince’s art collections. “First came my interest for the *Book*’, Sadri explained, in his friendly, subtle way. Sadruddin Aga Khan managed to let the person he was talking to believe that he knew more than he did. But of course it was not the case. The most famous (in the collection) were the pages of the *Book of Kings*, produced in Persia in the 1520s, considered chef-d’œuvres. But the prince was not afraid of bad taste. ‘I like kitsch. It amuses me. It’s a pleasure to collect things.’”

* * *

The Guardian obituary:

“He was a good man”

“Sadrudin, an Ismaili, did not dwell much on his religious beliefs. He was concerned with morals and ethics, and tolerance was an essential part of his credo. He was a good man who believed in the duty of elites to improve the lot of humanity.

“Sadrudin was helped and encouraged by his second wife, Catherine, whom he married in 1972. She is a strict vegetarian, and while guests at his Lake Geneva chateau could count on excellent fare, host and hostess often ate brown rice and salad.”

The Economist obituary ended with the following, referring to Sadrudin’s non-election in 1991 to the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations:

“He bore this second big disappointment in his life stoically. An even greater disappointment was the realisation of how little had been done for the world’s poor. In a speech not long ago he said that in eighty countries people’s incomes were lower than they were ten years earlier. The number of people in poverty, earning less than \$1 a day, was stuck at 1.2 billion.”

The Times obituary:

“He was vocal on numerous subjects, ranging from the plight of monk seals on the Sporadean island of Alonissos to nuclear disarmament, and from the spectacle of a wretched panda trained to play a trumpet in a circus to the detrimental impact on the planet of mass deforestation.”

David Paynter, wildlife photographer:

“There would be a wistfulness about him”

In a tribute to the prince, he wrote: “When he and I talked about photography – his lifelong hobby – or especially about elephants, there would be a wistfulness about him, an aura of longing perhaps, for another way of life that duty demanded he let pass by; one that included ranging through the African bush in a trusty truck like mine, or sitting for hours, days, or weeks maybe at a remote waterhole with his cameras at the ready.”²⁶⁰

260 *Elephant me*, David Paynter, *Africa Geographic* 2006

William M. Johnson, Monachus Guardian:

“He was a source of inspiration”

“Sadraddin Aga Khan was a source of inspiration to conservation, human rights and animal welfare – just some of the key areas that composed his holistic view of the world. Over time, he became increasingly frustrated by the glacial pace of government bureaucracies in tackling ecological and animal welfare abuse, and by the seemingly infinite capacity of officials to evade even the most compelling facts of a logical argument. He could be equally incensed by conflicts between organisations that supposedly shared the same worthy goals – a conviction that originally inspired *Bellerive*’s faith, and nurtured its talents, in assembling broad coalitions to tackle pressing issues. At the same time, the prince often voiced concern that, in striving to meet the challenges of operating within a new world economic order, NGOs could themselves become corporate entities alienated from the very people they needed to reach and to convince.”

Dr Gillian Mackilligin, earlier Secretary-General of the UN Student Association (UNSA), London:

“What a great man Sadraddin was.”

“He wrote to congratulate me when I spoke in the Sub-Committee of the Human Rights Commission calling for torture to be outlawed – 1970 or 1971. I broke several of the ‘rules’. The Committee had to be adjourned. The Turkish representative ‘got me’ in a passageway and threatened me with death and worse. I was mad as the rep in the Committee was a Judge who had sentenced the UNSA of Turkey to prison and torture and I, with a few other quickly-collected NGOs, exposed him! I was young and naïve. What a great man Sadraddin was to recognise something unusual being done and to write.”²⁶¹

* * *

The very many messages of sympathy addressed to Prince Sadraddin’s family that cannot be published here spoke *inter alia* of his inspiring leadership, his

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strong convictions, and the way he gave encouragement. They wrote of his sensitivity, his gentleness, his kindness, his loyalty, his humour, his elegance; the absence in him of any vestige of self; the compassion he had for people and for the whole of creation; his discretion, and his love.

The United Nations community celebrated Sadraddin's life at a memorial ceremony held at its headquarters in New York on 28th October 2003. He was remembered for representing the moral and compassionate side of the international community. The United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said: "Prince Sadraddin combined respect for humankind with concern for our environment. He worked on behalf of the poor and dispossessed, while celebrating humanity through culture and art." He concluded his tribute by praising Prince Sadraddin as "a role model to many of us. His example will continue to inspire new world citizens for several generations to come."

* * *

The prince was very much loved and has been very much missed by countless people. Let us leave the last word to Sadraddin, spoken in one of his innumerable speeches:

"It is to the people – and especially the young – that we look for a lead in the struggle to create a world based less on power and more on concepts of justice, equality and freedom."

Annex I

Prince Sadruddin's tribute to his father

THE TIMES SATURDAY NOVEMBER 5 1977

An intimate tribute by Sadruddin Aga Khan on the
centenary of his father's birth

The Aga Khan: from Curzon to Hitler, a man
always at the centre of history

My father, the late Aga Khan, was born 100 years ago, on November 2. Though he died in 1957 at the turn of what Winston Churchill aptly termed "this tormented half-century", few today can separate reality from myth when looking back on his long and active life.

To many in the West he remains the religious leader who was weighed against precious stones, the racehorse owner who won five Derbys or the man whose eldest son, Aly Khan, once married Rita Hayworth.

For those who are more familiar with the East he was the most gifted hereditary religious leader or forty-eighth Imam of some 12 million Ismaili Shia Muslims who are to be found from the Great Wall of China to the southern tip of Africa, a direct descendant of Prophet Muhammed and a true believer in the precepts of Islam.

Students of history or the older generations may recall the Aga Khan as a statesman who was received by Queen Victoria in 1898, became the youngest member of Lord Curzon's Indian Legislative Council in 1902, presided over the Muslim League from 1906 until 1912 and led the Muslim deputation to the Round Table Conference in 1930 which paved the way for the independence of the subcontinent.

In addition, 1937 saw him preside over the ill-fated League of Nations when

he later visited Hitler in Berchtesgaden in a last-ditch effort to avert war.

For me, of course, he was all of these things and many more. It remains challenging but essential for the son of any great father to do away with the labels which are inevitably attached by history to the public figures of our time and to attempt an impartial assessment. This I hope to do in a book some day.²⁶²

My father was first and foremost a deeply religious man who had no difficulty in integrating an active political and social life and everything it entitled in terms of formality and obligations in the post-Victorian era, with the close communion with God which is the aspiration of every practising Muslim.

The older staff at the Ritz in London or the Swiss strolling in front of the Hotel de Russie in Geneva in the Thirties, might recall the Aga Khan facing Mecca at prayer time on one of the balconies, completely oblivious to the stares of surprised bystanders. Muslims who journey westward are no longer the exotic objects of interest which they were in those days.

It was this Islamic sense of unity in all forms of life which confirmed my father's faith in a God-governed order. He achieved a synthesis which enabled him to conciliate his faith in the Almighty as well as in Darwin's theory of the origin of the species which swept across Europe in his youth and generated such heated debate.

It was difficult for him to separate what he called proto religion and proto science: they made their journey like two streams, sometimes mingling, sometimes separating but running side by side. For him Marxism was a religion where matter is the supreme power.

He sought the company of scientists since the time when, against orthodox medical opinion, he had himself inoculated publicly at the age of twenty during the Bombay epidemic of bubonic plague in 1897. This prompted others to follow and many lives were saved as a result.

I have not forgotten his heated conversations with Professor Leakey in Nairobi when the first discoveries of the earliest remains of man were made in the Rift Valley, or his exchanges with Professor Bogomolzer or Niehaus on longevity.

My father was a pragmatist when it came to politics. His main concern was the welfare and development of his community and as such, he deliberately chose to work closely with the administering power in the countries where the Ismailis lived. In 1914 and again in 1939, he resolutely threw in his lot with the British and spared no effort to ensure that Muslims everywhere should fight alongside the allies.

262 This was twenty-one years before Professor Aziz's magnum opus was published.

This nearly cost him his life in 1917 when the German secret service sought to assassinate him in Lucerne. This left him unshaken and he never chose to have any form of personal protection.

His optimistic faith in man and his desire to avert war had caused him to be swayed in the early Thirties by those of his friends – including the Cliveden set – who advocated appeasement in the face of the mounting Nazi threat.

He thus mistakenly chose to support the Munich settlement and said so in a much criticised article in *The Times*. It was with a sense of bitter disappointment, therefore, that he vigorously denounced Hitler's aggression and at once issued a strong manifesto urging his followers to give their fullest support to Britain. This was the aim of his visit to India in 1939-40 when he persistently campaigned in favour of British war aims and endeavoured to act as an intermediary with Reza Shah of Persia.

His foresight in other spheres of political analysis was positively uncanny, however: long before the word "Commonwealth" came into use, my father advocated, at the beginning of the century, the creation, under British inspiration and guidance, of a South Asian federation of self-governing states extending from the Malaysian peninsula to the confines of Egypt.

When the First World War ended, he endorsed the building up of a Federal Union of Arab States and Turkey with a single defence force and a united foreign policy. This could have achieved practical results in the security and stability of the Middle East far transcending, in my father's words, "anything that the makeshift, haphazard policies of the years since the end of the conflict and particularly piecemeal withdrawal of political suzerainty by Britain have been able to effect".

While working for independence, he was concerned about the post-colonial vacuum and big-power rivalry in the Muslim world following the break-up of political entities through nationalism and violent change.

My father abhorred injustice and fought actively for both human and civil rights at a time when it was hardly a fashionable pursuit. He resigned from the exclusive St Cloud golf club near Paris when some members objected to Sugar Ray Robinson – the black boxer – playing on the links. In Aix-les-Bains, one day, he rebuffed the pompous head waiter of the Hotel Splendide who refused to seat a large group of Senegalese students and promptly invited them to a three-star lunch.

He was deeply shocked by the ruthless and arrogant discrimination practised by whites in America, India and China. During his visit to China

in 1906, he remarked: “Within the foreign settlements the general attitude towards the Chinese was little short of outrageous. All the better hotels refused them entry. From European clubs they were totally excluded. We hear a great deal about the colour bar in South Africa today. In China, in the early years of this century, the colour bar was rigidly imposed – not least offensively in discrimination against officials of the very government whose guests, under international law, all foreigners were supposed to be. Is it any wonder that the Chinese intelligentsia long retained bitter memories of this attitude?”

Absolute power, if unenlightened, was equally despised: my father’s comments on the Qajar Shah Musafaraddin – to whom he was closely related – are indicative in this respect: “He exhibited, in an especially lurid light, all the dangers of the old-fashioned autocratic oriental monarchy. However incompetent, silly, or criminal such a despot was, not one of the able and intelligent statesmen of the world around him ever stood up to him and told him the truth about himself. The mysterious prestige surrounding kingship and the blood of kings induced a kind of mental paralysis even in good and sincere men, so that they were quite unable – in the interests of their king and their country, even in their own interests – to give true advice and guidance.”

For my father, education was understandably a priority and his community exemplifies the success of his policies. Ismaili men and women, the latter among the first to shed the veil, are well equipped in this respect. Ismaili institutions have provided a network of social, economic and cultural amenities which are unrivalled in many developing countries. These were made possible to a great extent by the wise administration of funds raised in connection with the traditional jubilee-weighting ceremonies.

The community took up the lion’s share of my father’s time and attention. This was – as he put it – his job. Thousands of Ismailis were received every year and those who did not meet their Imam individually were in contact with him when he visited their countries. He was highly accessible and seldom left a letter unanswered.

And yet he found time for journeys to centres of art and culture and I recall the importance he attached to my visiting the great museums of Europe. He owned no collections of his own, cared little about the décor of his residences and spent a great deal of time in hotels – but loved the opera and the ballet. Serge Lifar, the great Russian dancer, will never forget the time when my father gave him a considerable contribution in cash – wrapped in newspaper – to get his company out of financial doldrums.

If greatness there was, during his long and active life, then it rested on an oddly balanced mixture of Islamic faith and philosophy and Western logic and science born out of the industrial revolution: it allowed for reform and vision in both thought and action and, in retrospect, would seem to disclaim Kipling's famous pronouncement, as my father was truly the product of a meeting between East and West.

A centenary is a time to pause, look back and establish a link between the prologue of the past and the realities of today.

My father undoubtedly left a deep and meaningful imprint on the Ismaili community and the Muslim world. In addition, he contributed in no small way to shape the course of recent history.

But for me, his message remains that of a tolerant and loving father, always at peace with himself, particularly in sickness and when life ebbed away, convinced, in his own words, that he "experienced moments of enlightenment and of knowledge of a kind which we cannot communicate because it is something given and not something acquired".

The author is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

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Annex II

The High Commissioner's December 1975 address to staff

Statement by Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to UNHCR headquarters staff, 30 January 1975

Dear colleagues,

I welcome you to our annual meeting and look forward to the opportunity of exchanging views with those of you who wish to put questions or make comments at the end of my statement.

I wish also to welcome those who have joined UNHCR since our last General Meeting, and wish them every success and satisfaction.

As usual, I shall review some of the significant events which have taken place in the past year. Looking back at 1974 we immediately see that the year has for us been overshadowed by two major events. I refer first to the developments in Lisbon, which brought about a monumental change in Africa and a significant development in the field of repatriation. In the next few weeks and months most of our efforts in that part of the world will be geared to facilitating the return of a very large number of refugees whom we have been looking after in the countries bordering Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola.

The other important development has been the tragedy in Cyprus. It seems both ironic and significant – and very typical of our work – that as one problem of massive human upheaval comes to an end, and people are about to return home, as they did in South Sudan, a new crisis erupts in another part of the world, again creating homelessness and uprooting.

The problems which we have tackled and which we are going to tackle in 1975 have been reviewed very carefully by our governing bodies: the Executive Committee and the General Assembly. I will refer later to their

meetings and try to draw conclusions as to what these problems mean in terms of our work, particularly for 1975.

Let us begin, as usual, with our work in Africa. Here, the reason we were in a key position to take the lead in arranging for the voluntary repatriation of the refugees from the former Portuguese territories was largely the confidence which we had previously succeeded in establishing when dealing with the refugees from these territories. In the work we do, there is no clear-cut beginning or end to any refugee situation.

If we are asked by governments to assist, it is because they have confidence in UNHCR. If we are accepted in countries where there have been large groups of refugees for many years, it is because we manage, despite the political hazards, to deal with refugees in a way which satisfies the host country.

Should a solution finally appear on the horizon, enabling people to go home, we are called upon to assist them to do so, not only because the refugees themselves know us and the governments trust us, but in the case of the former Portuguese territories, because the Liberation Movements are in contact with UNHCR.

I recall some of our earlier meetings when we were asking ourselves what kind of policy we should adopt towards the Liberation Movements, at a time when the question was clearly controversial. Many of us felt, rightly, that the borderlines of humanitarian and political roles were dangerously close and should not be allowed to overlap; if UNHCR were to become controversial by dealing with Liberation Movements, we might weaken our humanitarian approach and with it the support we need from the international community. I think it is reassuring to see that it is precisely because we had such close contacts with the Liberation Movements and the OAU host countries where they were based that we succeeded in establishing confidence and understanding with these Movements, which are now called upon to assume the responsibilities of statehood in the countries formerly under Portuguese administration. It was therefore natural that thoughts immediately turned to UNHCR when the changes in Lisbon brought about the realistic possibility of a vast repatriation movement. The main problem we faced was the number of requests for increased activity, involving more funds and the delegation of more staff to facilitate the return of refugees from Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola. This implied responsibility in enormous areas for a vast number of people, somewhat similar to the task in South Sudan conferred on this Office by the Economic and Social Council and by the Secretary-General. It was therefore

essential to define the role which UNHCR was to assume in this momentous chapter of African repatriation. Clearly, if we were to undertake the same tasks as in South Sudan, where we were responsible not only for repatriation but also for resettlement and rehabilitation, we would, I think, be over-extending ourselves. We had also to make sure, to avoid any misunderstanding, that the role of the other UN agencies was defined with equal clarity: if UNDP, for example, were to assume the main responsibility for future development assistance, the refugee component, which is ours, should be taken care of at the beginning, especially from the point of view of fundraising.

Mr Coat is at present in Guinea-Bissau, where he is working with the other UN agencies to achieve a co-ordinated approach, such as we strove to establish in the Sudan. The situation is, however, very different from that in South Sudan. In this case a smaller proportion of the population has been uprooted. In addition, the overall economic and social development of the areas concerned would be extremely costly and would take a long time.

The role of UN agencies in providing multilateral aid may be more limited than in South Sudan, where the population was less dense. Moreover, bilateral assistance is likely to be of major importance in the former Portuguese territories: Portugal itself is playing a key role here. Clearly, as far as the refugees are concerned, we shall nonetheless have an important role to play. Much of what you will be called upon to do, both in the field of assistance and to a great extent in the field of protection, will be geared in 1975 to Guinea-Bissau, Angola, and Mozambique.

As far as Asia is concerned, the major event has been the development of our role in Indochina. Last year, I referred to this briefly. There again, we were not yet sure what the specific role of the Office would be. It is clear that to achieve anything of lasting value in the area, we require a minimum of stability, of security, of peace. Yet the martyrdom of the people of Indochina continues, despite the Paris Peace Agreement. Our main achievement has been that of being accepted by all parties – an encouraging development in that part of the world. Together with UNICEF, we are now working in North Vietnam, in South Vietnam, in the PRG-controlled areas of South Vietnam and in Laos, where we have a Regional Liaison Office headed by Jacques Cuénod, which is about to implement an airlift as a result of the peace agreement between the two sides. For the time being, it is a limited, special operation, implemented with the full concurrence and support of the Secretary-General. It has been examined and approved by the governments which have a special interest in

the area, including the United States. There has been a generous response from a number of governments, who are making contributions to this programme. Apart from the satisfaction we may derive from helping people who have suffered much more than many other refugees in other parts of the world, we may also feel a sense of achievement in having gained admittance for the United Nations to an area from which it had hitherto been excluded – even in the humanitarian fields – an area where the Red Cross has faced and still faces many difficulties, and has sometimes been severely contested. The fact we have so far been able to negotiate a successful agreement with the parties concerned, to ensure its implementation through operational partners, to establish an office in Vientiane, is, I think, of great credit to all concerned, and testifies to the confidence which governments and the General Assembly have in UNHCR.

There will, of course, be many other problems in Asia. We are currently engaged in final preparations for a limited airlift to repatriate to Pakistan a number of non-Bengalis, belonging to the same group previously repatriated in the large-scale airlift of last year. One thousand will thus be moved soon from Nepal back to Pakistan. Another group, cleared by the Government of Pakistan, will be moved subsequently from Dacca, once again at the request of the governments in the area. The funds for this special operation will have to come from special contributions. With the support of the Pakistani authorities, Mr Volting and Mr Rizvi are now travelling in the Gulf area to raise the funds required.

While on the subject of Asia, I might perhaps mention that I had the opportunity at the end of the year to visit Japan just before my annual trip to the General Assembly. I hope that my visit and the numerous contacts I made will have served to clarify a little the position of UNHCR not only in Japan but in the area as a whole. I had the opportunity to meet a great many people in Tokyo who have positions of influence in the Far East and hopefully, this will contribute to further financial contributions. You will recall that Japan made a contribution of \$1,000,000 to the subcontinent repatriation operation and that it is going to increase its contribution to the regular programme. In the present circumstances, the support of the Japanese Government is of great value for any agency working in Asia. I hope that this initiative will have contributed to a better understanding of the role of the Office in a part of the world which has been fortunate not to know or face any real refugee problem, and has not had the occasion so far to work closely with this Office.

In Latin America, we still face the sequels of the tragedy that took place in Chile in September 1973. We still have a large problem of Chilean refugees in Argentina and Peru, and a problem of reuniting the families that have been split as a result of the change in Chile. This represents a tremendous challenge to the Office, particularly to Mr Koulischer and to our representatives in the field, including Mr Haselman at the Regional Office in Buenos Aires. Of all the areas of work of this Office, few give us such cause for concern in terms of the protection of individual human rights as Latin America. Not a day goes by without our having reports of refugees being arbitrarily arrested, assassinated, and abducted, reports too of people being sent back at the border; people who were originally thought to have been accepted suddenly told to leave. This nightmare situation would seem to confirm that when countries face a degree of internal instability – when there is a breakdown of security, when extremism appears, when people take the law into their own hands – the first to suffer are always the refugees and the other foreigners. This is a great challenge for the Protection Division and even more so for those people who are trying to protect individuals in the countries themselves. In Geneva the problem may appear somewhat theoretical, in so far as it is dealt with at the diplomatic level.

But for Mr Haselman, for Mr Sicotte in Santiago and for their colleagues, it is a question of contact with the individuals concerned, with the local police chief, of visits to people in detention, to wives of the refugees who have disappeared, of arrangements for the departure of whole families. This is really the core of protection.

Since there are today over 25,000 Chileans abroad – over 15,000 in Argentina alone – we shall probably have to look closely in 1975 at the deployment of our staff in that part of the world. As the situation develops in Central America, the need for representation may become imperative. These are things which will be under close scrutiny in the coming months.

In the past one tended to believe that governments cared about their image. When the press gave publicity to torture, lawlessness, to the systematic oppression of certain categories of people for either ideological or ethnic reasons, one supposed that the attitude of these governments would alter through sensitivity to public opinion, particularly international public opinion. But sometimes one begins to wonder. Maybe it is because some of the governments concerned are struggling for their own political survival, that the refugees and foreigners take second, third place or worse. Or maybe it is because the world has become more callous, more indifferent, more

complacent and that governments no longer care what is thought of their behaviour. I'm saying this because it is good for us to remember how difficult it is to do our job in an atmosphere of this kind. We have not, I think, got the same facilities as we had in the past, when there was perhaps greater respect for the rule of law. The customs and traditions which came sometimes from the 19th century may have seemed obsolete, but from the ethical standpoint, they certainly maintained their value. Today these values seem to be vanishing in a number of countries, and the job of UNHCR becomes much more difficult. In a way what I've just said about Latin America is linked to what may happen to a number of refugees or persons who are *de facto* refugees, i.e. who face the same problems as those of refugees but who for one reason or another have not received or asked for refugees status.

In Europe we face a situation which is certainly not comparable to that in some countries of Latin America, but where the economic crisis is already affecting refugees. At the General Staff Meeting last year, the writing was already on the wall. We know that there was a recession, that a depression was likely to follow, and that there might be a serious crisis. The ominous signs we detected then are now increasingly apparent. In Germany for instance, the refugees are finding life increasingly difficult. In the past, work was easy to find even for refugees who were still awaiting a decision regarding their status, which could take a year, even two. They could support themselves meanwhile, sometimes with very good jobs. But now refugees are not allowed to work until a decision has been taken which makes it much more difficult for them to settle in the Länder, (i.e. the German states.). There is also sometimes confusion in some people's minds between foreign migrant workers, who are told to leave and who can go back to their countries, and refugees, who have no countries to which to return.

A depression would undoubtedly affect refugees even more than the current recession. We could well be faced in the coming years with the difficult task of ensuring that refugees who for many years have been leading normal lives in European countries are not again faced with undue hardship. I hope the need will never arise to revive a kind of an *ad hoc* major aid operation. This would be a most unfortunate development, equivalent to turning back the clock. Yet it seems certain that UNHCR branch offices in Bonn, Paris, London and Rome will face increasing cases of refugees who may find themselves in serious economic difficulty in the future as a result of the present crisis. This will be a test, I think, for UNHCR, just as it is also a test

for us to make sure that the refugees are not identified with those elements that trigger off violence and unrest in many countries, because this might provoke feelings of xenophobia against refugees and other aliens.

It was problems such as these that I discussed in Paris last fall, when I was privileged to meet President Giscard d'Estaing, the Minister of the Interior, and the Foreign Minister. Refugees, who have always been granted generous asylum in France, must not become the victims of events which are now occurring in France, as elsewhere. When acts of terrorism are carried out by extremists, refugees inevitably suffer more restrictions and closer scrutiny by the authorities. Our main concern must be to ensure that there is no forced repatriation, even if extradition requests are made. I intend to discuss this problem if necessary with other European governments, in an attempt to strengthen the principle of asylum against erosion such as has occurred in some countries in Latin America. It would indeed be paradoxical if governments with long traditions in the field of international refugee law, and which helped to draft the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol, were led to accept the slow erosion of the humanitarian principles they fought so much to defend, while developing countries in Africa and in Asia were required to observe these principles more closely than those who originally set the example.

To mention Cyprus briefly: what we have done there is again a great credit to the resources and capabilities of UNHCR staff. All of you who are dealing with this problem directly or indirectly, particularly the Cyprus team – I'm thinking of Jack Kelly and his colleagues there, some of whom, like Mohammed Benamar and Nicholas Morris, have returned to Geneva – have done an excellent job in establishing our role as co-ordinator of international assistance.

This is yet another example of the widening of UNHCR's terms of reference, as embodied in successive General Assembly resolutions to which I shall revert later. It shows that when facing the problem of displaced persons who clearly are not refugees in the legal sense of the word (these are Cypriots displaced in their own island) it is to UNHCR that the Secretary-General and governments tend to turn for assistance. The fact that we were able to raise so promptly more than the \$22,000,000 for which we appealed in early September, is again a sign of the confidence that governments have in our administration and of the skill of the fundraisers: Mr Volging and his colleagues. To cover the needs of some 200,000 refugees between the end of August and 31st December, the

money had to be found immediately, no easy task in the world today. Yet this has been achieved, and we are now about to launch a second appeal for another \$10,000,000 to bridge the gap until June/July.

I must admit that I was rather reluctant for UNHCR to continue its involvement in this tragic situation, but there was no choice. As the Cypriots themselves are well aware, the danger of perpetuation of the problem must be avoided. The danger in a situation of this kind, with regular appeals and the provision of food, medicaments and blankets, is that in the absence of a political solution, relief becomes permanent. We must therefore think of ways and means of phasing out this operation. We do not yet know what will happen to the refugees whose future is obviously linked to the ultimate political solution of this tragedy, but clearly the Office should not become a permanent relief agency in Cyprus.

Apart from reaffirming our expertise in special operations of this kind, our role in Cyprus has again proved the capacity of UNHCR to maintain the confidence and the support of all sides. Cyprus has long been a very explosive issue, with big power interests involved, and permanent and bitter confrontation between Greece and Turkey, the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots. The fact that we have been able to obtain the confidence of all sides, to establish an office in Nicosia with representation in the Turkish sector, to bring together the Greek and Turkish Cypriots for regular discussions, is a tribute to the way in which the Office has carried out its task in that part of the world. This has also been recognised by the General Assembly, and I think the results achieved will contribute to facilitating our task of meeting the target of the second fundraising exercise, and to enhance the confidence of the governments and of the UN system in UNHCR's capabilities.

In the Middle East, we face an ongoing problem. The need for an active UNHCR presence remains. The branch office in Beirut is concerned with the constant movement of a large group of people which must not be allowed to be blocked in any of the countries of transit. Furthermore, we are increasingly involved in the tragic plight of the Kurdish refugees who have been displaced as a result of the bitter confrontation between the Iraqi Government and the Kurdish minorities. The problem has not so far been one of material assistance. Iran is looking after 100,000 Kurdish refugees, but it is not unlikely that UNHCR will have a bigger role to play in this area. Our action so far has been at the diplomatic level, but we are following developments closely.

What then are the lessons to be drawn from all this? What can we

conclude from the discussions of the Executive Committee and of the General Assembly on UNHCR's activities? First of all, and for the first time, no real division is made between traditional refugees and displaced persons. This is a very important development, resulting from the application of the concept of "good offices". For the first time, the resolutions passed at the General Assembly's twenty-ninth session makes no distinction at all between the two categories, but refers to "those of concern to" UNHCR, meaning all who have benefited from our assistance either under the regular programme, or under the special operations. The door is therefore open for UNHCR to play a role which is institutionalised – constitutionally and officially accepted by the international community – in any situation affecting displaced persons, be they classical refugees or groups such as those in Indochina or in Cyprus.

The other significant development has been that, in parallel to the narrowing of the constitutional gap, the distinction between both groups has also diminished within the Office, giving way to an integrated approach. In the past, when dealing with special operations such as the Focal Point in India and the South Sudan Operation, for which Mr Jamieson was responsible, we had special units dealing with those particular problems. When dealing with the Asians of undetermined nationality expelled from Uganda, we also began by having a special unit; only later, as the people began to integrate in new countries, did it become part of the resettlement and regional sections. Now, in the case of Cyprus, we have not established a special unit, except of course in the island itself, where Mr Kelly has a small team. At headquarters, we deal with the displaced persons in Cyprus as we are dealing with regular programme activities for classical refugees. To our governing bodies we report both on refugees and on displaced persons. Those of you who in the past felt, perhaps rightly, that those dealing with special operations had a more exciting job at headquarters than those dealing with the regular programme, no longer have cause for unease.

Governments have also been sensitive to these dual functions, and in the Executive Committee they queried our ability to cope with both the special operations and the regular programme. I think they are also legitimately concerned with the question of control, for in terms of funds this Office has indeed been administering substantial amounts of money since the focal point operation in India. Adding up the financial components of these various operations – Focal Point, South Sudan, Uganda Asians, the airlift, Cyprus – one reaches an impressive total in terms of United Nations programmes even by

comparison with the specialised agencies and UNDP. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the national treasuries and ministries of finance should ask their foreign offices or ministries of external affairs to ensure that members of the Executive Committee, representing governments, are satisfied with the High Commissioner's administration of this money, since the special operations had not so far been subject to their scrutiny. The concern was expressed that the time had perhaps come, in our own interest as well as theirs, for us to report on special operations as we do on regular activities. This is now agreed, and endorsed by the General Assembly. Our reporting to the Executive Committee on special operations does not mean that it has to approve the financial requirements involved. The Committee will continue, of course, its traditional role of approving the target of the regular programme and scrutinising the activities under this programme country by country.

A few statistics concerning the General Assembly: at the twenty-eighth session in 1973/74, there were thirty-nine speakers speaking to our item. Last fall, at the twenty-ninth session, there were fifty-eight speakers. The resolution on the programme and special operations was sponsored at the twenty-eight session in 1973 by thirty-one governments. It was accepted unanimously, as last year. At the twenty-ninth session we had forty-five sponsors. The geographical base, involving a wide spectrum of regions and groups, has therefore broadened.

This year, in addition to the overall resolution, which was accepted without objection, we had two slightly more controversial resolutions: one on Territorial Asylum, the other on the establishment of a body to supervise the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Though I do not wish to go into any detail, I should point out that, whereas our assistance activities remain uncontroversial, governments are much more sensitive as regards protection, whether it happens to be a question of establishing a Convention on Asylum or of UNHCR's role as a body to administer the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. They do not attack the Office, but they are concerned about the way in which these legal instruments might affect them and infringe their independence, reminding us of the familiar problem faced by the United Nations on the question of the sovereignty of Member States. As a result, the resolution on Territorial Asylum – considerably modified to allow for a meeting of a group of experts to review the original draft Convention before its submission to a Conference of Plenipotentiaries – was adopted with 105 in favour, none against and twenty-one abstentions. On the

question of having UNHCR act as a body to supervise the implementation of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, there were forty-eight in favour, eleven against and sixty-six abstentions. Since the Convention on Statelessness comes into force only in December of this year, we have been given no additional staff facilities to deal with this particular problem. However, while the greatest responsibility will undoubtedly rest with the governments that have ratified the instrument, at least initially, it will certainly impose more work on the Protection Division in due course, and we will have then to see how it affects the Office.

Turning now to questions which are specifically related to staff and administration. Last year I had the opportunity to stress the need for a rotation of staff from headquarters to the field and vice-versa, and regret that in this area we have so far made little progress. Junior staff have been much more willing, it seems, to go to the field than senior staff, many of whom apparently wish to remain in Geneva. Although I do not want to labour the point at this stage, rotation is an obvious necessity, for the only way to allow people to return to headquarters (some having served in the field for ten years or more) is for others to leave headquarters for the field: there can be no movement otherwise. I realise of course that this is very much related to the problem of adjustments, and that this has caused considerable hardship on some of our colleagues. I have met many staff in the field who complain of this. It is not an incentive, of course, for those of you who are at headquarters to go to the field where the post adjustments problem would impose a burden upon you and your family. Unfortunately, this is a problem that I cannot solve myself. It faces the UN as a whole, and the battle we fought in New York has so far given results which are far from satisfactory. It is linked to the problems of the overall economic situation, the state of UN finances, and the dollar crisis. The fight on this problem must therefore continue. Meanwhile, we should remember that those who have been in the field for some time have been living with this problem, and that it is a little unfair that it should always be the same UNHCR staff who suffer.

I also wish to mention the question of indefinite appointments – a problem which is of great concern to many of you. There has been some delay in settling this question, largely due to the fact that we were trying to work out acceptable criteria to determine when fixed-term appointments should become indefinite appointments. These are now being put into practice. The new Appointments and Promotions Board, which is to start its work in mid-February, will thus

be able to tackle the backlog so that staff members who have been waiting for some time to obtain indefinite appointments will soon be satisfied. I'm not, of course, in a position to say that all those of you who are presently on fixed-term contracts will automatically get indefinite appointments. I am afraid that this is not possible for everybody, as I trust you will understand. The essential aim at this stage is to reach fairly rapid decisions on the basis of the new criteria, so that a staff member may be informed whether he/she may or may not reasonably expect an indefinite appointment. This is a goal we must attain, for people should not be asked to wait for ever.

I wish also to appeal once more to the chiefs of the Regional Sections whose responsibilities are likely to increase as we gradually merge the special operations with regular work. It will be their task to ensure that there is no undue emphasis on the more interesting or challenging problems of the moment to the detriment of routine matters, but that letters are answered, notes for the file are properly drafted, and that staff are properly trained and briefed on their responsibilities. If this work is not done at the level of the regional sections, the work of the whole office will be in danger of collapsing. In other words, the routine part of our work must go on, even though we are obliged to face more and more special operations. This is particularly true of those operations that involve sending staff to the field (Cyprus is the most recent example) leaving gaps that are hard to fill and an accumulated workload. If the Regional Section chiefs are unable to manage such situations, the whole attempt to undertake special operations side by side with regular programme activities may be in jeopardy. I therefore ask them to bear this in mind, and intend to hold more regular meetings with them on this particular problem of the organisation of their sections.

I am told that we are going to face a real problem in terms of space distribution. I know that this is tough news because many of you rightly feel that things are pretty bad as they are. However, from my recent talks with the Geneva office, it would appear that UNHCR is considered privileged in comparison with many other people in the Palais. It will therefore require some very imaginative thinking to solve this space problem without moving people to new premises, which I would like to avoid if possible. The new building is too small. This is a problem which, apparently, faces everyone in the Geneva office, and I must ask you to be patient and co-operate with the administration when the time comes to review the allocation of office space.

I am also told that at a time of economic crisis, when costs are closely

scrutinised, our telephone bills are extremely high and should be reduced. I must say that when reading memos, cables or telexes, I also feel that we should cut down on our amount of writing. In the old days, when communications were even more costly and difficult, they were kept very short. It was an intellectual challenge to try and compress one's thoughts, where expressed by cable or even on the telephone, into the most essential phrases. It seems to me that it was much easier for everybody to get work done this way. Maybe the fact that we have greater facilities at our disposal now makes us indulge in confusing and verbose messages – a thought we should try to bear in mind.

In the United States they have signs everywhere reminding people to turn off the lights when they leave their offices, in order not to waste energy. Maybe we should remember this when we use a telephone, a telex machine, or when drafting our notes.

May I also take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to all our General Service colleagues. If we succeed in doing our work, it is because of their co-operation. In this connection, I would also appeal to them to work out some kind of plan for sharing the burden of overtime, so that it is not always the same people who are obliged to work long hours. This brings me to mention the new system of working hours, whereby staff have been given the choice between 8.30 am to 17.30 pm schedule, but this is precisely what we have to avoid. I would therefore appeal to you to observe the time-schedule you have freely chosen.

Finally, some of you may have seen in the press the recent report issued by the Ralph Bunch Institute, accusing the United Nations of allowing itself to be influenced by pressure from governments, ambassadors, ministries, to recruit Secretariat staff who are not of a sufficiently high quality and standard. I can safely say that whatever the criticism levelled at some of the other members of the UN system it does not apply to UNHCR. The quality of our staff, the way in which you have responded to all the situations I have briefly reviewed, the confidence I know I can continue to have in you in 1975, show that at least UNHCR cannot be accused of having resorted to so easy a way of pleasing governments. This, I think, is a credit to the administration and to all of you. May I conclude by wishing you all once more a very happy and satisfactory New Year.

Annex III

Foreword of British Museum Exhibition

It was during a luncheon two years ago at the Leggatts' delightful flat overlooking Lake Geneva in Vevey that Sir Hugh, former Commissioner of the Museums and Galleries Commission, first broached the subject of an exhibition at the British Museum. Parts of this collection had been shown in America and Switzerland and many objects were loaned from time to time to various institutions. But the British Museum is a place where individual collectors are seldom invited to display the fruits of their quest.

A meeting was arranged at Bellerive with the British Museum's Director, Dr Robert Anderson, Graham Greene, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and Robert Knox, Keeper of the Department of Oriental Antiquities. Dr Sheila Canby, Assistant Keeper in the Department of Oriental Antiquities, then spent many hours in Geneva selecting the items with the efficient help of Liliane Tivolet from my Secretariat and preparing the entries for this catalogue. I wish to thank her for making it the reference work that is the lasting testimony of any exhibition.

My warmest appreciation goes to Stuart Cary Welch, who claims to know me better than I do and is probably right. His wise and unconventional counsel remains invaluable to this day. I am grateful to him for agreeing to write the preface of this catalogue when his time is very much in demand preparing other exhibitions. I particularly wish to thank the Altajir Trust and its Executive Director, Alistair Duncan, for the generous support given to this initiative.

My first awareness of art from the Islamic world goes back to the library of the Villa Jane-Andrée at Cap d'Antibes, where my parents spent much time before and after the Second World War. It was a musty and dark place. The curtains were often drawn to prevent the Mediterranean sun from bleaching the huge 14th-century Mamluk Qur'an which lay open on the rosewood stand, usually at the beginning of 'Surat-ul-Nas', which my father never tired

of quoting. I was fascinated by the power of its calligraphic counterpoint, the diacritics and illuminations. Though I could not decipher the text, the burnished pages and their dark corners where thumb and forefinger had left their mark over the centuries exuded a special mystery which I never forgot. My grandmother, who was the grand-daughter of Fath 'Ali Shah Qajar, had left us a large library of Persian books, particularly in Bombay and Poona. The classics of *Hafiz*, *Rumi*, *Firdausi*, *Baba Tahir*, *Omar Khayyam* and astrological treatises filled the shelves beside *Nasir-i Khustau*, mystical texts by *Hallaj* and assorted works on Shiite Imams and Ismailism. Sadly, the *Shahnama*'s illustrations were mostly 19th-century kitsch. Mustachioed faces of *Nasir-u'd Din Shah* and *Muzaffar-u'd Din Shah* peered out of golden lacquered bindings.

But it was only after many visits to the great capitals of the Arab, Persian and Turkish dynasties, where my father made sure I was shepherded by leading experts such as K.A.C. Creswell in Cairo, that the complex puzzle came together. When I arrived as a freshman at Harvard in 1950 and first met my mentor and fellow-collector, Stuart Cary Welch, the cultural heritage of the Muslim world took on a new dimension, much spurred by the enlightening lectures of Sir Hamilton Gibb, Philip Hitti and other resident scholars. Coincidentally, my very first acquisition was a page from a 14th-century Mamluk Qur'an for which the dealer Khan Monif, whose New York premises Cary and I visited frequently, was asking \$30.

Many years have passed and the world is a different place, but my love of Arab manuscripts and Persian and Indian paintings has never ceased. I am grateful to my wife for putting up with my occasional fits of 'collector's dementia', especially in the saleroom. It has been a fascinating journey during which the *Court of Gayumars* from Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama* (cat. no.25) became its Holy Grail, like the flower to which the aged pilgrim is drawn in one of my favourite Mughal pictures by Abu'l Hasan (cat. no. 104), Emperor Jahangir's *Nadir al-Zaman* (*Rarity of the age*).

It is my hope that *Princes, Poets & Paladins* will spread a timeless message, one befitting the halls of the British Museum.

H.H. Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan

Bellerive, Switzerland

(Reprinted with the kind permission of the British Museum)

Annex III (cntd)

Preface of British Museum Exhibition

Art collections sometimes reveal so much about their acquirers that the merest peek at their walls or vitrines causes blushes of embarrassment. In the case of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, responses are entirely reassuring, for this public-spirited man's inclinations as a collector match the rest of his activities. He is well known for his work at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as UN Co-ordinator for Special Operations in Bangladesh, Uganda, Sudan, Chile and Cyprus, and for many other humanitarian activities, as well as for his intelligent, generous and sensitive response to ecological problems through his Bellerive Foundation, his 'Groupe de Bellerive' and one of his most recent projects, saving the Alps. He has also written many articles, received countless decorations and distinctions, and funded and directed numerous academic institutions, associations and councils.

Prince Sadruddin's art acquisitions parallel his good works, supporting the words of a wise polynational and polycultural friend in New York City, a curator in a major museum: 'Collectors get what they deserve.' Prince Sadruddin's pictures and objects are a splendid harvest, chosen with both his heart and mind. Although his works of art range widely and include African, Native American, Inuit, Tibetan and even avant-garde European and American pictures and sculptures, the choices all reflect developments in his own life.

Reminded all too often through his work of humanity's suffering, Prince Sadruddin avoids buying works of art that evoke pain. Visitors to his house are struck by his penchant for the happy and lyrical. Several of his paintings relate to gardens and flowers. Two, acquired from London auctions, are among the most lilting botanical pictures in Indian art. The first, *Tulips and an iris* (cat. No. 107), represents a particularly cheerful aspect of the sensitive, down-to-earth naturalism of Mughal art, tempered with the poetic fervour encouraged by the Mughals' southerly rivals, the sultans of the Deccan. It

can be attributed to a Deccani-born artist and illuminator known as 'the Master of the Borders' on the basis of his superbly graceful floral arabesques, painted for Emperor Shah Jahan's albums. Presumably, his talent as an artist and designer – one also senses his hand in architectural ornament – was recognised at Burhanpur when his patron, as crown prince, commanded the imperial armies from that Deccani outpost. The second, a deliciously ornamental floral fantasy (cat. No. 116), painted in the Deccan, at Golconda, during the later 17th century, is paradoxically empowered by fragile delicacy: it makes us wish to reach out for it and inhale deeply, just as, at Bellerive, one is frequently tempted by the countless inventive arrangements of flowers grown in the adjoining gardens.

Prince Sadruddin's nature and taste bring to mind the beguiling grace of another favourite painting, *A noble hunt* (cat. No. 102). Paradisaical in its harmoniously soaring cypress, its flowers, horse and almost suprahumanly elegant prince, it was painted by Muhammad 'Ali, whose career was almost as thought-provoking and delightful as the painting. Like the miniature's present owner, Muhammad 'Ali was an adventurous traveller. Often in the company of his close artist-friend and fellow Sufi, Farrukh Beg, he moved from Khurasan in Iran where he was trained to the Mughal court at Agra, and thence to Bijapur in the Deccan. He is probably the most engaging of Turko-Indo-Iranian 'little masters', and his pictures – especially this one – achieve angelic heights. Admired as an artist (and presumably a witty courtier) by the Mughal emperors Jahangir and Shah Jahan, he was equally appreciated by the Deccani sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah II of Bijapur, who was a major patron of music, poetry, architecture and painting. No other painted tree is quite comparable to this: tautly and gracefully arched as a mainsail or jib, propelled by a firm but gentle breeze.

Prince Sadruddin is devoted to animals, and perhaps princely felinophilia prompted the purchase of one of Mughal art's liveliest animal pictures, *A family of cheetahs* (cat. No. 78). Unusually large and impressive, it can be ascribed to Basawan, Emperor Akbar's most innovative and expressive artist. Only Abu'l Hasan and Mansur, Akbar's son Jahangir's brilliant animaliers, equal Basawan's unsentimental, rigorously observed yet tenderly sympathetic zoological studies.

People, however, remain the primary concern at Bellerive, and those in the paintings, like the guests at Bellerive, are memorable for their expressive originality, whether stately as Shah Jahan, charismatically powerful as Akbar,

cleverly masterful as Shah'Abbas or positively comical. Particularly striking among Prince Sadruddin's painted 'guests' is a truly extraordinary royal personage: Shah Tahmasp, the second Safavid ruler, one of the world's most devoted and effective patrons of painting. We meet this Iranian 'Medici' as he was portrayed in the opening miniature of his own copy of the *Shahnama* (*Book of Kings*), surely the most richly, thoughtfully and artfully illustrated of all such manuscripts (cat. No. 24). The clean-shaven, droopy-nosed string bean of a shah, shy but prepossessing, stands behind Firdausi, the compiler-poet of the Iranian royal epic. He too might be a portrait, perhaps of Qadi-yi Jahan, the patron's mentor and father-figure. Be that as it may, the bearded figure is shown meeting with the court poets of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, who became the poet's patron. The sensitive portrait of Shah Tahmasp, probably unique in early Safavid art for its degree of psychological candour, is in effect the owner's stamp in the manuscript for which it sounds a painted fanfare. It was painted by the courtier-painter Aqa Mirak, one of the shah's three senior artists. Known to have been the shah's 'boon companion', he profoundly understood his friend's complicated nature and recorded it in benevolent depth. The twenty-year-old shah's extreme gentleness, so apparent from the portrait, may give a hint of unhappiness ahead, for in due course he would suffer from the guilt-ridden nightmares and other miseries that drove him into self-denying orthodoxy, turning him against the pleasures of painting and patronage. While enjoying this joyously superb painting, the momentum of which tugs us into the volume, we may be relieved to know that when Shah Tahmasp drastically diminished the scale of his ateliers he continued to appreciate and support Aqa Kirak, who painted for him a series of unusually large, excitingly and freely composed religious illustrations to the *Falnama* (cat. No. 30).

Prince Sadruddin's pictorial guest list also includes sub-royal beings such as *Pari Khan*, a *dancing-girl* (cat. No. 139). She was painted in Delhi during the early 19th century, by a gifted artist trained in the Mughal ateliers, for William Fraser, a most diverting Irishman for whom India – and Indians – provided pleasure and delight. Bringing to mind the offerings of Emperor Jahangir's wife Nur Jahan to her husband, this transporting portrait was given to Prince Sadruddin by Princess Catherine.

Aqa Mirak's extraordinary miniature for the *Shahnama* is one of a notable group acquired by Prince Sadruddin from Shah Tahmasp's greatest manuscript, reflecting its new owner as a collector. Although impassioned

by art, Prince Sadruddin is not one for aggressive display. His pictures and objects tend to be small in scale, comparable to chamber music as opposed to operas or symphonies. Often they reflect his cultural background as a Muslim. A few, such as a superb 12th century Qur'an, were gifts from his father, Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III. Most were acquired from specialised dealers or at auction.

During the 1950s, when Prince Sadruddin began to collect Islamic material while at Harvard University, excellent pictures, calligraphies and objects could be found in the hands of dealers in New York City, whose cupboards were rich with neglected works of art. Because the field had been in the doldrums for decades, new enthusiasts were warmly received. Although such institutions as the British Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Freer Gallery and the Fogg Art Museum made occasional purchases, their curators rarely explored dealers' basements and warehouses. Because many fine pictures and objects were available – leftovers from the days when the arts of the Islamic world had been eagerly collected – it was exhilarating for our ever-increasing circle of friends to explore the welcome bazaars of New York.

During the later 19th century and since, many great collections of Islamic art have been formed. In France, such enlightened and eager gatherers as Barons Edmond and Maurice de Rothschild acquired superb Persian and Indian manuscripts, miniatures, metalwork and textiles, virtually all of which have since exchanged hands. Two eminent Parisian jewellers, Louis J. Cartier and Henri Vever, also brought together astonishingly rich collections, which have since been sold, particularly to John Goelet, who gave them to Harvard University, and to the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in Washington, DC. In England and Ireland, C.W. Dyson-Perrins and Sir A. Chester Beatty acquired brilliant material. The former's smaller number of manuscripts, miniatures and drawings were bequeathed to the Irish nation, where they are maintained as the A. Chester Beatty Library. During the same years in the USA, museums as well as private collectors also built up fine collections.

By 1950, however, the great collectors in our field had either died or lost their acquisitive spark. The Rothschild, Cartier and Vever collections were packed away by disinterested heirs; and Sir Chester Beatty, American by birth, had moved from London to Ireland, where his instinct to buy in neglected fields led him to 17th century Dutch landscapes, which were emerging from disused country houses. For those with a taste for Islamic art, a new golden

age awaited. Although a few dealers in Paris and London had inherited dwindling stocks and auction houses occasionally offered good, even excellent material, prices continued to be low and buyers rare. But interest gradually resurged, due in considerable measure to activities at Harvard University, where we staged frequent small exhibitions and attracted students to this neglected subject. John Goelet, already seriously interested in Islamic history and culture, was among the first of a succession of connoisseurly students who responded strongly, and through his generosity Harvard acquired most of the Louis J. Cartier collection of superb Safavid pictures. To further our ambitious acquisition policy we prepared lists, based upon old publications, of the contents of other French collections, including those of the Rothschilds and Henri Vever.

Among these, the most exciting to us was the Rothschild collection, which we pursued with the eagerness of truffle-hounds. Upon reading in the London *Times* of the death of Baron Maurice de Rothschild, I cabled John Coolidge, director of Harvard University's Fogg Art Museum, and told him that an exciting opportunity awaited. Perhaps we could acquire the great but legendary – for it had not been seen by knowledgeable eyes for many decades – Rothschild *Shahnama*. Probably the most artistically rich of all Iranian manuscripts, it had been initiated by Shah Isma'il, founder of the Safavid kingdom, and completed for his son Shah Tahmasp. Predictably, the Fogg Art Museum lacked funds for such acquisitions; but upon my return to Cambridge he told me that a friend, Arthur A. Houghton, Jr, was eager to purchase 'a major work of art'. Assuming that he would give it to the Houghton Library, which he and his family had established for Harvard, I urged him in 1959 to buy the great *Shahnama* from its inheritor, Baron Edmond de Rothschild. He followed my advice, and soon agreed that my friend Professor Martin B. Dickson and I should publish it. Our two-volume, almost unliftable monograph, a vast 'labour of love', came out in 1981. To proclaim the importance and beauty of Shah Tahmasp's creation, we also mounted exhibitions at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1972, and in 1979 at the British Library, National Gallery of Art and Fogg Art Museum. But by then Arthur Houghton had surprised us by breaking up the manuscript, giving seventy-eight of its miniatures to the Metropolitan Museum and beginning to sell the rest of the manuscript's 258 paintings, first at auction, later privately.

One result of Houghton's unexpected action was the sudden availability of great Safavid pictures to lovers of Iranian art, one of whom was Prince

Sadraddin. Without hesitation, he bought at auction *The death of Zakhak* by Sultan Muhammad and *Mir Sayyid 'Ali* (cat. No. 26). Festive in mood, it avoids calling attention to the tyrant's agony. Instead, it overflows with spritely dragon-like clouds, wondrous faces – some of them smartingly naturalistic – concealed in rocky Mount Damavand, an elegant hawking party and countless splendidly attired courtiers and musicians. At the same time, Prince Sadraddin bought Aqa Mirak's most lyrical work, *Firdausi encounters the court poets of Ghazna*, with its extraordinary psychological portrait of *Shah Tahmasp* (cat. no. 24). Later, when further pictures were offered by Mr Houghton through Agnew's, he chose two of the finest by artists of the younger generation. The first of these, Muzaffar 'Ali's buoyantly composed, freely brushed *Rustam pursues Akvan the onager-div* (cat. no. 27), probably appealed not only for its zestfully leaping animals but for its purity and innocence of spirit, characteristic of an artist admired in his own day as an 'illuminated man, morally upright [and] profoundly humane'. The second of these miniatures, probably the most luminous expression of sunlight in Iranian art, is *Gushtasp slays a dragon on Mount Saqila* (cat. no. 28) by Mirza 'Ali, the enormously gifted son of Sultan Muhammad.

Dust Mohammad's *The story of Haftvad and the worm* (cat. No. 29), one of only two signed miniatures in the *Shahnama*, was added in c. 1540, perhaps at the artist's behest. Although he contributed many less masterful miniatures to the project during the 1520s, this strangely personal interpretation of an outlandish tale represents this follower of Bihzad at his mature best. It was painted not long before he departed from Iran to join the Mughal court of Emperor Humayun. For this art-loving emperor he painted a large and powerful portrait, also acquired by Prince Sadraddin (cat. no. 77). It depicts the emperor's controversial favourite, Shah Abu'l Ma' Ali, whose violence and fanaticism so disturbed the emperor's sons that, following the accession of Emperor Akbar in 1557, he was strangled.

Although unsigned, Sultan Muhammad's *Court of Gayumars* (cat. no. 25), acquired directly from Mr Houghton, is one of the foremost masterpieces of Iranian art. Spiritually intense, its candle-flame design seems to rise from the page despite its myriad of figures, picturesquely orientalising trees, delightful lions and other animals, and a density of concealed rock-beings. Minutely finished, it required many years to complete, and one can perhaps imagine a very young Shah Tahmasp scrutinising the progress of this amazing work during frequent visits to his artists' studios. The high point of Tabriz painting,

the work unites the pre-Safavid Turkman mode of western Iran with the eastern style of Timukrid Herat in a thrilling new Safavid synthesis. It also represents the peak of Prince Sadruddin's collection, reminding us that 'collectors get what they deserve.'

S.C. Welch

Paris, March 1997

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Annex IV

Article on Prince Sadruddin's collection of Islamic and Indian art

Mr Shehbaz H. Safrani's article on Prince Sadruddin's collection of Islamic and Indian art, *"The Arts of the Islamic book: The collection of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan"*.²⁶³ Dedicating his study to the scholar-painter ambassador Abid H. Safrani (1911-1984), the author began by listing the following works of art:

- "Saruye Shah summons the Demons to Aid Him Against Shah Rahmin" A manuscript of the Tuhfet Ul-Leta'If. Turkey 1593-1594
- "Isfandiyar Kills the Simurgh" Page from a Shahnamah for Shah Isma'il II. Iran, Qazvin 1576-1577
- "Zawarah in the Hunting Ground of Siyavush" Page from a Shahnamah for Sultan Mirza 'Ali. Iran, Gilan 1499
- "Jahangir's Lion Hunt" By Farrukh-i Khurd-i Chela. India circa 1610
- "A Noble Hunt" Attributable to Muhammad 'Ali. India 1610-1615
- "An Elephant of Many Parts" India. Circa 1600
- "A Family of Cheetahs" Attributable to Basawan. India 1575-1580
- "Shah Jahan and Jahangir" By Balchand and Abu'l-Hasan. India 1628
- "Firdausi Encounters the Court Poets of Ghazna" Attributable to Aqa-Mirak. Page from a Shahnamah for Shah Tahmasp. Iran, Tabriz. Circa 1532
- "Marks of Love" By Afzal al-Husayni. Iran, Isfahan. 1646
- "Two Shepherds in a Bucolic landscape" By 'Ali Quli Jabbahdar. Iran. Circa 1675.
- "Pictorial Genealogy of Jahangir" India. 1620-1622
- "Floral Fantasy" India. Circa 1650

"Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan has one of the finest private collections of Islamic art in the world. The most striking feature of this marvellous collection

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is the fact that it required a mere thirty years to be put together. Obviously, the prince is an aesthete and connoisseur of art. However, he is known to have relied upon scholarly advice from the noted Harvard University Islamic art historian, Stuart Cary Welch. Professor Welch who is curator of Islamic Art at Boston's Fogg Museum and New York's Metropolitan Museum, and has long acknowledged Prince Sadruddin's patronage and friendship, is quick to point out that ultimately, the prince made the final decisions.

"During the 1950s, while the prince attended Harvard University, the appreciation of Islamic art had not approached its present level of demand. Discerning dealers in New York offered him fine and often rare examples of Islamic art. Gradually, the prince acquired from European dealers in Paris and Geneva. He also bought from London dealers and bid regularly at Sotheby's and Christie's auctions on both sides of the Atlantic.

"The prince's Islamic art collection is comprehensive both in Muslim chronology and geography. He is constantly striving to strengthen his collection and upgrade its quality. Consequently, to concentrate his attention upon Muslim aesthetics, he recently sold his celebrated collection of African art. It would be difficult to summarise the enormous scope of Prince Sadruddin's collection. On the other hand, it is possible to stress the fact that his collection is best represented by the Arab, the Ottoman Turkish, the Safavid and Qajar Persian, the Mughal as well as Indian 19th century "*Company*" painting and manuscripts. Islamic decorative arts, ceramics and the minor arts, many of which can be found in the prince's collection, will not be dealt with in this article.

"Among the Arabs, calligraphy is the highest art-form. Muslims are people of the book. The Quran (Koran), the Muslim scripture, is the most revered Islamic text. So much so that even those Muslims who are unable to read Arabic, which is the sole language of the Quran, know a verse or two at least. Some Muslims, equally untutored in Arabic, can recite the entire Quran and know it by heart. The educated Muslims also share a similar interest in the Quran. Royal members of the House of Saud, such as the late King Feisal, knew the Quran, chapter and verse, and could recall any portion of this holy book at will.

"Two types of written calligraphy were preferred, Kufic and cursive. Kufic, which originated from the town of Kufa in Iraq, is geometric, with a

distinct rigidness. Due to this physical characteristic, Kufic is ideal for chapter headings, as well as wall inscriptions on Muslim mosques and minarets. The cursive script, the more popular of the two, still used in newspapers, is precisely what the term implies, flowing and easily readable. Basically, all other Islamic scripts are variations of the Kufic and cursive, and all of them tend to be highly inventive and frequently seem like a new style. In Muslim architecture and in the Qurans, Muslims invariably used a combination of both the Kufic and the cursive scripts. But the numerous styles derived from the Kufic and cursive are utterly fascinating.

“Prince Sadruddin possesses many copies of the Quran. Among all of them, he has one Quranic page which is an outstanding example of Islamic calligraphy. It dates from the early 10th century, approximately 300 years after Prophet Muhammad’s death in 632 A.D. As this page is from North Africa it is all the more interesting, for it sheds light upon a region generally considered late in the flowering of Islamic art. The lettering is in gold, written in Kufic style, on a blue vellum, which is extremely rare. It is believed to be one of several folios, now housed in various collections, from a Quran presented to the mosque in Mashhad by Caliph as-Mamun (A.D. 813-837). Incidentally, a number of Qurans have been discovered recently in Yemen, all of them dating to the early years of Islam. Even in retrospect, this stunning sample from Prince Sadruddin’s collection is a small but significant indication that the Arabs were diligent when it came to writing the word of Allah. Furthermore, the prince’s Quranic page attests to the fact that Muslims aspired to creating beauty within the confines of calligraphy.

“Turkish history spans several centuries. An adventurous people, highly disciplined and efficient administrators, the Turks terrorised and disrupted many people. Then, in the wake of victory, they controlled vast territories that included portions of Central Asia, Western Asia and eventually Egypt. Many of the great empires can be traced to Turkish ethnic origins such as the Mameluks, Timurids and Mughals. All of these people developed and integrated singular styles in art which are best defined by their dynastic names.

“In 1453, when Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks, another new era in Islamic art emerged. These Ottomans employed the most adept and artistic calligraphers available. They commissioned splendid illuminated Qurans and enhanced the standards of the decorative arabesque. Above all, they developed the book into a single flowing concept. As a result the bindings (of handsomely hand-tooled leather) are as exciting as the pages themselves.

“Prince Sadruddin has several examples of Ottoman calligraphies, manuscripts and paintings. Turkish arts thrived under Ottoman patronage. The thrills the Ottomans must have experienced at seeing the art of the Islamic book evolve under their aegis, can still be had from studying them. In fact, the Ottoman sultans acquired works of art for illustrated manuscripts and paintings, from all over the Muslim world – especially from Persia, and cities such as Baghdad, Damascus and Cairo, renowned for their skilled artisans and artists.

“While the calligraphers were striving to produce their finest art for the sultans, these Ottoman sovereigns, with their prodigious concern for excellence, also turned to architecture. As a result, there are distinct hints of architectural refinements in some of the Ottoman paintings in Prince Sadruddin’s collection, including the portrait of Sultan Selim II and a portrait of an Ottoman official. A cursory glance at Muslim paintings will indicate an emphasis on headgear. A huge, tulip-shaped turban, favoured by Ottomans, is one such distinctive headgear among those worn by Muslims. It is a means of recognising the Turkish origin of the wearer. Ottoman paintings reveal the foremost achievements of Muslim portraiture west of the Tigris and the Euphrates. Those intrigued by these works of art would do well to study the Ottomans as they were painted in the West by Venetian painters such as Bellini, and by later masters such as Johann Kopenski. There is more pleasure to be derived once there is an understanding of Islamic art, rather than merely considering it an exotic aspect of world art.

“There is no doubt that Prince Sadruddin’s collection is particularly strong in Persian art, while again, the emphasis is on the art of calligraphy as applied to the Quran. The preference for this geographical area should not be surprising when one learns that Prince Sadruddin’s ancestors came from Persia. Despite the change in his family’s fortunes and notwithstanding contemporary politics, the prince is warm-hearted towards Persia. It is Persia that contributed to the renaissance of Islamic art, and indeed, Persia is crucial to any discussion of Muslim cultural heritage.

“Before the 19th century, Persian Muslim arts are best seen in ceramics. An exception to this is the Seljuk calligraphies (1055-1258), of which Prince Sadruddin owns several 11th century examples. The Seljuks are remembered for their arts, but Persia was transformed after the Mongol conquest in the 13th century. Despite this change the Il-Khans, who were descendants of the Mongols, patronised the arts of the book. For all its brief reign, this Il-Khanid age inspired generations of Persian painters.

All the same, Persian pictorial art is generally conceived as beginning under the aegis of the Timurids in the 15th century. It is in great measure the genesis of Persian painting. Moreover, subsequent painting in Persia and India is ultimately studied from Timurid sources as well, “and as far as Islamic painting in Persia is concerned, the cities of Tabriz and Herat enjoyed the same kind of prestige as Florence and Rome in Renaissance Italy. Bihzad, for example, who is generally considered among the greatest Muslim painters, lived in Herat.

“Iran embraced the Shiite sect of Islam at the time of the Safavid dynasty. The Sunni sect, which is larger, claims the majority of Muslims. Whereas theological discussion is not pertinent here, it is wise to remember that Prince Sadruddin, like his forebears, is Shiite.”

The author wrote briefly of Prince Sadruddin’s family background and his achievements, and went on:

“Such pragmatic achievements enable us to conceive the picture of a Muslim aesthete who is also a man of action. It is also possible, furthermore, to see Prince Sadruddin in the context of past Muslim patrons of art. The Safavids of Persia are a fine example.

“Within the first generation, the Safavids (1502-1736) had established themselves as powerful patrons of art, no different from their Medici contemporaries in Renaissance Italy, the Mughals in India and the Ming emperors in China. The Safavids went so far as to accord calligraphers an esteemed position similar to that of painters. Shah Tahmasp (1524-1576), one of the most eminent Safavid patrons of painting, spent two decades in order to attract the best painters to his court. Having done so, he went ahead to inspire a stylistic harmony among his court painters. Such a royal incentive to paint had far-reaching consequences, some of which can be seen in Prince Sadruddin’s collection.

“Generations of Persian painters and patrons considered the *Shahnamah*, the Persian epic by the poet Firdausi (933 – ca.1020), as their biggest pictorial challenge. In Persia, the *Shahnamah* held the sort of literary position that Homer’s *Odyssey* had among peoples of the northern Mediterranean. Prince Sadruddin has two pages from a *Shahnamah* made for Shah Tahmasp. On one page, attributed to the painter Aqa-Mirak, dated 1532, there is a rendering of the poet Firdausi, *Firdausi Encounters the Court Poets of Ghazna*. On the second page, attributed to Muzaffar Ali, painted 1530-1535, is the legendary hero Rustam pursuing Akvan (the demon). Both these pages have been

assigned to Tabriz, one of the two great Persian cities noted for its paintings.

“However, Shah Tahmasp eventually lost interest in the arts while still in power. Soon, the neglected painters departed for new ateliers in Ottoman Turkey and Mughal India. There, at nearly opposite ends of Safavid Persia, these gifted artists contributed to the increased flowering of Islamic painting. This visual excitement is also garnered from Prince Sadruddin’s collection.

“Meanwhile, Persian patronage acquired a democratic trend in the final years of Shah Tahmasp. Shah Abbas I (1587-1629) and his successors discovered this egalitarian growth in the demand for inexpensive paintings. Besides the Shah and the aristocracy, the new patrons included bourgeois elements as well as career professionals such as soldiers. The physical form of drawings and paintings became a single page rather than an entire manuscript full of illustrations. No doubt some of these single page paintings were meant to be subsequently bound in albums. At that time this popular concept – of the single page painting and drawing – appealed to patrons in India and Turkey as well. Images in these low-priced paintings tended to be introverted. These works of art also departed from the established tradition of anonymity and, on occasion, were signed. Gradually, Western painting influenced Persian art through trade, diplomatic ties, evangelist and maritime contacts. This Europeanised aspect of Persian painting developed a formidable style in the 19th century and is celebrated simply as Qajar painting. Among the Qajar dynasty paintings in Prince Sadruddin’s collection is a striking portrait of Fath Ali Shah, dated 1819. Prince Sadruddin’s great-grandfather, the first Aga Khan, was the son-in-law of Fath Ali Shah.

“Indian Islamic art is syncretised with Hindu aesthetics. Even a casual glance at the similarities between the Hindus and Muslims of India is sufficient for a start. In religious practices, during festivals and occasions of mourning, including funerals, the two diverse religious groups come together in India.

“The “Muharram” is a period of mourning for Ali and his family, including his sons, Hasan and Husain, and their followers. Ali, a cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad, was martyred along with his family and followers. The Shiites accept Ali as the successor of the Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet had not nominated his successor. Ali’s position had been challenged and he lost. This event, dating to the 7th century A.D. is commemorated with Shiites dressed in black and reciting elegies in front of “alums”, the Shiite standards, usually free-standing calligraphy created in silver or copper, and at times even of gold. In the case of Indian Shiites, they carry the “taziya”, a green or

white paper mosque or mausoleum in miniature. The “taziya” is borne to the water’s edge, then released in the water. Similarly, the alums are also immersed in water. While the inexpensive, though religiously-inspired taziya is left to float and disintegrate in the water, the alums, expensive and with considerable iconic significance, are returned to their special shrines or stored in religious treasuries until the following year. The rituals of the alums and the taziya are worth studying alongside Hindu customs that prevail during the festival of Ganesha, the son of Siva. Whether Muslims, with these rituals, follow Hindus, or vice versa, is unimportant. The fact that remains striking is the similarity in this case of the two diverse faiths of Indian peoples – Hindus and Muslims. Small wonder that among conservative Muslims outside the subcontinent, the Indian Muslims are treated as country cousins at best.

“The early beginnings of Islam in India were limited to the coastal waters of the subcontinent. The Arabs arrived by sea and settled in Sind, now part of Pakistan, and also along the regions north of Bombay and at the tip of southern India. These events took place in the early 8th century A.D. As most of these Arabs traded, India remained undisturbed until the Afghans descended into the plains of Hindustan in the 10th and 11th centuries. All the same, Islamic art made little impact beyond Delhi, where the Sultanate was established and where some of its architectural remains can still be seen. Late into the 13th century the Muslims suddenly seemed to gain control of northern India and by the 14th century, their presence was felt as far south as the Deccan plateau. The architecture of the Tughlaq dynasty (1320-1398) and the somewhat later dynastic consolidation of Muslim kingdoms in the Deccan led to wonderful cities being founded such as Bijapur, Bidar and Golconda. Prince Sadruddin has an entire manuscript of a 1399 Quran ascribed to Gwalior. It is a rare and important work of art, quite aside from its religious significance. By the time the Mughals arrived in India in 1526, traces of Islamic presence could still be felt among the Hindu majority.

“By tradition, Hindus delighted in their scripture, but historiography, travelling accounts and memoirs were second nature to Muslims. Muslims kept journals. Imagine a boy of thirteen, standing inspired, conquering Hindustani, then setting out to landscape gardens. This was Babur (1526-1530), who founded the Mughal Empire (also known as the House of Timur) and continued writing his memoirs and composing poetry. Babur’s son, though effete in comparison to the great Mughals, nonetheless played a vital role as an art patron. Humayun (1530–1556), Babur’s son, exiled

to Safavid Persia, brought back to India painters trained in the ateliers of Shah Tahmasp. Thus Humayun, often overlooked, is to be accepted as a catalyst.

“Once Akbar (1556–1605) took charge of the Mughal empire from his father Humayun, he extended it and improved his relations with the chivalric Hindus, the Rajputs. It was then that Muslim art experienced a metamorphosis in India. Emperor Akbar has long epitomised the Renaissance man in India. In fact he is credited with the Mughal Renaissance.

“With his government under control, a magnificent court that contained “Naorattan”, nine of India’s most gifted men in the highest echelons of his empire, Akbar retained the best available painters. These talented artists synthesised the Mughal painting style from Persian, indigenous Indian and European sources. The realistic painting showed the diversity of Indian life, and included some specimens from the plethora of India’s fauna and flora. The Akbari paintings concentrated on action.

“Akbar’s son Jahangir (A.D. 1605–1627), was a half Hindu, the son of Akbar’s first wife, the Rajput Princess Joda Bai. Unlike the history painting and illustrations of religious epics under Akbar, both Hindu and Muslim, Jahangir championed individual portraits and natural history subjects.

“Shah Jahan (1627–1657) Jahangir’s son, turned more towards religion. He lived at a time when the Mughals were at the height of their prosperity, and the paintings of his court depict the formal elegance of Mughal India. A cold, distant, even somewhat restrained effect marked the paintings of an age best remembered for the Taj Mahal (completed in 1654).

“So, from this rich spectrum, Prince Sadruddin has several examples of Mughal paintings, covering all the leading epochs. The early Mughal paintings show the Timurid strains, the Mongol links (obvious in their sinicised eyes) and the rock formations idealised in Chinese paintings. The Safavid elements mingled, the Hindus contributed, and what surfaced as Mughal art is well represented in Prince Sadruddin’s collection. The *Pictorial Genealogy of Jahangir* is a painting that to my mind typifies the abiding enthusiasm which Muslim patrons of art have had for Islamic history. This is what I consider the “roots-syndrome” which is indicative of a continuing heritage.

“Along with anonymous Mughal painters, there are such famous names as Abd al-Samad, Makund, Basawan, Mitra, Balchand, Abu’l-Hasan, Bishnadas, Muhammad’Ali; they are all represented in the Prince’s Collection. This is not a “Who’s-Who” of Mughal painters but a sophisticated round-up of historical

scenes, courtiers, gorgeous tulips and aged pilgrims – a synthesis, one might say, of the best Mughal paintings that have become available in the last thirty years. There are fine examples from the schools of Deccani painting. The 1650 *Floral Fantasy* is typical of the excellence to which the prince aspired, when putting all these diverse Islamic works of art together.

“Then there are the paintings from the twilight years of the Mughals and the British Raj, such as *Story-teller, Dancer and Musicians*, dated 1810-1820 from the Fraser Album that Sotheby’s auctioned a few years ago. The setting is full of men eager to enjoy themselves, entertain and be entertained, simply by making music and there is an unmistakable air of revelry. The oral tradition of narration, so deeply ingrained in the Muslim psyche, is evoked in this painting. This was a world governed by poetry and enhanced by dancing.

“It is this quality and the amazing diversity of all types of flowers from the vast fields of Islamic art, that one detects in the collection of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan. The beauty of it all is the fact that the prince is continuing to collect Islamic art.”

Glossary of abbreviations and acronyms

ABM	Anti Ballistic Missile
ANC	African National Congress
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
CITES	Convention on International trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GLCM	Ground launched Cruise missiles
GNP	Gross national product
ICEM	See IOM
ICMB	Intercontinental ballistic missile
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IOM	International Organisation for Migration (formerly ICEM: Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration)
ITO	International Trade Organisation
MEA	Multilateral Environment Agreement
MIRV	A multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle (a ballistic missile containing several warheads)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OPEC	Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty
SDI	Star Wars
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

UNEP United Nations Environment Program

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (now known as
the UN Refugee Agency)

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund

UNRWA United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in
the Near East.

WFP World Food Program

WHO World Health Organization

WTO World Trade Organization

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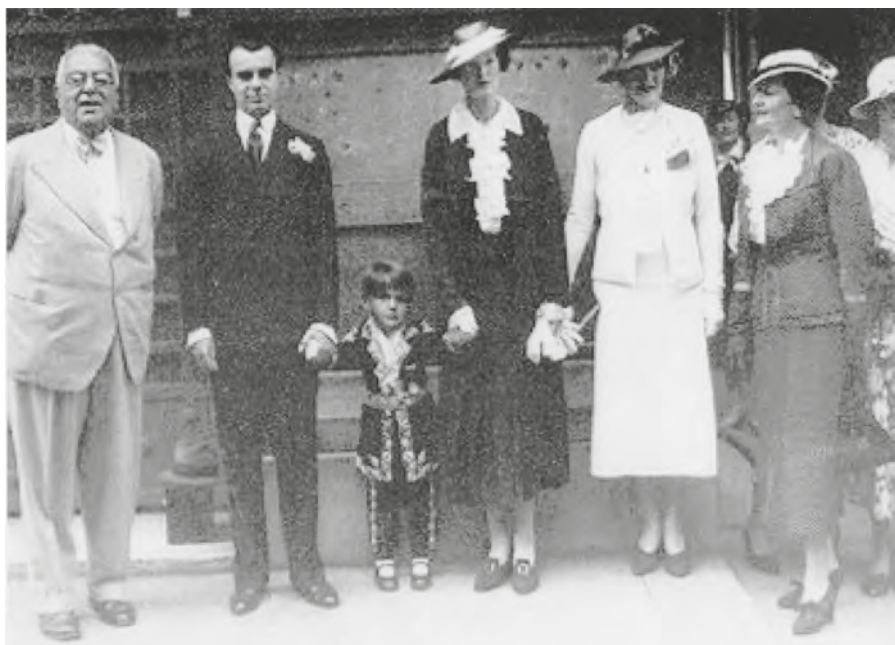
Acknowledgements

But for the gentle and persistent urging over five years of a great admirer of the prince, I would not have ventured to write this book. I wish to record my very warm thanks to all those who felt that this book had to be written, sometimes playing a meaningful part in the initial drafting exercise. Among them are my daughter Claudia, Nicola Spafford Furey and former UNHCR colleagues, Iqbal Alimohammed, Georges Koulisher*, George Gordon-Lennox*, Gerald Walzer, and Olivia and Jean-Noël Wetterwald; then there were friends and members of the general public, most notably Ligia Constantinescu (Romania), the late Gisela Decker (Germany), the Hon. H.G. Dickinson (UK), Barry Gilbert-Miguet (France), Natalya Grishaeva (Russia), Randi Balsvik Rønning (Norway), Pär Stenbäck* (Finland), Kate Tilborn (Sweden), and Georges Froissard (Switzerland). Important source material was given to me by Barry Gilbert-Miguet, who had worked with the prince in his town office for many years, in fact up to the time of his death.

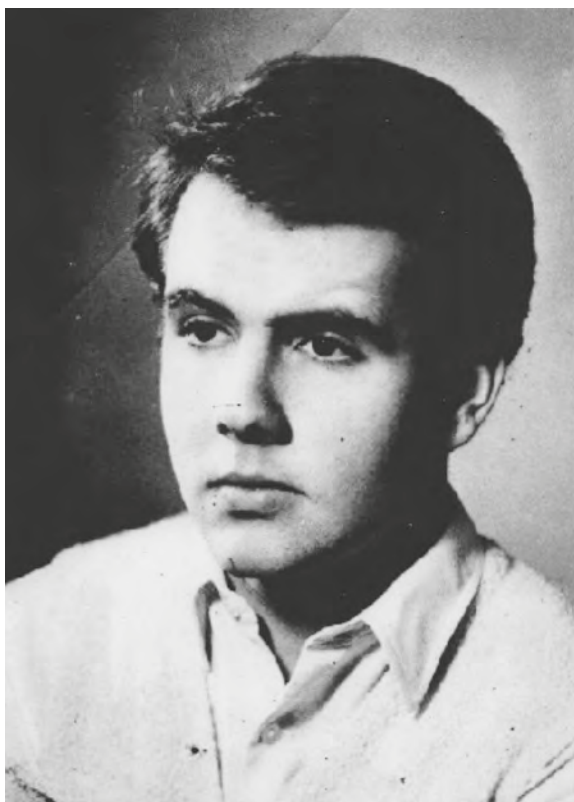
Those whose names are marked with an asterisk contributed most welcome material to the book. I am grateful to another former UNHCR colleague, Guy Goodwin-Gill, barrister and professor of public international law at Oxford University and Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, for writing the Foreword in the teeth of extraordinarily heavy pressures brought about by the migrant crisis.

I wish also to record my thanks to The Book Guild, for having agreed within a couple of weeks of receiving the manuscript to publish the book.

Riaz, April 2016



ABOVE: Sadrudin, aged 3, at the wedding of his half-brother Prince Aly to Mrs. Joan Butler Guinness. Prince Aly Khan and his bride, now Princess Tajudaullah, each holding little Sadrudin's hand, were photographed after the civil ceremony, with the Aga Khan, the bride's mother and Begum Andrée.



LEFT: A thoughtful teenage Sadrudin.



ABOVE: Sadruddin with his father, Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III, c.1945, and his two nephews, Prince Karim (left) and Prince Ayn. Prince Karim at the age of 20 was to succeed his grandfather, to become Aga Khan IV, the 49th Imam of the Nizari Ismailis.

BELOW: The Château de Bellerive.





H.H. the Aga Khan and his younger son, then about to enter Harvard University, 1950.



Nina Dyer and Sadruddin after their wedding at Bellerive, Switzerland, 1957.



World Refugee Year stamps, Africa, Asia, America, Europe.



Sadruddin, Special Consultant at UNESCO, with Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and Mr. René Maheu, Deputy Director General of UNESCO.



The Abu Simbel temple. Photo: © Emmanuel Pivard.



The Deputy High Commissioner presenting a long-playing record to H.R.H.Prince Charles. Standing beside Sadruddin is Mr. Jean Heidler. Photo credit: UNHCR.



Sadrudin Aga Khan, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, addressing the 1966 General Assembly Pledging Conference chaired by the President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Abdul Rahman Pazhwak of Afghanistan. Photo credit: UNHCR.



ABOVE: The High Commissioner addressing the UN General Assembly, 1968.
Photo credit: UN photo.

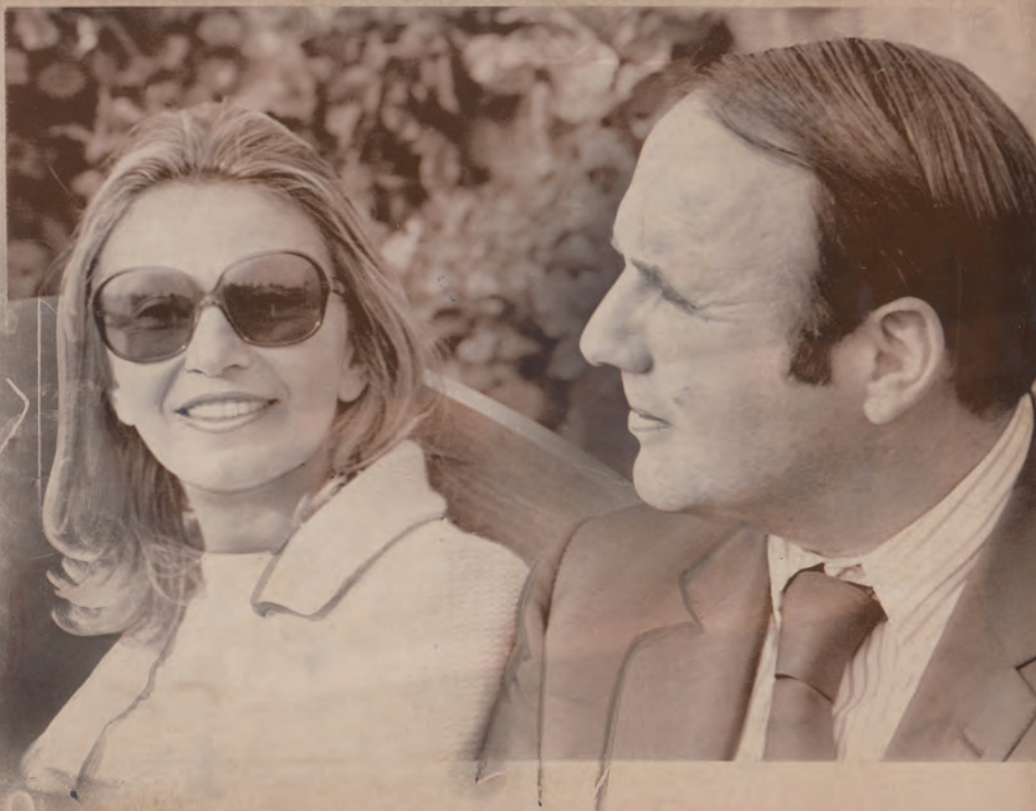
BELOW: Secretary-General Mr. U Thant (1962-71) and Sadruddin Aga Khan, UN High Commissioner. Photo credit: UN photo.





South Sudan Operation 1972: Abel Allier, President of the provisional High Executive Council of the South Sudan, and the UN High Commissioner, visiting the village of Kajo Kajo. Photo: UNHCR, Van de Linde.

(NY19-Nov. 27) MARRIAGE DISCLOSED--Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, 39, a high commissioner for refugees, and Catherine Aleya Sursock, a Greek born Lebanese divorcee, both shown above, were married Saturday, the prince disclosed Monday. The bride was reported to be in her early 40s. The prince, a Harvard graduate, is an uncle of the Aga Khan IV. (AP Wirephoto)(see AP AKA wire story)(PR21350HO)1972 DATE OF THIS PICTURE IS UNKNOWN



Prince Sadruddin and his bride, Catherine Aleya Sursock, after their wedding in November 1972. Photo: Historic Images.



ABOVE: 1973: President Luis Cabral of Guinea-Bissau shows the High Commissioner some of the reconstruction in his newly-independent country, where returnees have been resettled with UNHCR participation. Photo credit: UNHCR.

BELOW: The High Commissioner in Cyprus, 1974. Photo credit: UNHCR.





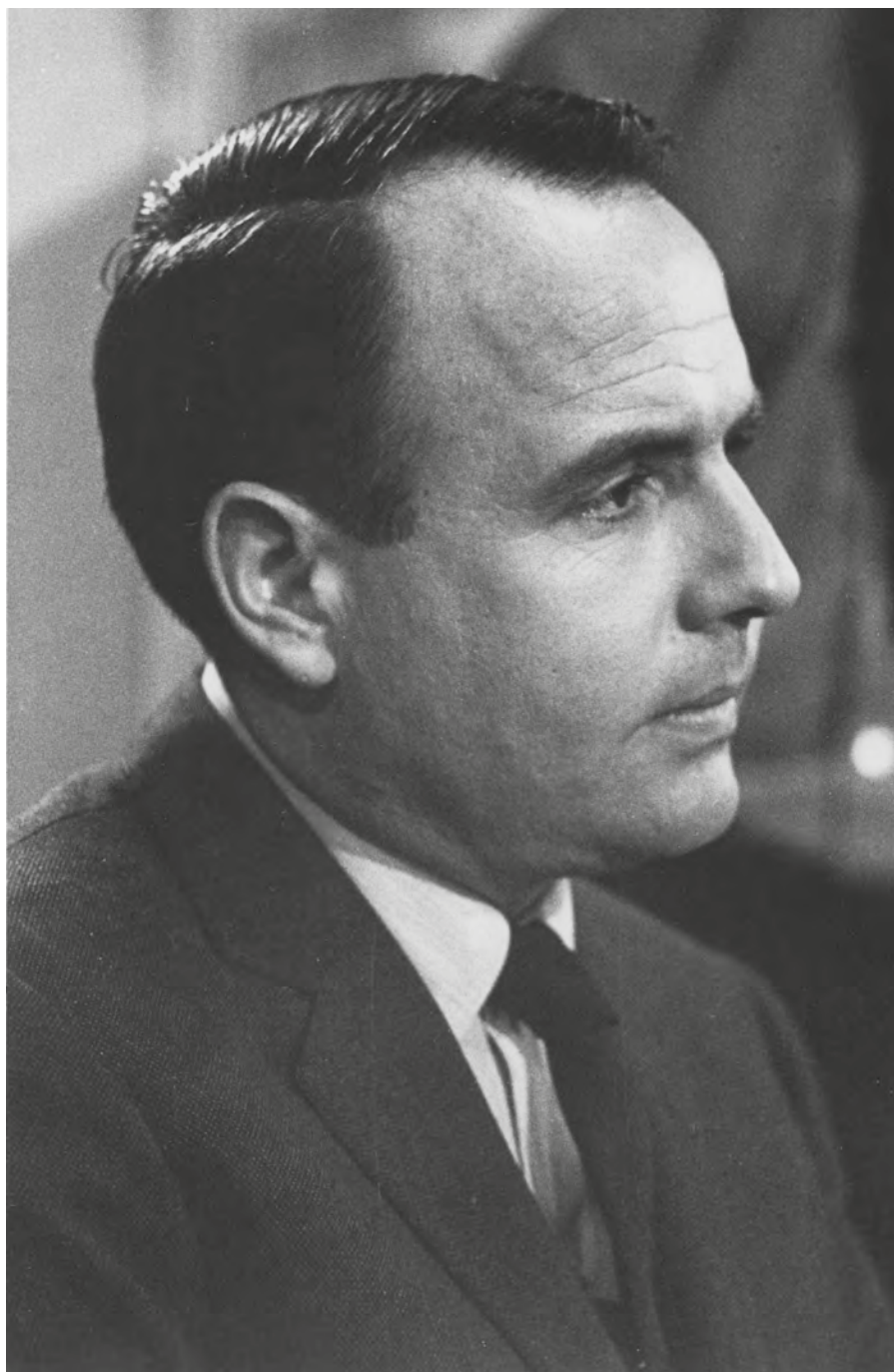
A 1974 portrait of Sadruddin, UN High Commissioner for Refugees.
Photo credit: UNHCR Jacques Lowe.



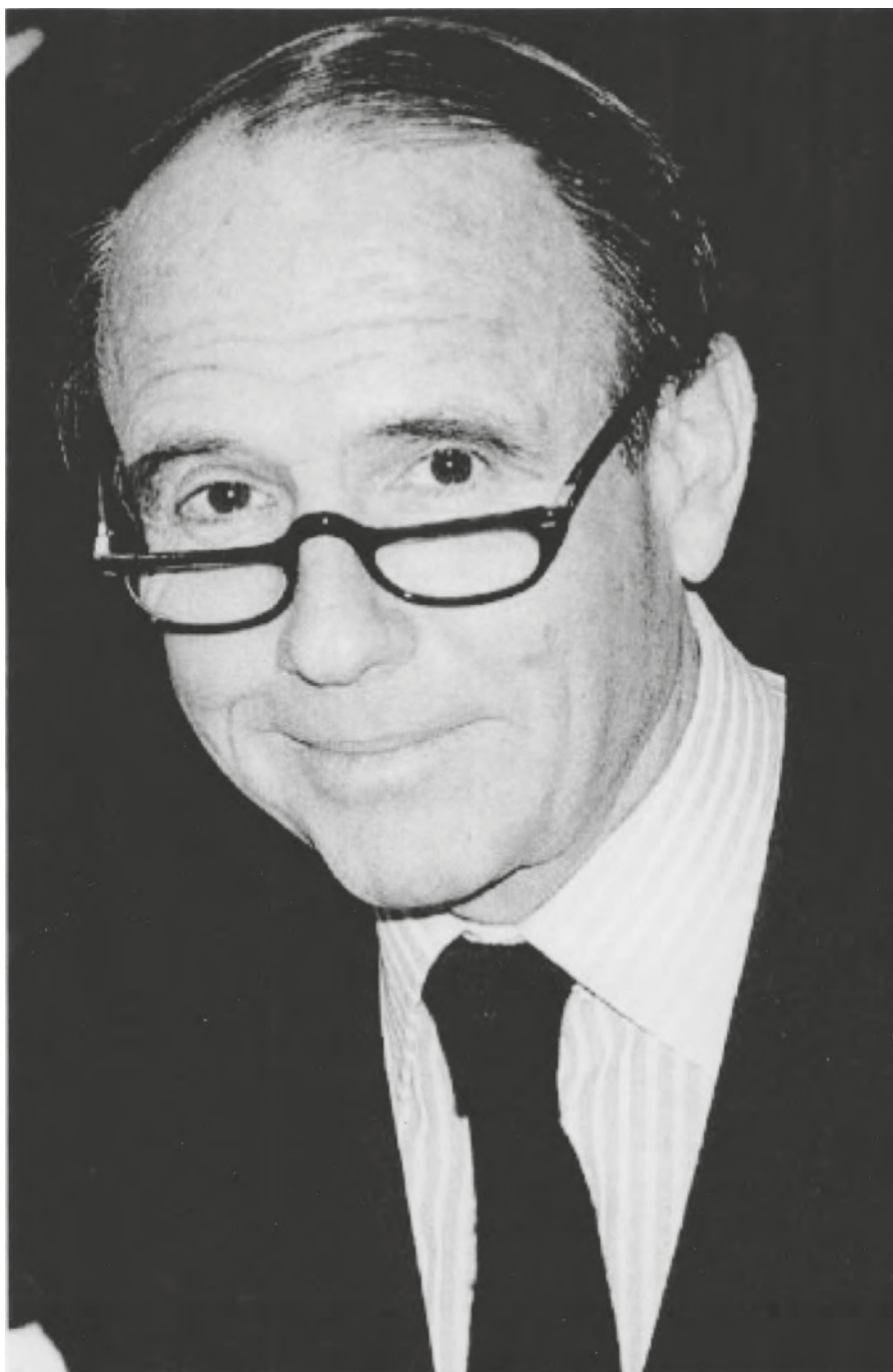
Sadruddin Aga Khan, UN High Commissioner, in Thailand, 1975. On the left of the picture is Sadruddin's Special Assistant, Mr. Zia Rizvi. Photo credit: UNHCR, J. Becket.



Secretary-General Mr. Kurt Waldheim (1972-81) and the High Commissioner.
Photo credit: UNHCR.



A serious UN High Commissioner. Photo credit: UNHCR, S. Wright.



Sadruddin at the time of his resignation as UN High Commissioner for Refugees, late 1977.
Photo UNHCR, A.Hollmann.



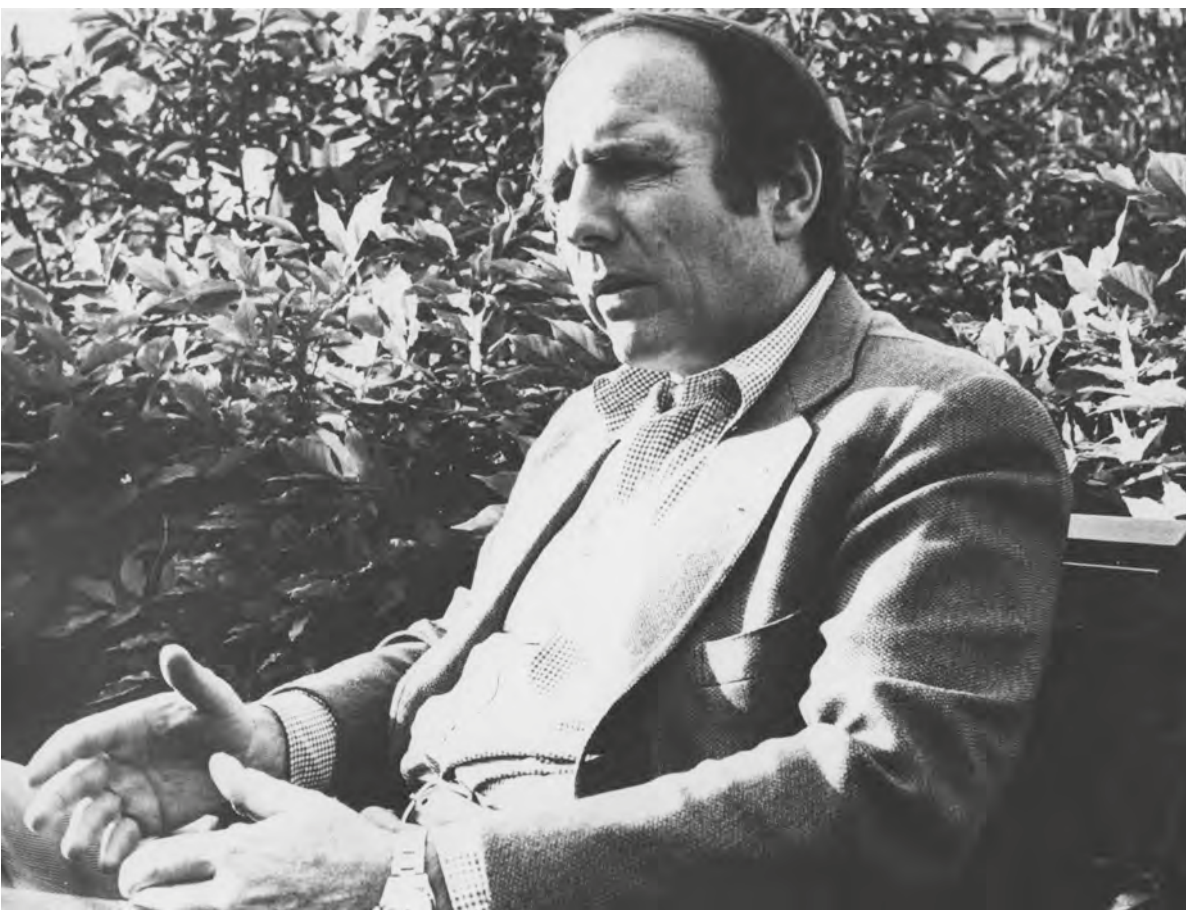
Prince Sadruddin with Brigitte Bardot, Animal Welfare, late 1970s/early 1980s.



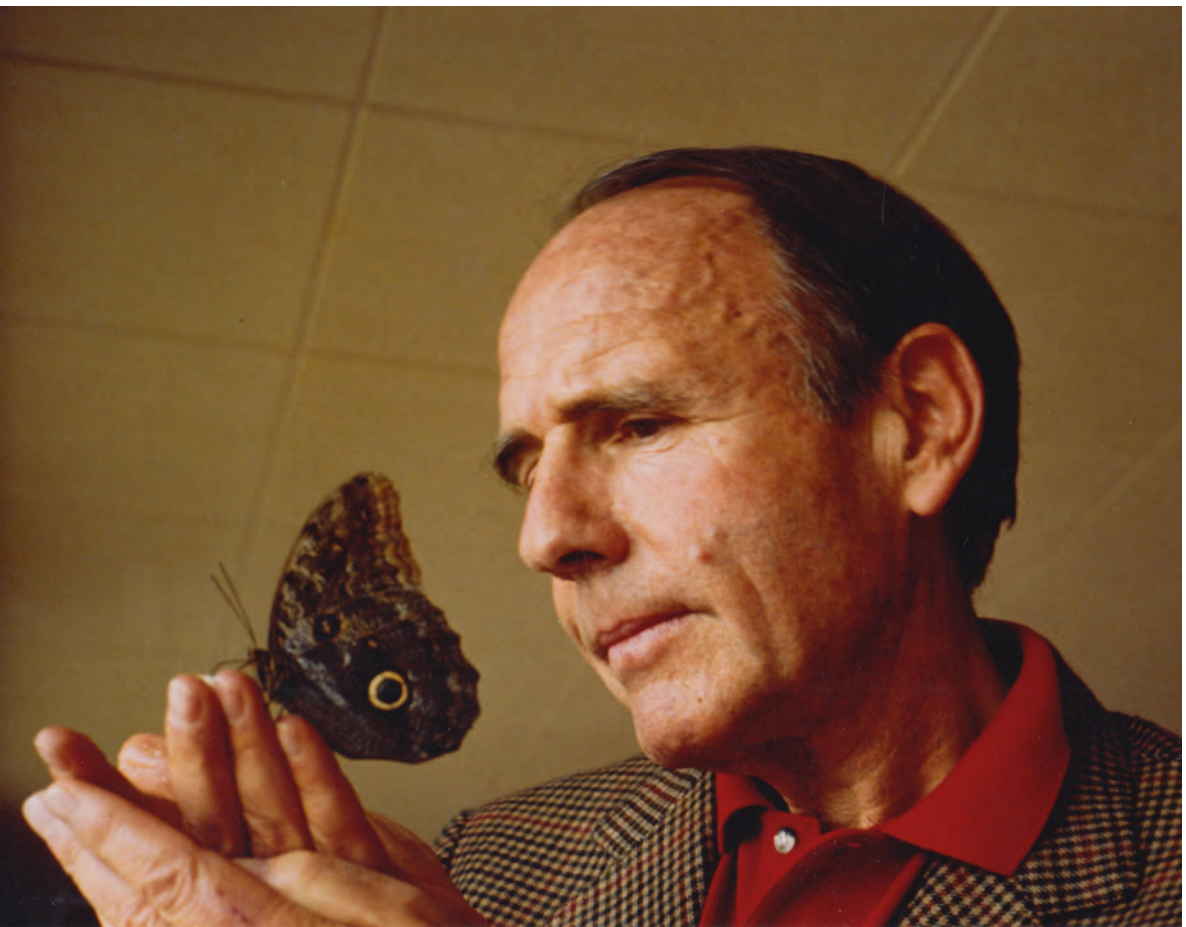
Sadruddin Aga Khan, President of the Groupe de Bellerive, chairing the Colloquium “Energy and Society”, UNESCO, Paris 1985. Next to him is Edmond Hervé, French Minister for Energy.



Sadruddin Aga Khan, chairing the June 1985 Bellerive Foundation Colloquium "Nuclear War Nuclear Proliferation and their Consequences", Geneva.



A deeply concerned Sadruddin Aga Khan.



Sadruddin, devoted to the protection of threatened species, admiring a rare butterfly.
From an Earth Focus Magazine Special Issue, early 1990s.



The prince in the Alps with his beloved Arak, the first of two Belgian Shepherds that he owned.
Photo: Alamy.

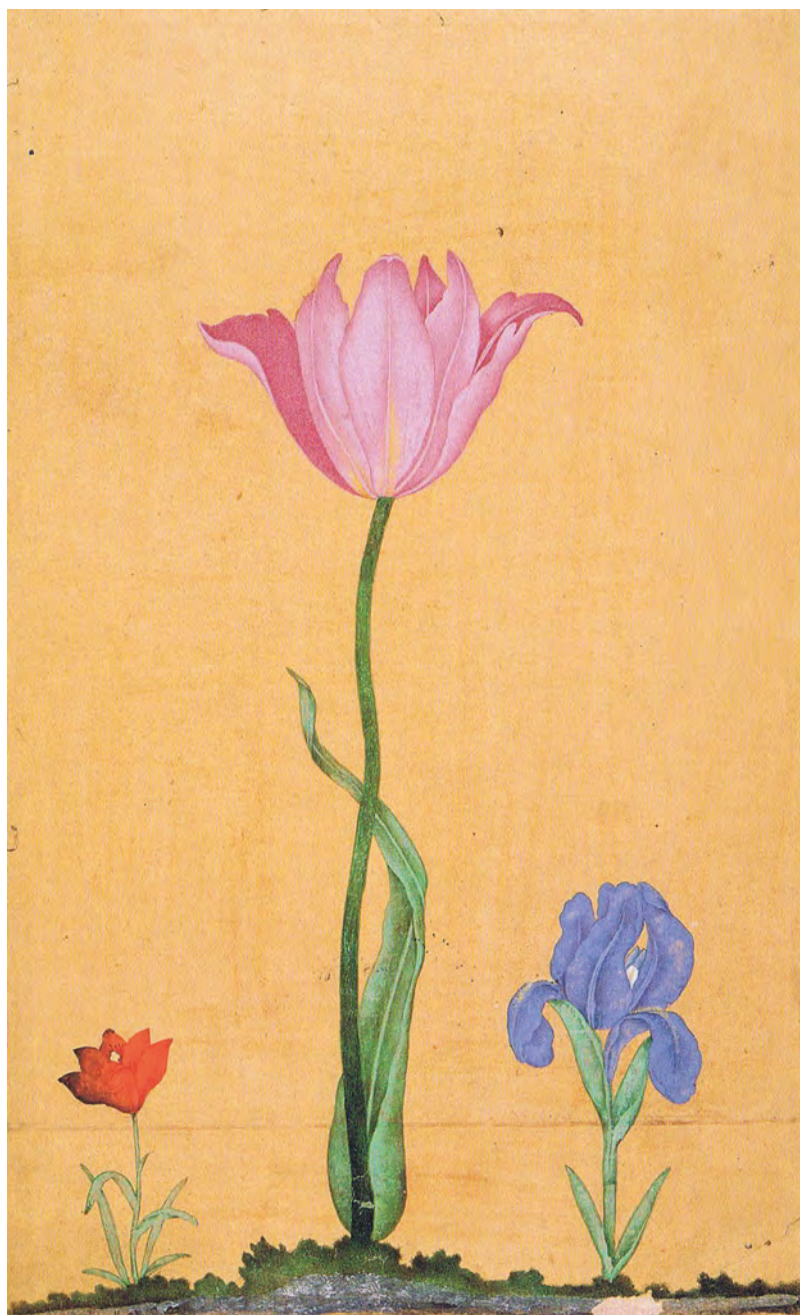


Prince Sadruddin with the orphaned monk seal pup Efstratia on Alonissos.
Photo credit: © Matthias Shnellmann, The Monachus Guardian.

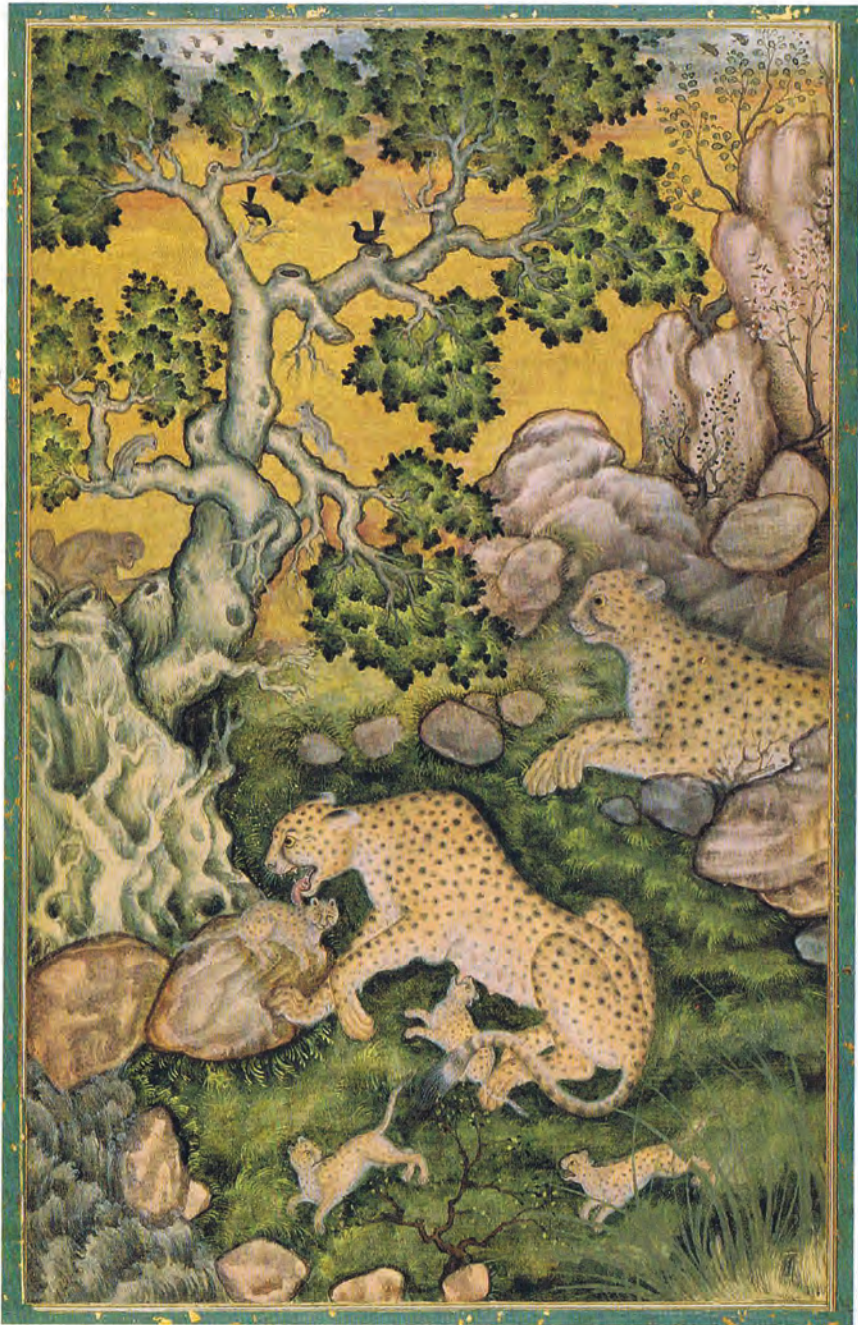
Four of the entries to the British Museum exhibition “Princes, Poets and Paladins”, 1998: by courtesy of The British Museum.



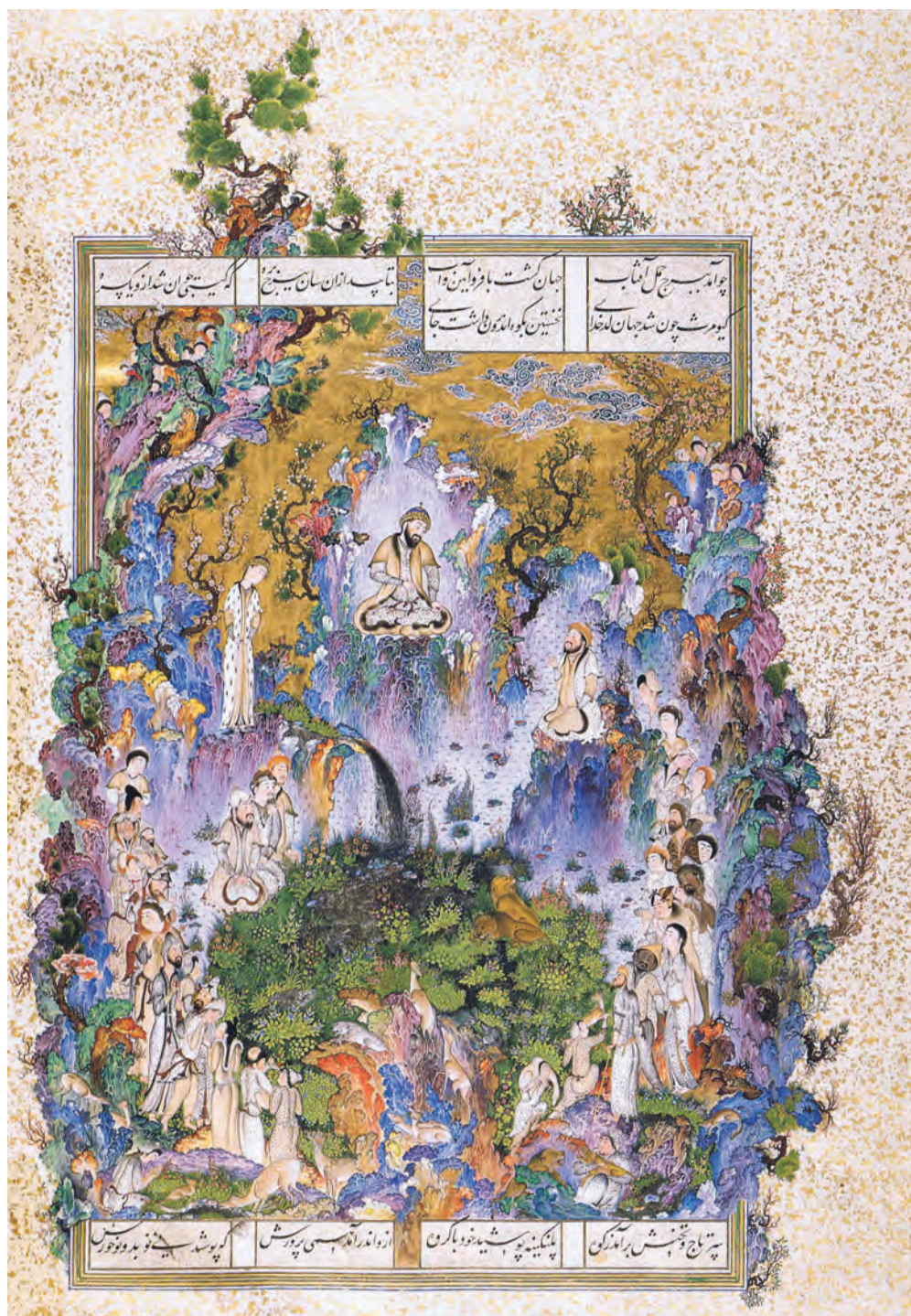
ONE OF FOUR: A floral fantasy, India, Deccan, c.1650.



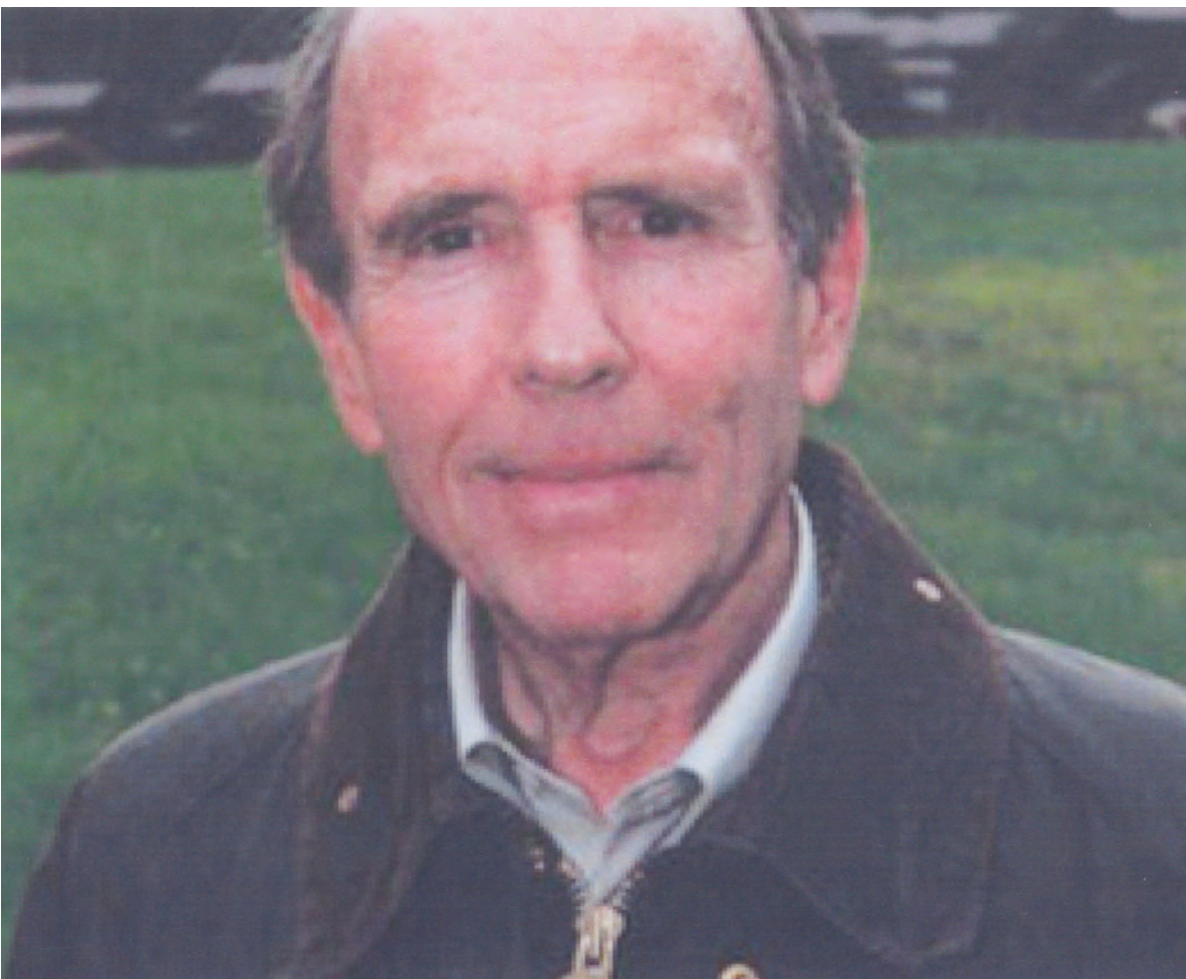
TWO OF FOUR: Tulips and an iris, Mughal India, c.1645-51.



THREE OF FOUR: A family of cheetahs, Mughal India, c.1575-80.



FOUR OF FOUR: The court of Gayumars, Sultan Muhammad, c. 1522-5.



Prince Sadruddin towards the end of his life.



10 December 2000 -

Dear Diana,

Thank you so very much for your kind and thoughtful letter of 19 November which I found when we returned to Geneva recently.

You are a warm and compassionate human being and I will not forget your contribution to refugees and humanitarian work. You were in hardship posts and you never wavered. I was happy to have you at UNHCR, to read your seminal book and I always admired your dedication and loyalty.

It was good to get your news. Claudia has certainly grown into an attractive young lady. Time certainly flies... we would love to meet her again when we return from a forthcoming trip with my nephew Karim over the holidays. You must bring her of course -

In the meantime Kate joins me, as do the boys, in sending you and the family our best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

As ever -

Mahmud -



The Author

Diana was born in London and grew up in the Midlands. At Bristol University she met a number of Eastern European refugee students, and an interest in their experience led her to work with what is now called the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Over the course of several periods at Geneva headquarters and field assignments in Africa and Asia, Diana came into fairly frequent contact with Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, initially Deputy, then UN High Commissioner for Refugees (1962-77). She was among the many people with whom the late prince developed friendly relationships, which he maintained for the rest of his life. Eventually, she was strongly urged by several former colleagues to write this biography. She is married to a Swiss and has an adult daughter.

The life of a high-born humanitarian, visionary and environmentalist

Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan traces the life of a high-born humanitarian, visionary and environmentalist, the second son of the once very well-known Aga Khan III.

The birth of the prince in France and his years in Switzerland and at Harvard University are sketched against the background of world events that would have repercussions in his adult life. The author, in depicting the prince's expert work with UNESCO and as UN High Commissioner for Refugees, also reflects his deep concern over North-South disparities and their inevitable consequences. The descriptions of his strenuous efforts to make known the dangers of nuclear proliferation and environmental depredation are interspersed with accounts of the crucial United Nations missions that the prince undertook over almost 20 years. Diana refers to some of the prince's remarkable predictions and in later chapters speaks of his overall outlook and his lifelong collection of Islamic and Indian art. Throughout the book the Prince's exceptional personality is reflected in extracts of his speeches, radio interviews, press cuttings and photographs.

This is the story of a high UN official who devoted his life to improving the lives of the planet's inhabitants. Sadruddin Aga Khan looked to the younger generations to make the world a better place. His example will surely prove inspiring to many young people.

'I have done my best to portray him in a way fitting to such an exceptional person.' Diana Miserez

