

THE WORLD BANK GROUP STAFF ASSOCIATION

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Transcript of interview with

GABRIEL BANFI

**April 21, 1988
Washington, D.C.**

Interview by: Charles Ziegler

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

ZIEGLER: Today is April 21, 1988. My name is Charles Ziegler of the World Bank's Oral History Program, and I have with me here at the Headquarters of the World Bank Mr. Gabriel Banfi. Mr. Banfi was a founding member of the Staff Association. During the 1975 to 1976 term he served on the Executive Committee as Treasurer of the Staff Association. In the 1982 to 1983 term he served on the Executive Committee as Second Vice Chairman.

Gabriel, I'm glad you're here today. You were one of the founding members of the Staff Association. As you recall it, what were the factors that impelled the staff to create the Staff Association in the first place?

BANFI: Well, I'm not so sure whether I was a founding member. When something is created, you don't know exactly when it begins and whether you came on board after some ideas already had been kicked around. But, indeed, my recollection is that I was among those that started getting together with others at a time when having a staff association was sort of an underground idea. People were a little hesitant to let others know that the Staff Association was in the minds of some people. So I think I was an active member, if you will, of the group that put this idea forward. And I think at one time--although I was not one of the participants--this idea was put forward to management.

ZIEGLER: Do you remember by whom specifically?

BANFI: No, as I said, I wasn't a participant. I don't know when and where this took place. But I certainly was very joyful when I heard that management and, in this case perhaps namely Mr. [Robert S.] McNamara, president of the Bank at that time, was pleased with the idea.

Let me go to the substance of the question here, which deals with the factors that impelled the creation of the Staff Association. And, again, I have to put my role in the proper perspective. I was a General Services employee at that time. And my circle of friends were by and large people doing clerical jobs. Many of my friends were employees in the Print Shop. Some others were messengers. I am a Latin American, and mostly my exchange of ideas was with this subgroup within the Bank.

I think that what was in the minds of these people was to have a channel of communication to air grievances, to express aspirations and to convey to management their ideas for improving working conditions so as to create a better World Bank. I would say that was the driving force in the creation of this organization. At that time--when the Bank was going through the beginning of the McNamara Administration and the tremendous growth that took place after 1968--there was a sense that an organization of this type was needed to facilitate an input from the bottom up that would contribute to creating a better organization.

ZIEGLER: One of the previous people interviewed for this series--I think it might have been Bengt Sandberg--said that he vaguely seemed to recall that management had the idea of creating its own staff association. In other words, instead of having the Staff Association be a creation of staff, it would be a creation of management. His view, and I think rightly, was that such a thing would have been a disaster, because it would have been regarded with extreme suspicion right from the start. Do you recall having heard anything of this sort?

BANFI: Well, first of all, I will share the view that it would have been seen with suspicion. But I did not hear mention of a management-created staff association until later, when we were in the process of trying to get started. That is, it may have been during the Constituent Assembly [Delegate Assembly of the World Bank Group Staff] that I heard of that idea for the first time. I had a very clear view of what the Association should be. It was very clear to me what I was pursuing, and, indeed, I had shared my views with others. We agreed on what the Association should be, but never envisioned it as a product of the management.

ZIEGLER: Just so we have it on the record, you mentioned tonight that you were a member of the Constituent Assembly.

BANFI: Yes.

ZIEGLER: Originally?

BANFI: Yes.

ZIEGLER: You did mention to me once before some of the antecedents of the Staff Association, such as the 5:30 Group. You touched on this topic already. But is there anything else you'd like to add?

BANFI: Well, let me tell you what my perception was, as someone who, at that time, was fairly new to the Bank. And, as I mentioned before, at that time I was a little removed from the main complex, on the tenth floor of the G building. I used to come to this 5:30 Group, and I used to see a few faces.

ZIEGLER: You might just like to say what the 5:30 Group was.

BANFI: It was a group that met one day of the week at 5:30. At that time, we didn't have flexible schedules; the work day was 9-5:30. Immediately after work, this group used to meet in the newly inaugurated D building in one of those conference rooms on the fifth or sixth floors. A topic that was relevant to the work of the Bank--whether it was development, or the political implications of the activities of the Bank, or what have you--would be discussed. Normally there was a guest speaker who would be a senior staff member at the Bank. I recall, for instance, that [Dragoslav] Avramovic, a well-known senior economist at that time, delivered a talk on trade. Many people would gather there,

but it would be more or less the same group. A large number of participants in that group were young professionals--I will name them later on--who to me were the beginners or the founders of the Staff Association. I may be wrong. But this is my perception. Now, why do I say the 5:30 Group? The same people that I saw in that Group were the ones that were in on the beginning of the Staff Association. That's only a perception of mine; it may not be shared by others.

ZIEGLER: One point, Gabriel, that you didn't touch on, and again I want to make sure we have this clear, is the attitude of management toward the creation of the Staff Association. My reading of what other people have said is that management was far from being hostile to the creation; they actually were quite sympathetic and certainly didn't pose any obstacles to the creation of the Staff Association. They were generally in favor of the whole idea.

BANFI: This is again a question of perceptions. I think if I had come and asked my immediate supervisor the question directly, he would have said, "No, such an organization doesn't belong in the World Bank."

ZIEGLER: What was your workplace at that time?

BANFI: It was called Central Files, which was a division of the Administrative Services Department.

ZIEGLER: Your supervisor was Mr. [Harold E.] Dyer, right?

BANFI: Mr. Dyer was the Division Chief.

ZIEGLER: Okay.

BANFI: Yeah, and the same was true for any of them, for that matter. All I'm saying is that at what we'll call the middle level, there would have been concern about any talk of creating something that could have been perceived as a unionization of the employees. But I had no access to higher level management. But let me go back and say that in my workplace, the Staff Association was something that had to be talked about in a whisper at that time. We discussed it with a lot of apprehension and with a number of safeguards. We wouldn't let the word leak. This was an underground type of thing. However, it seems that at the higher levels, it was viewed as a genuine effort to create something that would be useful to the organization. I happened to share that view. I thought from the beginning that it would be something very useful.

But, you have to take into account that I was a grade five employee, very low. In fact, let me say--going back to the previous question—that I think I was the only General Services employee that ever went to the 5:30 Group and was interested in topics of trade and development at that time. I'm not saying that the Bank has changed and evolved in a way that attracts a different type of staff member. I don't know what the reason was. But as I said, going back to your question, my perception was that you had to be very careful

in your workplace talking about the Staff Association. And I had no access, as I said, to senior management.

ZIEGLER: In your work during the formation of the Staff Association and your work in the Constituent Assembly, what did you perceive to be the most difficult organizational issues for the creation of the Staff Association?

BANFL: Well, let me share with you the experience that I went through. In fact, I can picture the tenth floor of the G building where we had these personal talks and saying, "Well, we have to do something. Someday we have to get together and have the vote and send a representative that will speak for us." The most difficult part, as far as I'm concerned, was getting together. But all of a sudden--I don't remember the name of the director of Administrative Services.

ZIEGLER: Could it be [James E.] Twining?

BANFI: I think it was Twining. He had a brand new office in the G building, upper floors. I remember one afternoon when people from all the divisions of the Administrative Services Department were called to meet in his office. I remember sitting at a round table very similar to this, and we were some 8 or 10 or 12 people. There was some logic involved in singling out the people that would go there and get the news and bring it back. I was selected from the Records Management. I don't think it was called Records Management at that time. I think it was Central Files.

ZIEGLER: I remember: Records and Communications.

BANFI: Records and Communications. And probably Betty Luke--I'm not sure who--came to my desk and said, "Look, Gabriel. Mr. Dyer has said that you should go to Mr. Twining's office. They are going to have a meeting, and he wants you to go there and make a few notes and come back and discuss it."

ZIEGLER: Any idea why he singled you out?

BANFI: Well, this is what I'm saying. I played somewhat of a leadership role in the group. I say it in a very humble way, but I guess that perhaps I was a little more skillful in communications and the language than most of the others in my group, who were heavily Spanish speaking. It would be a little presumptuous for me to conjecture why they asked me to go. But I went. This is an important point. And I came back with the good news. And then we went on to have elections and so on and so forth. To me, the most difficult part was the time preceding that when we had discussed the idea and we had tried to keep it underground. We were scared.

ZIEGLER: Do you remember anything about that meeting with Mr. Twining or the Director of Administration? Did he just convey the information to you and then ask you to go back to your respective units and convey it? Or was it a real dialogue of any sort?

BANFI: Well, again I'm speaking from my perspective. Things that I had worked for had begun to materialize. This man was giving us good news about something in which I had been somewhat active. I had been recruiting people. I had been saying to others, "We have to join. We have to do something." And all of a sudden, this man calls us up . . .

I want to add another thought. I think it's the first time that I had been in the office of a director. This was a big thing. All of a sudden this guy is sitting with, as I said, 10 or 12 of us, all Print Shop workers and that type of people.

And there was a person there, a very articulate person from the Language Services Department at that time. I don't recall who it was. And the rest were the typical Special Services staff of that period. Some of them were speaking broken English. And all of a sudden the director was telling us, "You're going to have a voice." That's at least how we interpreted it. So it was a very pleasant, very unusual meeting. I don't recall whether he had some handouts, but we made some notes. He instructed us to go back to our respective units and call a meeting to tell all the employees that this association was going to be formed and that they should elect representatives and so on and so forth.

So, of course, when I came back, the first person I had to report to was the supervisor, who may have been, as I said, Betty Luke. She organized the next meeting in which I reported to people as best I could what had transpired.

ZIEGLER: That's very interesting. As we move on with the Staff Association's formation, from my research into this topic I understand there was some controversy regarding the nature of the Staff Association. There were some who viewed its proper role as that of a more union-type organization, that is to say, one with real bargaining power--almost a trade union-type, or at least a strong professional association, if you will, while others believed that it was more a consultative type organization--an entity to which management could go and say, "Well, we're contemplating this type of change. What do you, the staff, think of it?" Would you care to elaborate on this point?

BANFI: Yes, very much so. I think the differing views of the Staff Association's role were nothing but a reflection of what the Bank is. All those who participated in this thing brought to it their own backgrounds and frames of mind, if you will. In any meeting of the Staff Association, when we were getting underway, you had Europeans with very progressive views toward labor-management relationships. And you had Americans, who had a different historical background in regard to unions, at least during the period we are discussing. I don't want to mis-characterize this, but unions weren't viewed as something that could have a place in a bank or in an international organization.

ZIEGLER: Or perhaps in an organization that's largely professional.

BANFI: Precisely. That's what I meant to say. Then you had my perspective, which was one of a Latin American who saw a union as a very good chance to open up a bottom-up channel of communication. Here is a perfect example: I had never met a director in the Bank. Now by virtue of this thing, I was invited to his office. So that illustrates what I'm

saying. We had, or at least I had, the view that this was the only way to enable some idea to go from there to very high up. So it's true there were people that viewed this as an organization that was very close to management. Others saw it as what I think the Association is--an independent representative of the employee. And others saw it as a very confrontative type of thing where issues of labor-management relations were to be dealt with, perhaps through collective bargaining. I'm very happy to say that from the beginning, I foresaw what the Association came to be--a responsible organization that was to facilitate channels of communication and to operate independently of management.

The only thing that perhaps disappointed me at one time was the amount of participation by the members, the employees. But nevertheless, yes, there were different ideas of what this new thing was going to be. Some took a very radical view on both ends of the spectrum. Some of us had a more central position. And I think that's the one that prevailed.

There was a referendum, a vote that we took in the original Delegate Assembly, before the Constitution was adopted. I don't recall who introduced the resolution. But it was to form a union. And that . . .

ZIEGLER: A real . . .

BANFI: Union.

ZIEGLER: Almost a trade union.

BANFI: Right. And that was defeated, which gave . . .

ZIEGLER: That's interesting. So almost literally from the beginning, that element was manifested and was turned down by the Constituent Assembly.

BANFI: Precisely. I don't recall what the motion was called, but let's call it an amendment. I think it was introduced by a person who, in fact, did not favor a trade union form of organization. So the amendment was a sort of a political move, offered to precipitate the issue.

ZIEGLER: He wasn't necessarily in favor of the trade union approach. He just wanted to bring it out in the open.

BANFI: Precisely. And have it disposed of. I remember it was a man, but I can't recall who it was.

The Association met in the Board Room in the evenings at 5:30, I recall, and some of the meetings lasted until 8 p.m. I can recall the room, and I can see where the actors sat. And I can see this man getting up and reading his proposal, which was put to a vote, as I said, and defeated.

ZIEGLER: You say that was in one of the early meetings.

BANFI: One of the very early meetings. I don't know who gave us permission to meet in the Board Room. Then, as you well know, that meeting place was taken away. I don't know what's happening now. But we used to meet anywhere we could.

ZIEGLER: In the early days of the formation of the Staff Association did you come across any significant opposition from members of the staff itself in terms of setting up the Staff Association?

BANFI: Well, there was a group that opposed the creation. It was, I think, a legitimate point of view, and it was brought out in the open. That idea of disbanding this whole thing was introduced, was voted upon and defeated. And therefore, the Association decided to continue drafting the Constitution. Even earlier than that, before the first legitimate meeting of the Staff Association, you would mention to people that the Association was being formed and that it was important that they get acquainted with it and participate. Some people would dismiss it as a betrayal to what the Bank was. They'd say, "No. We don't want anything." So there were people, definitely, who were not in favor of it, and one group came in during the initial stages of the Association and articulated that idea in a way in which it could be put to a vote.

ZIEGLER: Did that group in the Constituent Assembly represent any particular constituency within the Bank? One of the things I recall is that IFC [International Finance Corporation] representatives had some serious reservation about the formation of the Staff Association and IFC's affiliation with it, I believe. Are these the people you're referring to? Or was this just another group?

BANFI: It could well have been that one. But I don't recall exactly. IFC had a lot of problems with the Association, if I may go into that. Ultimately it was a question of representation. At the end, after the Constitution was drafted and was almost in final form, they felt they had been treated just like a department of the Bank, and they didn't like that at all. They wanted the representation to be half and half, almost.

ZIEGLER: But you were saying earlier that the opposition that you perceived was a principled opposition. It was put forth from their perspective and even from yours. They had good reasons for their opposition.

BANFI: Oh, yes, yes. It was a very genuine, yes. I would think, perhaps, it was based on philosophical grounds. I don't know. But there were people that felt that no form of association belonged in the organization. And as I said, that viewpoint was presented in the Constituent Assembly.

ZIEGLER: There has always been the problem of melting together the apparently disparate interests of two distinct groups of staff, higher level and support level--called Professional staff and General Services staff at the time of the founding of the Staff

Association. Indeed, at that time, there was a third level. That was Special Services. How did the founders initially address this problem? And, in your view, how successfully has the Staff Association dealt with this problem over the years?

BANFI: It's difficult for me to answer that question because I don't recall that. I must have been with Special Services, because when it was created, I remember the levels G and F. I was made the lower of the two levels; I think it was G. There was an announcement—unilateral, nothing to do with Staff Association--by Mr. McNamara saying that there was this particular group that worked immediately below the professionals and that they should be recognized as such.

But let me go to a point that is interesting in the light of what we are discussing here. When we were talking about the forms of association, I would think that it would be fair to say that the more manual workers--namely the Print Shop workers, the chauffeurs we had here at that time and the messengers--were a little disappointed in the way the Association took shape. They wanted to see it organized a little more along the lines of, not necessarily a trade union, but, I hate to use these terms, a more radical type of thing. And when the Association was formed, there was a little bit of disappointment.

ZIEGLER: Well, radical but not hysterical. Let's put it that way.

BANFI: Yes, precisely. Within certain reasonable limits. And I recall being a member of a group that was chaired by a Dane called Sven Burmester . . .

ZIEGLER: Yes, Sven Burmester. Yes, that rings a bell.

BANFI: He eventually became assistant to the President, Robert McNamara. He, three others that I don't recall at this time and myself . . .

ZIEGLER: Did you mean Leif Christoffersen? It may not have been. You may be right. But I think Christoffersen was at least a member of the Constituent Assembly.

BANFI: Christoffersen was, yes.

ZIEGLER: Because you're thinking of somebody else.

BANFI: No, this is definitely Sven Burmester. They formed this working group. And it consisted of three others, Sven Burmester and myself. I recall going to a small eating place, where the Medical Department is now on the first floor of the A building, to meet with this constituency if you will, the mostly grades 1 and 2, as they were at that time. We were to try to assure them that the Association welcomed them, was going to work for their needs, and that they should feel themselves part of it. We drafted a working program, detailing what they wanted the Association to do for them and so on.

So this is part of what you're asking me here. There were definitely different interests. And these people felt that theirs were not going to be addressed. So we went down--I say

“down” because we met on the 11th or 12th floor of the A building--to the first floor and met with them. We drafted an agenda for this sub-group, if you will, which was meant to channel their expectations and attitudes into the mainstream of the Association. I think we were somewhat successful in maintaining the interest from this particular constituency. In fact, at one time, some General Services people said, “Okay, they have the Association. We're going to form our union.” But it didn't go beyond informal talk.

ZIEGLER: There've always been rumblings about that over the years. But I really do wonder how viable such a thing would be anyway.

BANFI: Yes. But there was an emotion expressed, put in words.

ZIEGLER: You have touched on the next question somewhat. But just briefly, who were some of the staff members who you remember as being most prominently associated with the establishment of the Staff Association? And if you recall, what were their contributions?

BANFI: Again, I want to emphasize who made an impact on me. I think Bengt Sandberg was one of them. Mats Hultin to me was a tremendous figure at that time. He was a man in his 40's, with a Swedish accent, who told us that he had been involved in this sort of thing in Lapland and in the coal mines. He made a tremendous impact. I saw them as the fathers of the Staff Association, those two Swede. Also, Stephen Eccles was very articulate, intelligent, in my opinion. Peter Greening was always to the point, very composed, and made an extremely good contribution. Jim [James] Chaffey perhaps took the reins of the thing.

ZIEGLER: He was Chairman.

BANFI: Chairman of the Constituent Assembly. And I think he was elected chairman of the first Executive Committee of the Association. Chris [Christopher R.] Willoughby was another contributor. I don't know . . .

ZIEGLER: It would have been early in his career. He's still in the Bank, of course, as head of EDI [Economic Development Institute] now.

BANFI: Yes. At that time, he was probably a YP [young professional] or just out of the YP program. Tony [Anthony A.] Churchill, again insofar as the drafting of the articles is concerned, was very, very articulate. Other persons that I recall were Ian Hume, Paula Valad, Tom [Thomas A.] Blinkhorn. All of them made an impact on me in the clear way in which they expressed their views, first in articulating the philosophy, or the scope, of the organization, and then in the drafting of the articles of the Constitution.

ZIEGLER: It's almost ironic that Ian Hume is now Director of Compensation in the Bank. I recall seeing his name in the early files several times . .

BANFI: Yes.

ZIEGLER: . . . introducing resolutions in the Constituent Assembly.

BANFI: Right. Another important person, and I'll tell you why later, is Bjorn Hansen, also Danish. He was very important, as far as I'm concerned. Sven Burmester, as I said before, was also in that group of founding fathers.

ZIEGLER: My next question involves something you've already spoken about. And if you think you've said what you have to say, that's fine. But what, specifically, induced you initially to join the Staff Association? You said you saw it as a channel of communications. But you got involved. You actually got in there and did something. Is there something about the way the idea was evolving that made you say, "Ah, yes, I want to join and participate in this?"

BANFI: Yes, in a very humble way, I felt it was a duty for me to do it. In informal conversations, my friends and I had discussed a lot of things that we wanted to see changed. Again, probably that's going to be a topic of our conversation. But, for one thing, there was no way to know about job openings in the Bank. The vacancy list did not come into being until five years down the road. We were concerned about how to move from one job to another job. And, as I said, I felt at that time that it was a duty for me to join. I felt that I was a little better equipped than many of the people that I interacted with, to make a contribution. And that's why I joined. That was the main reason I wanted to be part of it.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

ZIEGLER: You served on the 1975-1976 Executive Committee as Treasurer. The Chairman's report of the Staff Association's *Annual Report* for that year states, "The events of last year highlight the constraints of the present structure of the Staff Association and point to a need for a broad review of the aims and objectives of the Association in light of rapidly changing circumstances." Could you describe some of the events and circumstances that led to this conclusion? And would you say that the Staff Association has since remedied the conditions referred to here?

BANFI: Well, what I'm going to say here is to the best of my recollection. There were several reasons. I don't know whether I should say this for the record. But remember that 1975-1976 was either the [Richard M.] Nixon or the [Gerald R.] Ford Administration; Mr. [William E.] Simon was in the Treasury. When it came to our compensation package discussions he took--for the first time—a strong interest in what was happening in the Bank, and, in my opinion, he had a number of misconceptions about what the Bank was and what the levels of compensation were. At any rate, Mr. Simon's interest set into motion what I would characterize as an unpleasant course of events. To be more specific, this particular Executive Committee, 1975-1976, called the first referendum that was sort of confrontational. Then, we were the first to go out in the courtyard, put up loud speakers, have the five officers sit in front and conduct an open meeting--it was the way

things were done across the way in the IMF [International Monetary Fund]. We had been very subdued and very controlled and very nice in conducting our affairs. But then we became more, shall we say, political to counteract the activities at Treasury.

ZIEGLER: At the U.S. Treasury?

BANFI: The U.S. Treasury, that's right. There was a proposal by the Executive Director representing in the United States in the Bank to have, for the first time, differential compensation for professional and nonprofessional staff. We fought it to the end, and it was removed. The proposal put forward by the management to the E.D.'s [Executive Directors] was changed, I like to think, due to the persuasive arguments that we put forward. I remember Amir Al-Khafaji with Karin Nordlander and myself in the office of Mr. Reginald Clark and Eugenio Lari there and talking about these issues. We told them what the impact would be in terms of morale and that what they would save in wages would be paid in other ways. And that's perhaps what this statement is referring to that you're quoting from the Staff Association--this is in the *Annual Report*, I suppose.

ZIEGLER: Yes. This part of the Chairman's report, which is contained in the *Annual Report*.

BANFI: I think it's very legitimate, this suggestions of changing circumstances. Because it was a turning point. Up until then, the business of the Association vis-à-vis the management of the Bank was conducted in a very, shall we say, conciliatory way. This was the first mild confrontation. And that marked a change.

ZIEGLER: So the feeling was that the structure of the Staff Association--which may have been adequate to the previous, more civil form of dialogue with management--was no longer adequate to the needs of the new situation.

BANFI: Well, there's a two-part answer here. I thought the structure was adequate, because, in fact, we persuaded management on this issue. At least that's my perception. The outcome wasn't as bad as it could have been for the employees in terms of their compensation. But the second part of the answer is that immediately thereafter, a working group was formed to explore different types of associations to see how to strengthen the Staff Association. So, in that sense, you are quite correct. But in regard to the adequacy of the existing form at that time, I would think it was adequate. I think that we were very successful in doing what we did--in preventing this pay differential at that time. Eventually we did get a pay differential. But, at that time, we resisted it, and we succeeded. But there were many things that were a first for the Association. And that's why it has these [inaudible]

ZIEGLER: The second part of this question is whether you think that the Staff Association has since remedied the conditions alluded to in that quotation. In other words, I suppose I'm really asking whether you think that the Staff Association has successfully adapted to the change in circumstances?

BANFI: Well, I always have believed that the Association is nothing but a reflection of the attitudes of the members who are employees of the Bank. And I would like to think that the culture, as they call it, of the Bank has changed slightly--a reflection, perhaps, of how society has changed. Remember that the players here were people whose ideas were molded in the pre-Vietnam War era; they were people of the early '60s. And I'd like to think that the culture of the Bank is more mirroring the people of the '70s and '80s now. So, in that sense, I think that the Association was adequate to deal with what was at hand. And I always felt that if the Association had had more support from its members, meaning the staff at large, it would have been much more effective. But then, that is a different question altogether. How do you stir up some . . .

ZIEGLER: We'll be touching on that somewhat later. You mentioned compensation. Were there any other major issues that you recall during that term of office, 1975-1976?

BANFI: I'm glad you brought up that point, because I mentioned Bjorn Hansen before. I joined the Bank in 1968. And the Association began its work in a Bank where there were very few policies, at least written policies. I'm sure we're going to talk more about that.

Let me focus on the career development policy. There was a one Delegate Assembly created a special group that was to look into career development. Bjorn Hansen was appointed chairman of that group. And I can recall Percy Mistry, Promodh Malhuttra and myself being the members of this group in the very beginning. Its purpose was to discuss with the management of the Bank and at that time what was basically the Personnel Department, the need to have a number of policies written down. Those included policies for promotions, transfers, lateral transfers and so on and so forth--seven different areas, as I recall. And we set out to do this.

Now, this was a major undertaking and, I think, a very important one. I think people have never given enough credit to the Association for how much of a catalyst it has been in creating a better Bank. The Bank couldn't have survived, couldn't have entered into the '80s, without having completed all this work on policies. Eventually came the question of principles, which was more refined. But at that time, we had a personnel manual which simply consisted of three or four green pages. In the beginning, it was white, and then it was made green. Most of the policy said, "To be published."

ZIEGLER: "To be issued," yes.

BANFI: "To be issued." And there were a number of those things. I'm sure if you go through the records, you're going to see that everything was lacking. And the Association was the catalyst. And, in fact, in the case of career development, the Association was not only a catalyst, it was a tremendous help. The numbers of man hours that were invested in this was enormous. And I think we were extremely creative in suggesting things. And they were adopted by the Bank and included in the policies. I can mention Jim [H. James] Dyck, who I think still is in Personnel. He was one of the persons that operated on the side of the management. We had constant meetings. They would provide us with drafts,

and we would comment; the Association did a tremendous amount of work. The Association made a very worthwhile, a very important, impact in that.

So Bjorn Hansen to me is a very important person, not only in the Association, in the Bank. Because his aspiration, if you will, was turned into a very useful tool that is used today and will be in use for many years to come.

ZIEGLER: How would you characterize the relations of the Staff Association working groups with the Executive Committee and the Delegate Assembly? And what was the effectiveness of work that was done? That's a rather general question. Because obviously, even today, the effectiveness of the working groups varies enormously and even the types of work groups the Staff Association has at any given time is a reflection of what issues are going on. But putting this as a general question, how effective, generally speaking, was the institution of the working group?

BANFI: Let me start by finishing what I said before in regard to the constitutional crisis that we faced. This particular working group on career development was created by the Delegate Assembly. I think it was formed during the Al-Khafaji administration, 1975-1976. At that time, I was wearing the other hat in the Executive Committee as Treasurer. The career development group refused to give reports to the Executive Committee. The group had been created by a resolution of the Delegate Assembly, and the group felt that it should report only to the Delegate Assembly. There was a give-and-take, and it lasted for a long time. So this was the crisis. Then, a policy was developed within the Association, and this particular career development group was persuaded to adhere to this new policy. The policy basically stated that all working groups were to report to the Executive Committee.

Going back to the question at hand: I think from the beginning, there were some working groups, as you mentioned, that were more effective than others. I recall with a great deal of pleasure my own work with the working groups. I remember other groups which had a very strong constituency and very clear defined goals. The education group, which was chaired at one time by Peter Greening, had very clearly defined purposes and operated very effectively. Another I recall was chaired by Franco Ruberl, another old timer.

ZIEGLER: I remember him.

BANFI: He was always concerned with travel policy. I think that group was very effective in clarifying certain policies, in being the catalyst and in getting these policies written and well explained and well thought out. In general, to answer your question, I think the Association couldn't have operated otherwise. That is to say, the working groups were an integral part of it. Some of them were very useful. Perhaps because of the constituency that they served, some weren't as active as others. But, in general, I think the working groups were very important. And I think they have remained very important and continue to serve as the grassroots contact. I don't know whether I answered your question there . . .

ZIEGLER: Yes, I think so.

BANFI: It's a very difficult question. But I have a firm conviction that if you are going to have an association that's going to serve as a channel of communication, you must have these working groups.

ZIEGLER: Also, the working groups are the ones that really do the spade work.

BANFI: That's right.

ZIEGLER: I mean, the fundamental work that has to be done, which frankly the Executive Committee cannot undertake, nor can the Delegate Assembly. It's just simply not possible.

BANFI: That's right. That's right. I agree.

ZIEGLER: In 1982-1983 you again served on the Executive Committee, this time as Second Vice Chairman. The job grading exercise began around this period, although it would not end for some time. How did the Staff Association see job grading in the early stages?

BANFI: You know, I was an advocate of--and I think in general this was the attitude in the beginning--of ignoring this thing. We knew what it was. We knew what it was going to lead to. And if we wanted to preserve the good name of the Association I felt we should stay clear.

ZIEGLER: This being because it was almost a no-win situation?

BANFI: That's right. Politically it was the thing to do, to stay away, for the reasons I just stated. But eventually, the consensus changed. Because job grading was such a major activity in the Bank, it was a little irresponsible for the Association to play wise kid. So the Association took a position and got seriously involved, but always, with very critical views not only of the substance of the actions, but also the form. During my year the first six months of my year in office, we tried to ignore it and look the other way and say, "This is the Bank's baby. The Association is in no way part of it. And if something goes wrong don't blame us. It's theirs." But then, the consensus seemed to become that it would be irresponsible to stay on the sidelines.

ZIEGLER: It's always a difficult decision whether to become involved, especially in the case of very crucial and wide-ranging institutional changes. The general feeling seems to be that staff is going to come out on the short end. And if the Staff Association participates, even though they may have ameliorated the potential bad effects, the staff is going to say, "Well, the Staff Association was involved in it. And therefore, it's at least partially their fault that this thing is all screwed up now."

BANFI: Yes, true.

ZIEGLER: We've seen this before.

BANFI: Well, now that you mention it, the 1975-1976 Executive Committee, in which I participated, was the beginning of the F/I. as it was called. And in my opinion, in that particular thing, the Association got burned.

Mind you, this was after a very successful exercise chaired by Gillian Kaplan on the general services and the secretarial staff. I should say, with pride, that I was the only nonsecretarial person that participated. And I think that we were tremendously successful in creating three new job streams and resolving a number of problems that existed at that time. There were a few people who were dissatisfied with the results, but by and large, the great majority of the secretarial staff saw it as a positive result.

Then, immediately after that, comes the so-called [Hans C.] Hittmair Report on F/I, which was the Special Services group in between professionals and non-professionals. The Association jumped on the bandwagon, immediately criticizing the report, reacting very harshly to its views. Also, the way we accused the management of producing a report that was unsound and very poor in quality type is ironic, because I have great respect for Hans Hittmair. I happened to get to know him better afterwards, and I have a great respect and admiration for him. But at that time, I remember a meeting in which I was extremely harsh and I sort of blamed him personally for the report, which, of course, was named the Hittmair Report.

But we reacted to that and persuaded management to conduct surveys. I remember working many hours collating the results. And the end result was that any changes would be to the detriment of those who were in the Special Services categories. So we had that experience. And then comes this job grading, and my reaction was, "Here it comes again. We ought to learn by our mistakes. Let's not get involved. We know what is going to happen." But as I mentioned before, if we were elected to the Association, we could not stay on the sidelines for too long.

ZIEGLER: Another issue was a revised reward system, which was introduced into the salary process at this time and which still exists to this day. How extensively was the Staff Association consulted on this matter? And how was it perceived?

BANFI: Well, I recall the beginning of that. I don't think it was established that very year. I think it may have been the following year. You're talking about this matrix.

ZIEGLER: Yes, right, right.

BANFI: To the best of my recollection, that system was instituted with less consultation with the Staff Association than had been the case with many other things previously. And I remember when this thing was shown to us for the first time. First of all, in issues like these we always call for parallelism.

ZIEGLER: You mean with the Fund?

BANFI: With the Fund. And then we said, “The Fund is not doing this kind of thing. We don't want it.” And then we argued that this was going to lead to favoritism and that the middle management of the Bank wasn't capable of administering it in a fair way, I think. We had a lot of concerns about it. But it was presented as a take it or leave it proposition, and the Bank was going to go ahead regardless of our response. But I didn't learn about this thing, the matrix, until very late in the stages of its preparation. So I don't think I can contribute much in answer to that question.

ZIEGLER: During that 1982-1983 term there seems to have been a problem with the hiring of consultants, to the extent that guidelines for hiring consultants were formulated. Could you shed some light on this episode?

BANFI: Here I don't recall anything at all.

ZIEGLER: How would you contrast the workings of the Staff Association in general and the Executive Committee in particular during this period, that is to say 1982-1983, with the 1975-1976 term? Do you perceive any evolution in the Staff Association for better or worse? The Staff Association was still relatively young during your first term on the EC? And then, of course, by 1982-1983 the Association had a chance to settle in a bit more. So I'd be interested in whether, having served on two Executive Committees that were several years apart, you might have perceived something to be different?

BANFI: Yes, indeed. First of all, I think the Association was different and the management was different. And as I mentioned before, to me, 1975-1976 marked a change in the Association.

ZIEGLER: A watershed, essentially.

BANFI: Right. Then later on, I think the [Nicolas M.] Gorjestani administration also caused profound changes in the Association. So when I came in during [Lucien E.] Moreau's administration, as Second Vice Chairman along with [Damian] van Stauffenberg as First Vice Chairman, my perception is that it was a very cohesive group. It worked well within the Association. The Association, the organization, was different. And also our counterparts, meaning the management, were different.

ZIEGLER: There was a new President of the Bank, a different President.

BANFI: A different President, precisely. Precisely. And I recall certain things . . . Indeed, the leaving of Mr. McNamara and the coming of Mr. . . .

ZIEGLER: [Alden Winship] Clausen.

BANFI: Clausen was a great change. I recall a meeting that we had regarding a misunderstanding, if you will, on the snow days policy. We went to the office of Mr.

Clausen to discuss this thing. And I saw, for the first time, a President of the Bank losing his temper and shouting at one of the staff members. I had met with a group of Staff Association members on three or four occasions with Mr. McNamara. Those were very efficient, very to-the-point meetings, finishing in exactly one hour to the second. And point after point was made with very little opinion given. But it was a completely new thing to me to enter the office of the President of the Bank and see him being upset about the . . .

ZIEGLER: This was the first time you'd met Clausen?

BANFI: First or second. It may have been the first meeting.

ZIEGLER: Do you recall the particular point over which he was upset?

BANFI: It was about this snow day. It's the only case that I can recall in the Bank where nobody knew whether the Bank was open or closed. And people who didn't get to work were going to be docked for . . . I don't know whether that term is clear.

ZIEGLER: A day of leave.

BANFI: Yeah, half a day's leave. And then there was a lot of turmoil about it. Some people felt that it was very unfair because the Government offices had closed that morning, but the Bank was open, something of that nature. And, in essence, Mr. Clausen took the position that we were a bunch of wimps that couldn't walk in the snow. He was upset about it, and he let us know. To me that was a change. But, in substance, I think that management had a perception of the Staff Association at this time, and this particular thing was more of a bother--something they had to deal with that they'd prefer not to. Whereas in 1975 and 1976 we had good discussions, spirited discussions with management. But nevertheless, I think there was always the feeling that we needed each other, and it was a useful exchange of ideas or something that was going to lead to a useful product. Whereas I felt in this second Executive Committee . . . What was it? 1982-1983?

ZIEGLER: Yes.

BANFI: . . . that the feeling was there on the part of management that, "Gee, I wish I didn't have to deal with you. I could carry out my duties without your participation."

ZIEGLER: Well, I think Mr. Clausen kind of set the tone. He came to the Bank during the administration before yours. And he essentially said to the Executive Committee at their meeting that if the Bank were a well-run institution, it could do without you guys. Essentially he did not see the purpose of the Staff Association in an institution like the Bank and didn't think very highly of the Staff Association at all.

BANFI: Right.

ZIEGLER: Maybe he came around a little bit later but clearly not during the time you were in office. I dare say Mr. Clausen at the top set the tone for his managers pretty much down the line.

BANFI: Yes. Very possibly.

ZIEGLER: They weren't stupid about it. They could read what was going on.

BANFI: Yes, that's possible. But I felt that way. Let me bring up an anecdote connected with the F/I Working Group. The few days before Mr. Clausen took office he visited the Bank. That must have been during the last days of June 1980. And as I recall, we had a sit-in, in the courtyard the day Mr. Clausen visited. So he came into this with his background from the Bank of America in San Francisco. I don't think he ever expected international civil servants to stage a sit-in or work stoppage of whatever kind. So he was greeted with that, and probably that set the stage for his attitude.

But again, I come back to the specific question you asked me. The Bank was different. I think the Association was different. Remember that we were a dues-supported organization.

ZIEGLER: The Association had introduced dues since your previous term.

BANFI: That occurred in the Gorjestani or the [Spiros T.] Voyadzis administration, 1978-1979, around there. So it was different. No doubt about it.

ZIEGLER: And you pretty much answered the next question I had in mind which was relations with management. That came through pretty clearly in your answer, too, that management had a much different view of the Staff Association during your second term in 1982-1983 than it did in 1975-1976. During the latter term, they barely tolerated you, I suppose you could say.

BANFI: Yes, I think that's a fair statement. I recall one meeting in one of these buildings in the esplanade at the Administrative Services Department. I think Mr. [William J.] Cosgrove was the director of that department at that time, the present Vice President of Personnel. The issue at hand was the creation of the security force. We learned through a very, shall we say, low-key memo that this group of five security people had been hired by the Bank. We had several complaints. I don't think it's necessary to go over them at this time. But we met across the table, if you will, and for whatever reason, the three or four Staff Association representatives that went to discuss this topic went to this building.

We all sat on one side of the table. And Mr. Cosgrove and his aides were sitting on the other side. Mr. Cosgrove I believe had to leave; he was called to the phone. Then the discussion was left to those remaining. He had some assistant directors who were brand new. And then this gentleman, who I think is head of the Security Division in the Bank . . .

ZIEGLER: Bob [Robert F.] Townsend.

BANFI: Townsend, yes. He introduced himself. And we discussed this thing. And we had a very, very different attitude. The Staff Association side was mainly--I don't recall exactly. I remember Damian von Stauffenberg sitting next to me. And we were, shall we say, old timers. We had been in the Bank several years, as opposed to all the people on the other side who were brand new people. I don't even recall their names. I think the assistant director was one that had a very short tenure. He left in about eleven months.

ZIEGLER: Oh, Gus [August] Klovan. Yes, I remember.

BANFI: Eleven months, you see. And this gentleman Townsend was brand new to the Bank. We had two serious allegations. One was regarding the person who had been followed on the streets of Washington, D.C., to his home because he was suspected of something.

ZIEGLER: Followed by the security forces?

BANFI: By security forces. And then there was another case in which a woman was reprimanded for giving her views during an open meeting. The woman came up to the microphone. I don't recall whether she asked a question or made some remarks. Then, when she went back to the office, the division chief called her into his office and told her in no uncertain terms that this was the last time he was going to tolerate such behavior. So these were the two instances that we were concerned about.

And so we discussed it with management. By contract, I like to recall the atmosphere of the Bank, when McNamara used to walk alone from his home in Kalorama Street. I mean, with not even a friend next to him. Forget bodyguards. I used to come before eight o'clock and I used to meet him, 20 minutes to 8 walking down 19th Street. I'd say, "Good morning." I would bow my head. He didn't know me. I knew him. And no big deal about it.

ZIEGLER: Sometimes he'd even take his limousine. I remember seeing him come to the Bank in his limousine. But sometimes he would just walk.

BANFI: He would just walk. Sometimes he would walk with a friend or an employee of the Bank, a staff member, who he knew. I used to walk to the I building, and I would run into him, as I said. But nevertheless, the Bank was a free society, if you will. And all of a sudden we were confronted with people who were followed home and with somebody informing the division chief about a woman who aired her views openly. We thought that those were grave violations of this atmosphere. And I guess our backgrounds were showing there. I'm talking about von Stauffenberg, who I would consider a very extraordinary person and very down to earth in regard to civil and human rights.

And then there's my case. I happen to be Chilean, and there were all of these unfortunate events that happened in my country, and the allegations of violations of human rights. And then here in the Bank, in this oasis of freedom, if you will, all of a sudden people are

suspected of something and followed home in a very shadowy . . . I mean, I thought it was a betrayal of everything we stood for.

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

BANFI: So we had this discussion. And the final and important part of the anecdote is that these people sat across the table from us, and they looked at us as if we weren't reasonable people. Nothing of what we said seemed to make sense to them.

ZIEGLER: They have different mindsets, perhaps.

BANFI: Totally. Totally. And that, in my opinion, answers your question. We were a different Staff Association and there was a different Bank.

ZIEGLER: But you wouldn't say it was necessarily a better Bank.

BANFI: Well, I would have considered that the change was for the worse. But this is my personal viewpoint.

ZIEGLER: In your terms of office, well, let's preface this question a little bit. This is not only an oral history, which indeed it is or at least I hope it is, but it's supposed to be also a resource for the future. In other words, how--just as any history properly done I think should be--how did one predecessors deal with issues that confronted them. And this isn't to say that it's a rigid blueprint or framework arranging but sort of a general guide or instruction such as perhaps a favorite uncle could offer you in the problems of life if you will. So when you answer this you kind of look to the future as well as just kind of recounting specifically what happened. What sort of negotiating tactics and strategy did you use with management? Now, of course, you say that '75-'76 was considerably different from '82-'83. So this may have indicated a two part answer. But what did you find successful in, and unsuccessful, in your relations with management in terms of talking with them, negotiating, dealing with the issues.

BANFI: Are you asking me to answer that from my own experience or from the perspective of the staff Association?

ZIEGLER: From your perception of what the Staff Association did.

BANFI: Well, I think that the way I understand the definition of "strategy" is that it is the use of tactics.

ZIEGLER: Well, did you have an overall approach?

BANFI: Yes.

ZIEGLER: When I say strategy I mean did the Executive Committee at any particular time--not even for the whole year, but, say, on a particular issue--sit down and say, "Okay, guys, how are we going to deal with this issue or set of issues?" That way, we'll get into a discussion of some coherent whole, whereas focusing only on tactics would keep us, perhaps a somewhat lower level of: "All right now, here's a particular issue on a particular day. What are we going to do here and now?" That's the distinction I'm trying to draw here.

BANFI: I think it would be a little presumptuous to think that we had a tactic. And I think the tactics developed as needed. But I think the tone was set by the Chairman. The Chairman had a modus operandi, if you will. And, in my experience, I would say that Amir Al-Khafaji was a very well organized individual when he conducted the discussion with management. In fact, in that particular E.C., in the very beginning of the organizational meetings, it was decided that in any contact with management, the Staff Association could send five officers. So any of them could attend. There were some meetings in which Mr. McNamara or perhaps the Vice President of Personnel at that time
...

ZIEGLER: [Martijn J.W.M.] Paijmans?

BANFI: No, no, before him. French.

ZIEGLER: Oh, [Bernard] Chadenet.

BANFI: Chadenet would invite him specifically, individually. And Al-Khafaji would go alone. But in most of the other meetings, two, three, four, or even the five officers went together--meaning the Chairman, the two Vice Chairmen and the Secretary and Treasurer. And Gottfried Ablasser or Karin Nordlander and Norman McMillan. Any one of us would go. Mostly the spokesman for the Association was Amir Al-Khafaji. He would request information from the others. But I think, in general, he set a tone, which was to appeal to the need for cooperation.

And let me again touch on one of the earlier questions regarding why we're so different. This Executive Committee, Al-Khafaji's Executive Committee, was unique in that in the compensation thing it went for the benefits that would benefit the most. Because, at that time, there was the beginning of this question of expatriate vis-à-vis Americans. So we decided there, for instance, to go for a reduction. It was a substantial reduction in the contribution we made to the Medical Insurance Plan. And I think it still remains the same. The Bank used to pay half, and we persuaded the Bank that a good benefit would be for it to pay two-thirds. The other thing was that the benefit translated into actual money, and it benefitted all, whether they were General Services, Special Services, expatriates, Americans and so forth. We agreed to changes in the leave policy. We went up to 25, 27, 30, I think it is, days of vacation. We exchanged some snow days; we made them into annual leave. Before that, you had snow days.

ZIEGLER: I remember you could get a day off if you got married or if you were mourning.

BANFI: All those things.

ZIEGLER: Right. And they simply, as I remember, increased the amount of annual leave.

BANFI: Yes, that's right. But all these things were changed. Al-Khafaji set a tone where we constantly advocated cooperation. Don't get the impression that this was that easy. To try to persuade Reginald Clarke in matters of compensation--whether it would be 5.6 or 5.8 percent or that there should be no differential--it wasn't easy. But nevertheless, the key word was it would be best for all concerned, the staff and the organization. As opposed to the 1972 . . .

ZIEGLER: You mean 1975?

BANFI: 1982-1983.

ZIEGLER: The first one was 1982, well, 1975-1976.

BANFI: Al-Khafaji, and Luc Moreau was 1982. That administration also set the tone. But it was more delegation. I remember, for instance, going in as a representative of the Staff Association with I don't know who else, to talk to Mr. Paijmans about the famous snow day. I was sent to do this thing. I don't know why Luc or the First Vice Chairman, who was Damian von Stauffenberg, didn't go. This then went on to another meeting. I remember [Rolando R.] Arrivillaga discussing in the Clausen setting. But it was a different thing in the sense that, for the reasons I mentioned earlier, the situation was more confrontational. To say the least, it was much more unpleasant to be in the Executive Committee of the Staff Association discussing matters with the management. And insofar as tactics . . .

I feel that in the case of job grading we stood on the sidelines for a long time. And then we went in to react to what we thought were outrageous positions that the Bank had taken. So, at that time, I think tactics were totally absent. We discussed, we prepared ourselves in the E.C. meetings and went out there to do the best we could. And I felt my tenure took place under very adverse conditions. I think that the support of the staff at large had eroded by that time to very dangerous levels. In fact, we were undertaking a tremendous effort to regain the support of the staff.

In fact, one confrontational point of view that I advocated was having this newsletter. Management was not pleased by the fact that we eventually got out this newsletter and published 2 or three issues. I remember they reacted very strongly to a cartoon where we had a manager stabbing somebody in the back or something like that; it was confrontational. And I think it is not adequate to simply talk in terms of tactics. I think we

were more reacting to what was in front of us and trying to do the best job possible under the circumstances.

ZIEGLER: So you'd say management was taking initiatives in various areas vis-à-vis staff. And the Staff Association was often hard put to react to them.

BANFI: Right. And a good illustration is the one you mentioned in regard to compensation, the inclusion of the matrix. A lot of work had already been done without consulting us. We were presented with something very advanced.

ZIEGLER: Another question, and here again you might like to draw distinctions between your two separate terms on the E.C., is the mobilizing of staff support. I noted you said that in 1982-1983 you felt the staff support had eroded to very dangerous levels. And, again, it's something that the Staff Association needs to keep in mind at all times.

BANFI: Yeah, the contrast is, I personally felt and I think all the leadership of the Staff Association felt, that there was strong support in 1975-1976. In fact, in the famous gathering, the first one in the courtyard, we felt it was a first, and we were extremely apprehensive about what was going to happen with these activities. And yet, when we appeared in the courtyard we had the support of all; there were two or three that spoke against what we were doing. And we may have been called radicals for doing what we had done. But you could sense that the majority of the people were behind you. Whereas in 1982-1983, the tremendous difference is that you felt that you were acting in a desperate, last minute effort to protect the interest of a very small group that was your last support, if you will. We felt we could not let them go down the drain. We had to go and show our faces on their behalf, but with very, very little support. Very little support. It was a very fragmented situation.

ZIEGLER: Was there anything, in particular, you tried to do to mobilize staff? You mentioned, for instance, that newsletter which was, as I recall, named "Staff Matters."

BANFI: Right.

ZIEGLER: Aside from something like that, was there, during either term, any conscious effort to mobilize staff support that you recall?

BANFI: Well, that came to a final realization, no. The only thing during the term that we came out with was two or three issues of this newsletter, and it took a long, long time. Then, as I understand, it faded, disappeared. Many of the things went beyond the length of the term. And among those things was the strengthening of the Staff Association by reviving, if you will, or perhaps incorporating new ideas into the structure of the Association. One thing we were concerned with was continuity. Another thing was stirring up more interest through these avenues. But they needed so much work, preparation of documents and what have you. And at that time, we were so busy with job grading and the second part of that. Then came the new . . .

ZIEGLER: Compensation?

BANFI: Compensation. Then came the PPR [Performance, Planning and Review], too. I remember the PPR and how it changed. There were so many changes at a time when we were so busy, and we had litigation in that year, too. We had funds, and we hired a law firm to litigate a case in the [Administrative] Tribunal. So it was extremely busy. And, all of a sudden it was May or June, whenever the term was over. And we hadn't finished that much.

ZIEGLER: Time flies when you're having fun, right?

BANFI: Precisely.

ZIEGLER: The last question I have is, in your view, what is the appropriate role for the Staff Association at the Bank?

BANFI: Well, I think it's the one that it set out to do in the beginning. It's a channel of communication. But it has to be truthful. It has to be strong. It has to be genuine, and it has to be articulate. Let me go further into this. When I say truthful, it has to be representing the staff, the largest number of people. It cannot be centered on the special interest groups. It must be clear to management that these are not the ideas of a group of ten people that meets three times a week or two times a week in the executive room of the Staff Association, but that these are the ideas of the staff articulated for practical reasons by this small group. They are the spokesmen. They are the spokespersons for the aspirations of the staff at large. And for that reason the Association has to be forceful. It has to convey to management the idea that these are things that are really on the minds of these people.

But mainly, it is a channel of communication that is able to dialogue and persuade, clearly showing that the decisions to be made will be in the best interest of the organization and its parts, including management on the one side and staff on the other. But, you know, what I'd like to convey in answer to your question is that neither the Association nor its spokesperson should be in any way reluctant to express these views forcefully. Because they are not his or her own views. They are the result of an elaborate chain of communication with many links, and the spokesperson is only the mouthpiece, if you will. And I think it's important to convey the importance of adopting, in some measure, the proposals, the ideas, or at least to give it serious thought and discussion. Because I think it's an integral part of a healthy organization that you hear from the bottom up. Not everything has to flow in one direction, namely from the top down.

ZIEGLER: Well, is there anything else that you'd like to discuss that we've not covered here?

BANFI: Oh, very little. Mainly that I would like to see the Association last as long as the World Bank Group. And that it should always play an important role in making this organization a stronger and better one by allowing the staff to speak up, if you will, as I

mentioned before. And that in order to do that, any human organization must adapt to the dynamic process and it has to change constantly, always having as a goal to become a better organization.

Much as I talk of the contribution of the Staff Association to making a better World Bank, there also should be a great deal of concern about making the Staff Association a better association. And, in that respect, I think that perhaps it is time to look into the actual structure of the Association, into whether it could be strengthened by changing the way elections are carried out or the participation of Delegates or whatever. There are so many ideas that have been kicked around. But because of lack of time, they have been put on the back burner. Maybe it's time to bring them up front and work on them and strengthen the Association in order to keep pace with this concept of a dynamic organization.

And I firmly believe that that will pay dividends that will help the organization. The World Bank will be a better place not only to work, but it could perform its purpose in a better way. I have no illusions. I know what the Bank is. And I'm from the Third World. I know what the Bank's role is, but, for whatever reason, I'm convinced that if the Bank is able to attract and retain good staff, it is going to do a better job of achieving the purpose for which it was created. And the Staff Association has a role to play in that.

ZIEGLER: Well, thank you very much for joining me here today, Gabriel. I found your comments and answers to be most thoughtful and enlightening. This is a really valuable contribution to our collection of oral histories. Thank you, very much.

BANFI: Thank you, Chuck. It was a pleasure to be here.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[End of interview]