

STAFF RIGHTS?

"Problems relating to the professional staff of the [UN] Secretariat are usually considered in political, administrative, and budgetary terms. The time has come to discuss them in legal terms too, or rather, in the light of the purposes and the requirements of the Charter. Indeed, given the political and social stresses to which the staff is exposed, it is imperative to focus on, to reinvigorate the role of law, and to develop proper procedures, counterbalances, safeguards, and due process. ..."

Theodor Meron, The United Nations Secretariat: The Rules and the Practice, D.C. Heath, Lexington, Mass., 1977, pp. xiii-xiv.

The author of the above quote was one of the first experts to assess the issues and problems of staff rights in the UN Secretariat, as a former UN delegate and a professor of international law in New York. His own subsequent career over the past quarter-century underlines the vastly expanded involvement of the UN in international judicial processes today, since he was recently reappointed as president of the UN war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. An interview disclosed that:

"Drama, barbarity, and accountability are the threads that run through Meron's life ...

In conversation, he does not like to dwell on the four harsh years he spent at a Nazi labor camp ...

But yes, he conceded, those years unquestionably compelled him to study law in order to 'explore the means to avoid mistreatment, to focus on ways to protect human dignity.'

His] eyes light up as he turns to what is clearly his passion; the principles of humanitarian law ...

"As a judge, it would not be appropriate for me to refer to any current case,' he said. 'But the fact is that before this tribunal we see the same type of age-old human tendency, of leaders and commanders washing their hands. It was already of great concern in Shakespeare's time and it remains at the very center of war crimes today. ... Shakespeare's dialogues that touch on the moral and legal duties of leaders, their accountability, their attempt to evade blame, will resonate in the ears of anyone who listens to the major trials going on here.'"

Marlise Simons, "Hague judge shaped by barbarity and the Bard," International Herald Tribune, January 3, 2004.

Unfortunately, while justice is now being served in new ways on the international scene, the situation that Mr. Meron analysed in 1977 within the UN has, if anything, worsened. The

issue of "UN staff rights" may not be a pressing global priority, but it is of critical importance to UN staff morale, and even more to UN integrity and credibility. The UN most certainly cannot be a proper "moral spokesman" for all mankind on human rights and legal matters if it treats its own staff unfairly and abusively.

Yet IO Watch has found, and presents herein, much evidence that the UN staff rights situation is poor. In fact, it has been firmly entrenched ever since UN operations began. Among various experts on this topic, Shirley Hazzard is by far the most incisive, elegant, and determined chronicler. Her satire on UN staff life published in 1967 (she was a UN staff member for 10 years), her two books of 1973 and 1990, and her two-part magazine article of 1989 are, tellingly and sadly, just as valid today as when they were written. Readers who want to understand the full magnitude of grossly inadequate UN staff rights and their larger significance for the Organization should definitely seek out and read her work.

Shirley Hazzard, People in glass houses, Macmillan, Australia, [reissued by Penguin, New York, 1988], **1967**.

----- Defeat of an ideal: A study of the self-destruction of the United Nations, Atlantic-Little, Brown, Boston-Toronto, **1973**.

----- "Breaking Faith, Parts I and II", The New Yorker, September 25: 63-99, and October 2: 74-96 (both **1989**), and

----- Countenance of truth: The United Nations and the Waldheim case, Viking Penguin, New York and London, **1990**.

As noted in the preceding introductory section, UN operations are "extra-territorial", and the UN has also asserted that (as a non-nation-state) it is not even bound by international conventions. The UN Secretary-General has autocratic power, with no independent judiciary and only weak and erratic legislative oversight. He (and his representatives) have also been granted much discretion in making exceptions to the basic staff and financial rules and regulations approved by the General Assembly.

In a feeble attempt to "democratise" this system, the Secretary-General appoints many staff bodies, which, however, only "advise" him on various staff matters. In addition, the UN staff has long been denied proper representation of its interests, compared to other organizations and government units around the world. Joint staff-management consultation mechanisms produce little real dialogue (and sometimes considerable manipulation by management). They are thus unable to deal meaningfully with major problems, which leads to deep frustration and lessened staff morale.

Secretariat officials occasionally have been forced to admit that the UN staff-management relationship functions poorly, and they dutifully pledge to improve things. But staff volunteers remain skeptical because of repeated heavy-handed and unilateral Administration actions, their often-futile countering advisory efforts, and doubts about the credibility and integrity of the entire cumbersome personnel and judicial systems. IO Watch will add considerably more detail to this frustrating and often futile process of UN staff-management relations in this section in the future.

"United Nations staff rules", **1999**, *inter alia* Regulations VIII, IX, and IX-XI, and related rules, especially Regulations 8.1-2, 9.1, 10.1-2, 11.1-2, and Rules 104.14, 108.1-2, 109.1, 110.5-7 and 111.1.

Yves Beigbeder, The internal management of United Nations organizations: The long quest for reform, St. Martins Press, New York, **1997**, Chapter 12, "The staff unions' dilemma: Confrontation or partnership?", pp. 199-208,

Aamir Ali, "The international civil service: The idea and the reality", in Chris de Cooker, International administration: Law and management practice in international organisations, UNITAR, Martinus Nijhoff, Dordrecht, the Netherlands, **1989**,

"Claim of 'new management culture' at UN is widely disbelieved by staff and delegations", International Documents Review, **1996**, pp 1-2,

Rosemarie Waters, "Interview with the President of the Staff Council", UN Staff Report (New York), **November 1996**, pp.2-3,

"A rubber stamp for SMCC?", UN Staff Report (New York), **November 1996**, pp. 4-5,

Xavier Campos, "Down with those walls", UN Special (Geneva), **February 1999**, p. 17, and

Jaques Vigne, "Labourer la mer!", UN Special (Geneva), **January 2000**, pp.14-17.

In this inhospitable overall environment, the struggle and need for staff rights was evident from the very beginning of UN operations in New York in 1947:

"In the [UN] Secretariat there is no unifying directive on the functions of management. The need to keep subordinates informed of what is going on; the need to convey just praise and blame; the need for the impartial award of privilege and promotion; the need for discipline; the need to avoid unnecessary impositions on the time and energy of subordinates; the need to set a personal example do not seem to be appreciated as well as they should be.

These major shortcomings are accompanied by the less important but nevertheless tiresome defects in working conditions perennial irritants that would be tolerated if morale were high, but which count for much when it is low. Add to this the insecurity implicit in staff reductions and in the adjustments required to achieve proper geographic distribution and a balanced budget and you have a most unhappy conglomeration of forces making for discomfiture of the staff.

The staff feels the need for a lead from the top to combat these disrupting factors."

A confidential analysis in **April 1947** of the UN Secretariat's morale, as quoted in Stephen Baldwin, "Good management in the United Nations", Secretariat News (New York), January 31, 1986, pp. 11-12.

As Shirley Hazzard recounts, in 1949 the UN administrative chief secretly approached the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, with Secretary General Trygve Lie's blessing, and an agreement was made whereby US citizens (who were then some two-thirds of the UN headquarters staff) would be subject to FBI screening on their opinions, political sentiments, and private lives. Hazzard cites this as the "least mentioned official transaction in UN history," although it was later exposed in US Congressional hearings in 1952 and led to Lie's resignation from office. That secret agreement was:

" ... the ascertainable point at which the [the UN Secretariat] conclusively delivered itself into the hands of national interest ... in direct violation of the [UN Charter insistence on] a scrupulous independence from national pressures. ...

Staff representatives who [spoke out against the] collaboration with the FBI and the United States State Department were among the earliest and least ceremonious departures. The dismissals were accompanied by intimidating and abusive statements from the administration to those remaining. ...

The squalor of these conditions, punctuated by announcements of summary dismissals, acted on the staff with a combination of attrition, confusion and violence. ... Each department had its informers, and its victims.

The total of United Nations employees affected ... undoubtedly runs into the hundreds ... [but is difficult to determine] ... since employees were permitted to resign with extra indemnities, 'in exchange for their silence' ... [or in] terminations disguised as 'economies,' or ... deportations to the field, or careers shunted [permanently] into sidings ... [or] a secret blacklisting ...

Above all, there is no accounting for the deterrent effect of Trygve Lie's policies on those who might have wished to serve a differently administered United Nations secretariat."

Shirley Hazzard on the situation in the UN Secretariat in the **early 1950s**, in Chapter Two, "The purgatory of the investigations," in her Defeat of an ideal: A study of the self-destruction of the United Nations, Atlantic-Little, Brown, Boston-Toronto, **1973**, pp. 15, 23, 34-35.

The corruption of UN staffing practices had thus been initiated in the 1950s by the United States, but then everyone else jumped on board:

The uncontested establishment of [US government screening and approving personnel for UN service in the 1950s] nullified the Charter concept of an independent and effective civil service, inflicting untold damage on the potential of the United Nations. Other governments would thenceforth [and aggressively] also install their nominees in virtually all significant, and in many insignificant, U. N. posts. Hundreds of meaningless and costly positions would be created throughout the leadership of the U. N. system for the sole purpose of accommodating national candidates -- some of whom [were] devoid of qualifications Unwanted in their homelands [or] trailing rumors of incompetence or scandal.

The useful work of field missions would, on occasion, be similarly encumbered by such superfluous emissaries, dispatched to lucrative senior field assignments

In 1978 [Secretary-General] Waldheim would inform his unhappy staff that 'the General Assembly has made it clear the geographical distribution of the staff is the over-riding factor' -- without reference to the contrary mandate of the Charter.

By the nineteen-eighties, the *Times* would report the view of 'one Western ambassador' that 'You try to get as many posts as possible for your own nationals. This is wrong, but everybody does it.'

Shirley Hazzard on the UN in the **1950s**, in "Breaking Faith, Part I", The New Yorker, September 25, 1989, pp. 63-99, p. 74.

The seriousness of these abuses of staff rights was also not lost on some of the delegates to early General Assembly sessions:

"An end must be put to everything that seems to make the Secretary-General's post an autocratic one, to everything that tends to make the staff subject to the whims and caprices of their superiors and makes careers -- and even employment -- dependent on blind obedience to such absolute power."

chief French Delegate Henri Hoppenot, protesting abuses threatening the creation of a legitimate international service, during a debate in the U.N. General Assembly in **March 1953**, as quoted in Shirley Hazzard, "Breaking faith: I", The New Yorker, October 2, 1989, pp. 74-96, [86].

Ms. Hazzard also observed that [arguably the most respected] UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, played a large part during the 1950s in establishing the autocratic attitudes that still dominate UN operations:

"During his first year in office, Hammarskjöld sought and largely obtained from the General Assembly administrative powers that, invested in the Secretary-General, were at variance with the intentions of the [United Nations] Charter toward the international civil service. (His attempt to modify the authority of the Administrative Tribunal was acceded to only in part, but the standing and importance of that body declined.) [These] actions were condemned in a searching study, by Claude Julien, of erosion of rights at the United Nations [in 1953] -- a study that may be read with much interest today, when history has exposed the inadequacies of successive Secretaries-General.

The renewed insistence on unconditional loyalty to a personality, whose requirements are equated with those of the United Nations, again illustrates the remoteness of the U.N. service from democratic procedures. Hammarskjöld's inaccessibility to rational opinion is disquieting. his failure to recruit or retain persons of talent, or to expel sycophants, were part of a striking remoteness from realities by then besetting the U.N. service....."

Shirley Hazzard, on Dag Hammarskjöld's policies on assuming office in **1953**, in "Breaking Faith, Part I", The New Yorker, September 25, 1989, pp. 63-99, [82.]

The pressures created by autocratic leaders were heightened by the underlying pressures of life in the international civil service:

"Like most of his deputies, Hammarskjöld had no sustained contact with the staff body, and his pronouncements concerning the organization's condition and morale were misconceived. The abstractions set forth on paper as administrative policy during his U.N. years did nothing to mitigate the alienation of a body of persons deprived of a merit

system, uncertain of their rights, intimidated by procedures of surveillance and by the network of secret files maintained on its employees by the organization itself; and conscious, above all, that adherence to the explicit principles of their appointment would result in their victimization or dismissal. The separation of United Nations affairs from normal legal and ethical accountability had left the international staff quite without the 'effective protection from external pressure and internal domineering' called for as a matter of urgency by Henri Hoppenot of France in 1953. Many of those original fifty-one member states against whose interference the U.N. Charter had provided were bound, by watchful populations in their own land, to an observance of basic rights under laws and regulations far more exigent than the policies applied within the United Nations."

Shirley Hazzard, on the **1950s** situation, in "Breaking Faith, Part I", The New Yorker, September 25, 1989, pp. 63-99, [82-83].

In the late 1950s a pivotal action occurred that defines the low status, and abuses of, UN staff rights and their consequences. The hopes for the new United Nations of the 1940s (see first quote below) were firmly buried forever by a severe and autocratic disciplinary action case (see second, third, and fourth quotes following):

"In 1943 ... Mr. C. W. Jenks emphasized that quality of leadership would dominate the effectuality of a future United Nations Organization; and listed as the desirable attributes of an international civil servant 'integrity, conviction, courage, imagination, drive, and technical grasp -- in that order.'"

Shirley Hazzard, on events in **1943**, in Defeat of an ideal: A study of the self-destruction of the United Nations, Atlantic-Little, Brown, Boston-Toronto, **1973**, p. 132.

[Note: In 1970 Mr. Jenks became Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO)]

One key incident, related by Hazzard, vividly illustrates the very personal nature of staff rights and relations established in the Hammarskjöld era on a severe disciplinary issue [in contrast to the present-day UN staff of more than 33,000, and the many assistants that more recent Secretary-Generals now have available to carry out such disciplinary tasks for them]:

"In a bizarre episode, which [led to] the apparent suicide of a senior official who had opposed his orders on a claim of principle, Hammarskjöld [issued] a long personal letter of dismissal as a United Nations press release:

'It is further my view that any moral reservations which might have prevented you from obeying my instructions do not ameliorate the impropriety of your conduct as a member of the Secretariat in refusing an order by the Secretary-General relative to official papers. It is my view that if you considered your clear official duty to acknowledge my authority in Secretariat matters to be in conflict with your private moral convictions arising from an unauthorized assumption of authority, it was your duty to resign from the service.'

The official had refused to relinquish papers identifying activists in the Hungarian uprising of 1956, for fear [that the Secretariat could not protect such documents]. the case served as a forum for Hammarskjöld's views, expressed with despotic ferocity, with regard to the unreflecting submission he required from his staff.

A disciplinary body composed of senior officers of the United Nations circle reproduced Hammarskjöld's attitude in its censure of this 'defendant'"

Shirley Hazzard, on Hammarskjöld's actions in 1958, in "Breaking Faith, Part I", The New Yorker, September 25, 1989, pp. 63-99, [83,86].

In 1958, a UN Joint Disciplinary Committee of senior officials, considering [the above] case, declared that "the staff member must accept the findings of the higher authority or leave the service. Finding heavily against the "defendant," the disciplinary body went on to state:

"While recognizing that the obligations of staff members of the Secretariat are basically the same, whatever the nature of the duties which may be entrusted to them, the Committee considers it particularly important that the staffs assigned to the secretariats of political bodies, operating either at Headquarters or in the field, should not only subordinate their personal views to the decisions of their responsible supervisors in the Secretariat, but also understand and accept the overriding authority in all matters of substance of the bodies themselves."

Shirley Hazzard, on events in 1958, in Defeat of an ideal: A study of the self-destruction of the United Nations, Atlantic-Little, Brown, Boston-Toronto, 1973, p. 134.

Ms. Hazzard makes the following important point on this pivotal JDC judgment:

"This important statement goes far beyond the obvious requirements of impartiality and professional rectitude: it abrogates conscience. Although ... [it emphasizes] 'secretariats of political bodies' at the UN, it concerns itself with the conduct of all United Nations personnel, and perfectly reflects the attitudes, as they have evolved since 1950, of administration to staff. It does away with at least the first five of Mr. Jenks' requirements, and substitutes in their place the philosophy of Adolf Eichmann.

The 'personal view' of a reasonable being is not a mere hodgepodge of latent partiality over which some arbitrarily designated 'responsible superior' may confidently assume supremacy, but necessarily includes the dictates of justice, of humanity, and of self-respect. No organization or person is entitled to command, from any human being, a spiritual subservience of the kind required by the 1958 [UN JDC] ...

... "Responsible superiors,' in the UN Secretariat, are very often geographical appointees with a greatly varying regard for international scruples. There are any number of regulations defining the propriety of the international civil servant without ... [the JDC's] totalitarian statement; there are ample restrictions on the career of a United Nations employee without depriving him of his immortal soul."

Shirley Hazzard, Defeat of an ideal: A study of the self-destruction of the United Nations, Atlantic-Little, Brown, Boston-Toronto, 1973, pp. 134-135.

IO Watch believes that powerful elements of the same shamelessly autocratic attitude of UN management in the 1950s remain embedded in the Secretariat today, as evidenced by the arrangements introduced in the past five years for managers to "investigate" and control UN fraud, waste, and abuse cases, the punishment of UN whistleblowers, and the often farcical "internal justice" system, which helps maintain senior UN managers' impunity even in the face of mounting scandals and major field

program decision-making failures.

The first of the desirable attributes of an international civil servant listed by Mr. Jenks in 1943 -- integrity -- is in fact one of the three paramount considerations in the employment of staff listed in article 101 of the UN Charter. To make clear the meaning of this critical integrity term, highlighted in the Charter but so frequently used and abused by UN senior officials, IO Watch wishes to note the illuminating thinking on what integrity means in everyday language, provided by Stephen Carter in his excellent book on the topic in 1996:

"Integrity is like the weather: everybody talks about it but nobody knows what to do about it. Integrity is that stuff we always say we want more of.

When I refer to integrity, I have something very simple and very specific in mind. Integrity ... requires three steps:

- (1) *discerning* what is right and what is wrong;
- (2) *acting* on what you have discerned, even at personal cost; and
- (3) *saying openly* that you are acting on your understanding of right from wrong. ... A person of integrity lurks somewhere inside each of us: a person we feel we can trust to do right, to play by the rules, to keep commitments.

Indeed, one reason to focus on integrity as perhaps the first among the virtues that make for good character is that it is in some sense prior to everything else: the rest of what we think matters very little if we lack essential integrity, the courage of our convictions, the willingness to act and speak in behalf of what we know to be right."

Stephen L. Carter, *Integrity*, 1996, Basic Books, New York, pp. 6-7.

[Note: Mr. Carter is the William Nelson Cromwell Professor of Law at Yale University, and the author of several critically-acclaimed books on related topics.]

UN staff groups began very early to analyze their vulnerability on basic rights issues (such as speaking out to maintain their integrity), noting the negative impacts on operations:

"Staff morale is [central] to any organization. [and particularly] to the international career service. The 1956 Salary Review Committee prescribed [some essential] conditions for maintaining staff morale : each staff member must feel that he can rely upon his leaders, that the personnel policy of his organization is sound and fair, that the whole administration is activated by a sense of equality, and that he has protection against arbitrary action. [It] warned that 'If these elements are missing, [morale problems] and low productivity are probable consequences.' The experience of the [subsequent] 13 years has proved the soundness of this warning.

[Applying the] geographical distribution principle to ,,, , promotion and placement contributes to slacker discipline and poorer morale. It [seems] that hard work tends to be less appreciated than flattering words uttered to the right person at the right time The fairly frequent clashes in administrative philosophy and habits among [staff from] so many different cultural and social backgrounds often cause tensions. As the international organizations live to a large extent in a kind of political vacuum, their staff often [feel] they are lost in what they are inclined to consider a vast bureaucratic machine."

Tien-Cheng Young, reflecting on a 1956 staff assessment in "The international civil service reexamined", *Public Administration Review* (US), May/June 1970, pp. 217-224 [223].

In 1974 a group of UN system staff representatives met to launch their first campaign to reform the UN internal justice system. Their key question still reverberates today:

"Given the diffidence accorded 'executive privilege,' the difficulties of staff organizations in establishing themselves as a countervailing force to that privilege, and the disinterest ... of those whose help can make a difference-- for instance, members of delegations and the press -- then, what are the chances for review and reform of the system of due process?"

That question asked 18 years ago [in 1974] needs to be raised again. For, as put by the distinguished professor of international law, M. N. Akehurst (University of Paris):

"In the early days of the 20th century, it may have been possible to regard legal relations between international organizations and their staff as operating outside any known legal system; such a view is no longer tenable."

Peter Ozorio, [who was a member of the 1974 staff working group] "Legal rights revisited," UN Special (Geneva), October 1992, pp. 24-25.
[emphasis added]

By the late 1970s, any earlier possibilities of openness and a healthy climate for staff and their legal protection was already fading. As Theodor Meron noted:

" ... recently there appears to have occurred a marked decline in the number of requests for legal opinions from the Secretary-General and various departments, including the Office of Personnel Services. This may be another indication of the politicization of the Secretariat, of the diminishing role of law in the Organization, and of the increasing power of the various departments that want to be free to establish policy ..."

Theodor Meron, The United Nations Secretariat: The Rules and the Practice, Chapter 4, "Selected legal questions", D.C. Heath, Lexington, Mass., 1977, p. 83.

Shiurley Hazzard observed that, surprisingly and tellingly, it was only UN staff, not UN top management or the General Assembly, that seemed really concerned about UN performance issues and mismanagement:

During [Secretary-General Kurt] Waldheim's second term [in the late 1970s], ... [and] thwarted in their negotiations with the United Nations administration, [UN staff representatives] were enabled to express their disquiet to the Assembly by a special provision enacted by the Assembly itself in consequence of staff agitation. ... these efforts failed in their object of generating wide concern and consequent reforms ... The spectacle of a staff body vainly seeking the proper use of its resources in the organization's service and soliciting, in effect, the intercession of the organization's governing council to prevent continued mismanagement by its appointed leaders was not new at the United Nations."

Shirley Hazzard, on the Waldheim era of staff relations in the 1970s, "Breaking Faith: II", The New Yorker, October 2, 1989, pp. 74-96, [85-86].

[emphasis added.]

Outside experts were equally disturbed by the lordly attitudes of UN top leadership, and the lack of rights of UN staff:

"In the late 1970s, the U.N. staff union in New York engaged the American labor negotiator Theodore Kheel to represent it in its dealings with the U.N. administration. His ... experience with the U.N. hierarchy -- which he likens to 'the court of Henry VIII' --- [focused in particular on] its propensity for abrogating formal agreements on basic matters of staff rights

'The thing that *utterly amazed me*' Kheel said recently, 'was the position taken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations [then Kurt Waldheim] to disregard the elementary established rights of employees; that the agency created to maintain standards of human decency and to bring about peace by negotiated settlement would violate its own agreements and see no necessity for compliance with its own word.'"

Hazzard, Shirley, on impressions of leadership attitudes in the late 1970s, in "Breaking faith: II", The New Yorker, October 2, 1989, pp. 74-96 [86].
[emphasis added]

Indeed, open dialogue and especially any internal criticism or dissent seemed to have become patterns to be feared and firmly suppressed in the UN Secretariat:

"[Recently, as President of the Staff Union] I met with senior UN officials, who warned me] ... that the staff must be extremely careful about its actions because the UN was on the verge of collapse and the *tiniest* upset might bring the whole structure crumbling down. I asked 'Gentlemen, do you really believe that the UN is such a fragile flower?' A solemn yes was the reply I received. (This, I might say, is [a line] used rather consistently over the years to silence criticism and unrest. I recently saw an article from the 12 March 1947 edition of *The New York Times* where the first Secretary-General, Mr. Trygve Lie, was quoted as saying to a meeting of the staff, 'Everything you say will be used against this Organization by the enemies of the United Nations.')

... more often than not, we find our [UN existence) defined by limitations anti negatives rather than positives The whole tone of present personnel policies and practices is founded on rather outdated concepts of limiting, checking, and blocking staff rather than [seeking) the optimum development of each employee so that the Organization can function better.'

Lowell Flanders, "The future of the UN ... In whose hands?", address at a preparatory meeting of the United Nations Community Forum, Secretariat News (NY), **April 16, 1979**, pp 10-11.

In 1984 Donald Dunham cited the growing mismanagement problems, and the extreme carelessness with which UN staffing decisions simply left some staff members adrift (a persistent problem which still continues today:

"If one independent [UN] fiefdom should lock horns with another independent fiefdom and staff members are caught in the middle, their demise is assured. No machinery exists to force either one to take responsibility to resolve the issue; and no top

official will pull the horns apart, free the staff members and then knock their heads together. [Curiously,] when the first unit has issued termination notice on the staff member and the second unit countermands it and arranges for work continuation without a contract against retroactive reimbursement. According to UN regulations, the countermanded assumes no responsibility for staff members by its action, while the terminator does not lose its responsibility because it was on its payroll that they were last listed. The butting back and forth is pretty exhausting [and can go on for years.] since there is no liberator in sight, the literal demise may beat the administrative one to the punch."

Donald Dunham, "Management by personnel action", Secretariat News (New York), **November 30, 1984**, p. 11.

Note: this kind of muddled and irresponsible management still goes on, leading to the continuing phenomenon of a group of UN 'floaters," who may be suspended between units, or sitting somewhere with no work at all, for years at a time -- an enormous waste which continues on, as discussed in the UN "gulag" subsection later in this archive):

Houshang Ameri noted further in 1985 that this overall carelessness was increasingly destructive and needed [but subsequently never received] urgent attention:

"On the occasion of the 40th anniversary, the Secretary-General suggested a critique 'of the weaknesses of the Organization and their cause or causes.'

The shortcomings [are broadly two: those] of a predominantly political or structural nature [which are beyond the Secretary-General's control] [and those which are] the result of a chronic mismanagement of the Secretariat [which] the Secretary-General can put right. ...

This [latter] malaise is due to a wide range of causes, which include: the Secretariat's submissiveness towards influential governments; the failure to [properly] balance the principles of merit and geographic distribution; extremely poor personnel management; passive and defective recruitment policies; politicization of selection, appointment and promotion of staff; lack of a career development plan; etc.

Acknowledging the Secretariat's shortcomings -- and the breathtaking deterioration of both performance and the public image of the UN -- would be the first step toward finding answers ... [But] the attitude of many top [UN] officials is still characterized by indifference"

Houshang Ameri, "Shortcomings of the United Nations", Secretariat News (New York), **October 16, 1985**, pp.22-23.

Meanwhile, UN staff were becoming very much aware of hidden agendas and discriminatory treatment in UN disciplinary cases:

"The Administration has recently dealt with a number of cases of alleged fraud relating to taxes and education grants within the Secretariat. In the process, different administrative actions have been undertaken ... [including] summary dismissal, referral of cases to the Joint Disciplinary Committee, resignation and recovery of overpayment.

- What are the criteria according to which summary dismissal -- the hardest penalty -- has been meted out to some, but not to others?
- Under what circumstances it is decided that a case should be submitted to the [JDC]?
- What are the circumstances under which the Administration accepts the resignation of staff involved?
- By what criteria is it decided that only the recovery of the overpayment should

be made?

We are concerned that the established judicial procedures which are intended to guarantee staff a minimum of due process should not be undermined. ... There is a need to explain to the staff the circumstances governing the choice of measures being invoked. In cases that are similar, justice will require that staff are not only equitably treated but that they are seen to be equitably treated."

From a "Group of concerned staff", "Fraud and due process," Secretariat News (NY), **16 July 1986**, p. 2.

The UN's increasing field operations also provided many instances of abusive senior officials, who were protected and retained by the UN leadership, while the situation was condemned by staff, as shown by the following three quotes.

" ... [The UN programs which eat] up the great bulk of U.N. resources ... the economic, social and humanitarian programs aimed at development, emergency relief and 'better standards of life' around the world ... [get little scrutiny.] ...

Clearly, the United Nations employs many hard-working and idealistic people. [but] ... Parts of the system are overstaffed and lethargic, while others, particularly field offices in unpleasant places, are overstaffed and overworked. ...

Local employees tend to bear the brunt of disciplinary action ... when fraud or abuse are discovered ... while erring international professional staffers often survive and even advance in the organization. At the same time, U.N. employees who complain about irregularities [lose promotions or must transfer elsewhere.]

It is a system that tends to cover up its abuses and discourage whistle-blowers.

...

A European U.N. official, who recently left his agency in frustration, [said] 'A certain enabling environment ... allows [fraud] to happen. The question is not whether you do it or not, but whether you're stupid enough to be caught.'

"Basically, there's a lack of determination to combat the sleaze factor' he said. 'In an environment where mediocrity has a strong self-protective interest, these things flourish.'"

William Branigin, "The U.N. empire: polished image, tarnished reality", "As U.N. expands, so do its problems: Critics cite mismanagement, waste", Washington Post, **September 20, 1992**, pp. 3-4.

"[Concerning allegations of corruption at UNHCR in articles in the Washington Post in September 1992] with respect to discipline in UNHCR, a courageous staff member in Angola immediately brought the Boubakar wrongdoing to my attention. The case was airtight, and U.N. headquarters found it impossible to avoid our recommendation for dismissal.

In the more complicated Lukika case in Uganda, UNHCR's recommendation for dismissal was equally strong. The Secretary-General's office rejected it (on grounds that the United Nations lacks precedents in firing for incompetence) and forced UNHCR to take Lukika back. Threats and intimidation in no way dampened our efforts in UNHCR to deal with corruption and incompetence. The Secretary-General at the time just did not support us. Ensuing troubles with Lukika after headquarters directed that he stay in UNHCR should surprise no one."

Arthur E. Dewey, "No laxity", UN Special (Geneva), **November, 1992**, p. 31.

[Note: Mr. Dewey was deputy high commissioner of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from 1986-1990.]

"On the very day the Sunday Times [(UK published a very critical report on UN mismanagement] ... I received the news of the killing of one more UNHCR colleague, Boris Zeravic, in Bosnia. The report failed to mention the sacrifices that the vast majority of the United Nations staff make, particularly the loss of life, while working in conflict situations.

The Staff Council in UNHCR agrees with the thrust of the criticisms. The staff wants to weed out corruption, mismanagement, nepotism, double-dippers, desk-warmers, and all other irregularities ... Staff representatives have been tirelessly pointing out unsavory management tendencies and reported to the governing body of UNHCR ... on how to strengthen the organization and to ensure the effective use of its human resources. The question is: what do these government representatives do with these reports when they return to their capitals ...

UNHCR ... staff on the ground work with dedication and have twice won the Nobel Peace Prize, but they are demoralized when subjected to unjustified criticism. UNHCR staff needs the help of the media to further strengthen its humanitarian commitment to work for refugees."

Nasr Ishak, "HCR staff replies", UN Special (Geneva), **October 1993**, p. 20.

[Note: a reply letter to the Sunday Times, by the Chairman of the Staff Council, UNHCR]. [emphasis added.]

During the 1990s new staff concerns, such as sexual harassment and abusive managers, became more evident and showed that in these new areas too the UN leadership was almost totally unable to observe staff rights and to sanction managers for flagrant misconduct:

Geneva. "The United Nations Wednesday denied reports that it briefly suspended a senior official earlier this year for sexually harassing up to 10 women after a disciplinary committee inquiry into sexual harassment allegations by 10 secretaries

The United Nations refuses to disclose [such records, which] underscores the difficulty individual workers have in pursuing formal complaints when they believe they have been treated wrongly.

Secrecy laws at the United Nations cover a broad spectrum of regulations but there are no specific guidelines for what will be made public and what will be kept under lock and key.

U.N. staff are not allowed to speak to the press on [work-related matters] for example, nor are they allowed to start any legal proceedings in court without the permission of the Secretary-General.

Even if a senior official is brought to trial, he or she cannot be forced to testify because of diplomatic immunity. Most senior U.N. officials enjoy the protective blanket of immunity which can only be revoked by the U. N. Secretary-General.

'It's an old boy's club and when you have reached the diplomatic level, they all protect each other', said one secretary who requested anonymity."

"U.N. denies sexual harassment", UPN, **May 19, 1994**.

As the UN moved toward much more aggressive internal investigations of UN operations in the 1990s, that same favoritism of managers against lesser staff was very much in evidence:

"... In early July, eight members of the U.N. procurement office [were suspended following alleged procurement irregularities in UN peacekeeping operations]

So why did the U.N. hierarchy suspend the eight staff members?

[Colleagues say] ... the suspended and humiliated staff made many judgment calls about bidder [performance capabilities], but they were [serving] ,, 14 U.N. peacekeeping operations and their 87,000 personnel ... [and] worked 12 hours a day and weekends [under extreme pressure], which has redoubled their resentment at the shabby treatment they have suffered.

By contrast, the eight's boss ..., who signed many of the documents in question, received a similar job he wanted in Geneva, while no action was taken against the senior officials on the contracts committee who are supposed to approve all deals.

A [staff member] explained '... the unique hierarchical structure of the U.N. which leaves all decisions to the underlings. When everything works, they take the credit. When it goes wrong, they wash their hands of it.'

At the U.N., the presumption of innocence ought to be enhanced, if only because all too often the guilty there are promoted, not punished."

Ian Williams, "Free the U.N. eight! Travelgate on First Ave.", The New York Observer, **September 13, 1993**, pp. 1, 10.

[Note: In 1997 the UN Administrative Tribunal completely exonerated the eight staff members charged, with blunt criticism of the UN's lack of due process and an apparent knuckling under to outside political pressure. The eight received \$20,000 each, but barely an apology, and the investigation and case cost the UN millions of dollars. Apparently as well, no hint of a reprimand was given to the senior officials who decided to prosecute.

"Skylink case closed", UN Staff Report, **March 1997**, p. 14.]

The autocratic style and the lack of a law-based culture continued to be cited as key UN failings in the 1990s:

"Another week, another UN scandal

Why are scandals so frequent in [global] institutions ? What makes them so vulnerable to corruption, inefficiency, and personal aggrandisement?

The first problem is leadership. Leaders are selected by an inefficient and labyrinthine process from a pool of poor quality talent.

Second, the waste and inefficiency can only be reduced if they are visible to public opinion. [but] international institutions [lack] accountability

The third problem is the weakness of a law-governed culture.

.... The UN Charter [Article 100] focuses on the Secretary-General and staff as international officials accountable only to the Organization....

Here, rooted in idealism, lie the clues in what can go wrong. All too often the heads of UN agencies signaled their autonomy through grandeur"

Perri 6 and Michael Sheridan, "A world order of scandal and graft: What is it about international agencies that invites corruption", The Independent (UK), **May 11, 1995**.

In light of all the above grim material about UN staff rights, reflections by Karl Paschke, the first head of the new UN internal oversight office, the OIOS, in a farewell message introducing his last annual report in 1999, gave interesting but rather blithe insight into management problems and staff dissatisfaction, stating that:

"The United Nations of today ... is a better Organization in many respects, than, say, five years ago, and enhanced oversight has played its part in that change.

However, further improvement within the United Nations is still necessary in many ways. Internal controls are not strong enough yet; accountability continues to be blurred and misunderstood; delegation of authority must be effectively executed; and human resources management is in need of further reform, particularly in the areas of career development, intensified staff rotation, enhanced substantive support in respect of staff-management relations and the system of personnel assessment. ... The operational and psychological distance between Headquarters and the field, that is, the other duty stations ... remains a problem.

Beyond these managerial challenges, some more general phenomena have been of concern to me throughout my tenure here, and remain complicating factors in the daily struggle of the Organization:

A staff-management relationship that is characterized by antagonism rather than the spirit of cooperation ... "

"Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services" A/54/393 of **23 September 1999**, Preface.

Even as the UN entered the new millennium, the failures of UN leadership to protect and promote staff rights, and the damaging consequences of this failure, have continued on:

"How not to

'UN internal reform has done little to solve what staff see as the real problems of the Organization. The U.N. has concentrated mainly on cutting staff costs, increasingly awarding temporary contracts -- some 'temps' have been with us for 15 years. [However] the combination of management incompetence, job insecurity and overwork have created a workforce beset by stress, jealousy and fear, all of which diminish the cost-effectiveness of 'human resources.'

The U.N. does not apply its own international conventions on, say, collective bargaining, on the technical grounds that not being a state, it cannot sign them.'

Where there's no will, there's no way. However, even if the U.N. really couldn't sign the conventions securing basic rights it could still consider committing itself to applying them and, to prove its good faith, even designate an independent tribunal as the ultimate arbiter. But let's stop daydreaming.

'Staff effectively surrender their labour rights when they join [the U.N. They are] not covered by [national] labor law, and, in the event of a dispute with their employer are obliged to appeal through the internal justice system, which is administered by that same employer.'

Eric Blair, "From our man in Absurdistan", UN Special (Geneva), March 2000, p. 31; the quoted material is excerpted from a letter by Nigel Lindup, a UN-Geneva staff representative, printed in the **February 18, 2000** issue of *The Guardian Weekly* (UK).

The old disregard for merit and equitable treatment in staffing matters still continues on with the same zeal that existed in the formative 1950s:

"The Brahimi report implicitly criticizes the appointment of key peacekeeping personnel on geopolitical grounds, rather than on merit ... As the report states, 'Put simply, the UN is far from being a meritocracy today, and unless it takes steps to become one, it will not be able to reverse the alarming trend of qualified staff ... leaving the organization.' These are fighting words at the UN, where turf, national advantage, and

every job are fought over and preserved with a vigor that belies the public image of UN torpor in most other respects. "

David M. Malone and Ramesh Thakur, "UN peacekeeping: Lessons learned?", Global Governance, 7 (2001), 11-17 [14].

[Note: the report referred to is the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations [the "Brahimi report"], UN document A/55/305 -- S/2000/809 of **August 21 2000**, which is available at <http://www.un.org/documents/> under the A document number]

There are many more excellent assessments of the plight of UN staff who seek to exercise their right to speak out and thereby help to ensure a healthy, credible, and accountable UN. Two particularly important quotations concerning staff rights (and the growing disregard thereof) were summarized by the *International Documents Review* in late 1995, as the UN attempted to celebrate its 50th anniversary. Although they are now almost a decade old, they illustrate quite nicely the central obstacles that UN staff continue to face today in exercising their basic human rights. The first involved an impasse in staff-management negotiations:

"The joyless nature of the United Nations 50th anniversary was underlined this week by a public spat between the Staff Union and Management [on appeals of poor performance ratings] ... which could have far-reaching implications for the international civil service. ...

The [staff-management joint] agreement that the performance rating resulting from a staff member's challenge to a low evaluation would be binding, was [subsequently] changed by [management with] the addition of a proviso that it was without prejudice to the ultimate authority of the Secretary-General as Chief Administrative Officer.

In effect, Management could ignore a finding in favour of a staff member by invoking the Secretary-General's ultimate authority. (*You know how many people speak in the name of the Secretary-General in this house?* says Staff Committee President Mohammed Oummih, underlining why the change is unacceptable. ...

A general meeting of staff on 10 October endorsed the [related] Staff Council resolution by a vote of 730 to 0 with one abstention."

"Staff-management spat with possible serious impact reflects a joyless 50th anniversary," International Documents Review, **16 October 1995**, pp. 1-2. [emphasis added]

The editor of the *International Documents Review* made very perceptive further comments. **They encompass the central concerns of this archive on UN management accountability and the rule of law**, and IO Watch therefore hopes that the reader will bear with all the "emphasis added":

"In considering ... the account above, it is worth noting that ... a critical question has been avoided: *what is the rationale for increasing the vulnerability of staff to unfair and/or arbitrary judgements by administrators? The pat answer to that -- it will allow "managers to manage" -- is unconvincing because the most serious problem affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of the UN Secretariat has been bad management.* ...

The Secretariat reforms proposed by the Secretary-General would do little to

improve management. They would, however, remove a range of checks and balances built into the international civil service for the very obvious reason that in a multicultural, multinational context, justice must not only be done but be seen to be done. While the integrity of the rebuttal process might seem an arcane matter to outsiders, it is the only recourse for a staff member victimized by a bad manager. To weaken it would be to reduce the integrity of the entire structure ...

The United Nations will clearly [face] ... wrenching changes in the period ahead, and it would be both unfair and counterproductive to do away now with the only means staff have to hold managers accountable."

"Staff-management spat with possible serious impact reflects a joyless 50th anniversary," International Documents Review, 16 October 1995, p. 2.
[emphasis added]

In fact, however, Secretary-General Annan's human resource management reform intentions of 1997, emphasizing his "quiet revolution" to "transform" the organization, started at the correct point but then jumped toward a blunt deprecation of such rules, as stated in a 1998 OHRM document:

"We are too complicated and too slow. We are over-administered ... and have too many rules and too many regulations' [Mr. Annan] told staff on 29 October. [He called] for ... simpler procedures and more authority for managers ...

The Secretary-General and his senior managers are addressing shortcomings that impede the effective use of staff resources. Chief among them:

Managers have limited responsibility over their human and financial resources. This leads directly to the erosion of accountability at all levels of the Organization;

Complicated rules and procedures have served to discourage the recruitment, advancement, and mobility of staff, affecting the UN's capacity to move the right person to the right place at the right time. This is essential in a global organization which is increasingly expected to act quickly to address complex crises and changing priorities."

"Staff become focus of United Nations modernization: New management culture key to revitalization," United Nations Focus Series, No. 4, **November 1998**, pp. 2-3. [emphasis added]

To illustrate just how little has changed in the UN on rule-of-law and management accountability issues, despite all the management reform efforts of the last decade, IO Watch notes the rather devastating results of a survey of UN staff perceptions of integrity issued in June 2004:

"A new survey of ... [UN integrity perceptions has found that] while structures for reporting and combating corruption exist, most staff members are either unaware of how to use them or afraid to do so for fear of high-level retaliation.

'The UN has a 'phone book' of rules and regulations which are totally useless as they are never practiced', a staff member is quoted as saying ... [Another says,] 'Senior leaders caught in serious breaches of ethics should be punished, not promoted as usual.'

... [The study] is being made public at a time when Secretary-General Kofi Annan has been forced by the widespread publicity [about corruption in the Iraq oil-for-food program] to appoint a high-level panel to look into [it] ...

The new study records relatively high levels of worker satisfaction ... but its most negative findings have to do with ingrown leadership and the lack of response to reports of corruption.

'Get rid of the old boy network,' one staff member ... [says.] 'That network is wide, tenacious and powerful. ... So long as you can wind your way into that network, you are OK. ... Opposing the network is certainly the end of a UN career.'

Warren Hoge, "Report criticizes the way UN fights corruption", International Herald Tribune, **June 16, 2004**. [emphasis added]

[Note: The actual survey is "United Nations organizational integrity survey", Final Report, prepared by Deloitte Consulting LLP, **June 2004**.]

There were other key developments in late 2004, suggesting that the long-subdued issues of UN staff rights and staff-management relations may finally be returning to the spotlight, a development that is very much overdue. The issue was raised by Mr. Annan as a sweeping one for the world, but was then continued very strongly and properly in the UN context by staff representatives and others, as shown by the following quotes.

"[UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan] ... appealed to world leaders yesterday to rally behind the rule of international law ...

'Today the rule of law is at risk around the world,' he told the UN General Assembly in New York. 'This [international] framework is riddled with gaps and weaknesses.' ...

He said: 'It lacks the teeth that turn a body of law into an effective legal system. Many feel it is not always used fairly or effectively; those invoking it do not always practice what they preach.' ...

His speech reflected an organisation facing a sense of crisis. ..."

Mark Turner, "Annan says global rule of law is at risk." Financial Times (UK), **September 24, 2004**.

"Rosemarie Waters, [the UN Staff Union President], said that ... in the last six years, [UN] ... management had been reforming itself and increasing managerial authority, while reducing accountability. The Staff Union [had great respect for the Secretary-General's vision and reform programme goals.] ... It could not support, however, the erosion of staff rights and dissolution of oversight mechanisms as a means of implementation, [or legitimize] ... actions in which staff, through their elected representatives, had no meaningful role to play. ...

The [integrity survey] ... revealed that staff ... feared reprisals for exposing breaches of ethics, and they perceived that the disciplinary process was applied unevenly. Their view of integrity among senior managers was less than positive..

The Organization had yet to establish concrete measures for individual accountability, she continued. It was essential that areas with expanded delegation of authority for personnel decisions should be carefully examined and, if abuses were found, such delegation should be revoked. ... The [OHRM] had informed staff representatives of its inability to enforce accountability because they lacked central authority. The Fifth Committee may wish to recommend that concrete individual accountability be developed, in consultation with staff representatives, on a priority basis."

"UN staff committee representatives tell budget committee concerns ignored in management reform report", Fifth Committee, Press Release GA/AB/3641 of **29 October 2004**, pp. 2-3. [emphasis added]

"[Rosemarie Waters, the UN Staff Union President, said that] ...The Secretary-General wished to ensure the international community that the United Nations led by example and met the Global Compact standards, which he advocated for the world. Sadly, the Organization could not be called a leading example of responsible corporate citizenship, because it failed to adhere to at least one of the fundamental principles of the Compact: freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining. The United Nations should not continue to advocate ideals that it did not practice, since that would ultimately cause confusion to staff and embarrassment to the Organization.

The staff-management consultative process ... had been suspended since April 2003, when all staff unions and associations had withdrawn from the Staff-Management Coordination Committee (SMCC). ... Shortly after that action, in an unprecedented move, the management had formally rescinded the release granted to ...[New York Staff Committee officers, which] constituted direct interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign staff representative body as provided for under chapter VIII of the Staff Rules and Regulations. The absence of an independent judicial system placed staff in a situation where their right to fair and impartial adjudication was compromised. ...

Staff representatives, throughout the global Secretariat, shared the view that good faith was lacking in the consultative process, she said. In one clear example, ... the [General] Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to ... [develop proposals through consultations for internal justice reform]. The management had made no attempt to consult with the staff on that issue, even after staff representatives submitted a proposal on their own initiative. Agreements reached at the SMCC were frequently not implemented, partially implemented, or delayed for years.

Staff representatives in New York had withdrawn participation from the central review bodies in April 2003, she continued, at the request of the staff at large, because there was no meaningful role for those bodies. [They] ... conducted reviews on procedural matters only and basically endorsed the decisions of programme managers -- serving only to legitimize the process ...

In closing, she added that the Staff Union had been undergoing its own reform for the past two years. ... It was aware of its limitations and fully accepted and respected the authority of the Secretary-General. However, in matters that had an impact on the conditions of service, the staff were major stakeholders. To take into consideration their views based on actual work experience before taking decisions was not co-management. It was good management."

"UN staff committee representatives tell budget committee concerns ignored in management reform report", Fifth Committee, Press Release GA/AB/3641 of **29 October 2004**, pp. 3-4. [emphasis added]

"James O. C. Jonah, ... [who worked at the UN for three decades] ... and served as head of personnel from 1979 through 1982, ... recalled that [when the Fifth Committee initiated reforms in the late 1970s], ... a staff-management consultation process was established, and it was decided that staff representatives should be allowed to appear before the Committee. Now, it was sad to see the erosion of the international civil service in the United Nations. That had serious implications. The Committee should also have a serious look at the results of the integrity study. Never had the staff perception of integrity been so low. ... In some respects, the reforms had weakened the Secretariat considerably.

When he served as head of personnel, his biggest fight had been with programme managers, who were most resistant to reform He could not believe that such measures as giving authority to programme managers would strengthen the international civil service. What had been said about the lack of authority of the OHRM was true. Without a strong personnel office, however, there would be no uniformity of

rules and fairness in the system. Governments should not take what was happening lightly."

"UN staff committee representatives tell budget committee concerns ignored in management reform report", Fifth Committee, Press Release GA/AB/3641 of **29 October 2004**, p. 4. [emphasis added]

"Integrity sponsor unit 35:

The staff council:

[Recalling its April 2004 request that the Secretary-General establish an independent investigation of violations of the delegation of authority in the OIOS] ...

Regrets the decision of the Secretary-General to accept the findings of an incomplete investigation; ...

Further considers that the failure to fully investigate the allegations ... upholds the findings of the [staff integrity survey] that there is a lack of integrity particularly at the higher levels of the organization;

Recalls that the Secretary-General declined to accept the honourable action of the deputy Secretary-General who tendered her resignation as a result of the Baghdad bombing of a UN compound that resulted in 22 staff members perishing, to hold accountable the head of UNHCR for alleged sexual harassment and to hold accountable the chef de cabinet whose son was employed by the Secretariat in contravention of staff rules;

Decides that the senior management no longer displays the level of integrity expected of all employees of the organization;

Requests:

i. The president to convey this vote of no confidence to the Secretary-General and president of the General Assembly ...

iv. to the staff at large and;

v. to issue a press release."

"Raw data: U.N. staff resolution", Fox News (US) website, **November 19, 2004**.

[Note: Fox News stated that the above was the text of a UN staff resolution which it received, calling for a vote of no confidence in Kofi Annan.]

The General Assembly paid attention to the staff concerns. In its resolution on human resources management in December 2004 it stated that it:

"1. Takes note of the views expressed by staff representatives in the Fifth Committee, stresses the importance of a meaningful dialogue on human resource management issues between staff and management, and calls upon both parties to intensify efforts to overcome differences and to resume the consultative process;

2. Reiterates its requests that the Secretary-General take into account the views of staff representatives, in accordance with [the staff regulations] ... and resolution 35/213 of December 1980."

"Human resources management: Report of the Fifth Committee", UN document A/59/650 of **22 December 2004**, and

"Human resources Management", General Assembly resolution 59/266 of **23 December 2004**, Section XVI.

IO Watch notes the 1980 resolution cited above, which indicates how long this struggle for meaningful consultation has gone on, and wonders whether autocratic UN senior managers will ever surrender their entrenched position of avoiding sincere

collaborative efforts with staff.

IO Watch also believes, however, that these pressing issues of integrity, staff rights, and staff-management relationships within the UN -- more than ever before -- are at the heart of many of the severe Secretariat operating problems in the 21st century. They have long been buried as a lesser and hidden issue in analyses of the UN, but the above quotes indicate that they are moving front and center once again, because their status is perhaps as bad or even worse than it has ever been.