

CBC TUESDAY NIGHT  
“SINGLE FORM: A MEMORIAL  
TO DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD”  
CBL/CBC: TBA

SCRIPT: George Whalley  
[Radio 20 September 1966]  
PRODUCTION: Unknown

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*SOUND: THE VOICE OF HAMMAR (A) SPEAKS OVER THE AIRCRAFT NOISE WHICH IS THEN FADED TO A LOWER LEVEL TO HEIGHTEN THE INTERNALITY OF HAMMARSKJÖLD'S SPEECH.*

PILOT: Salisbury tower from Sierra/Delta/Yankee calling Salisbury.

CONTROL: Go ahead SDY.

PILOT: SDY abeam Kasama 06 – Estimate abeam Ndola 47 Flight level 175.  
Request descent to flight level 160.

CONTROL: Stand by one.

HAMMAR(A): I don't know Who – or what – put the question, I don't know when it was put. I don't even remember answering. But at some moment I did answer *Yes* to Someone – or Something – and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, therefore, my life, in self-surrender, had a goal.<sup>1</sup>

CONTROL: SDY. Nil traffic at flight level 160.

PILOT: Roger check.

HAMMAR(A): From that moment I have known what it means “not to look back,” and “to take no thought for the morrow.”

CONTROL: SDY. What are your intentions on arrival Ndola?

PILOT: We are keeping outside Congolese territory proceeding around the border to Ndola to land at Ndola.

CONTROL: What is your destination on departure Ndola?

PILOT: Unable to say at present. Out.

HAMMAR(A): Led by the Ariadne's thread of my answer through the labyrinth of life, I came to a time and place where I realised that the Way leads to a triumph which is a catastrophe, and to a catastrophe which is a triumph, that the price for committing one's life would be reproach, and that the only revelation possible to man lies in the depths of humiliation.

PILOT: Salisbury tower – SDY now level at 160.

CONTROL: Roger understand reached 160. Time now 2139. Contact Ndola 119.1.

PILOT: Roger, changing 119.1.

HAMMAR(A): The word "courage" lost its meaning after that, since nothing could be taken from me.

PILOT: Ndola tower from Sierra/Delta/Yankee – Estimate abeam Ndola at 47, Ndola in 20.

CONTROL: Roger, confirm ETA Ndola in 20, or at 2220.

PILOT: 2220.

CONTROL: Ndola weather wind 120 at 7. Visibility 5 to 10 miles with slight smoke haze. At what time do you wish to start descent?

PILOT: Request descent clearance at 57.

CONTROL: Roger, clear to descend and maintain 6000.

HAMMAR(A): Have mercy  
Upon us.  
Have mercy  
Upon our efforts,  
That we  
Before Thee,  
In love and in faith,  
Righteousness and humility,  
May follow Thee  
With self-denial, steadfastness and courage,  
And meet Thee  
In the silence.

PILOT: 2210. Your lights in sight. Overhead Ndola, descending.

CONTROL: Roger, report reaching 6000.

PILOT: Roger.

*SOUND: (THE SOUND OF THE AIRCRAFT FADES AS THOUGH WE NOW HEAR THEM FROM GROUND CONTROL RATHER THAN FROM THE AIRCRAFT ITSELF. WHILE THERE IS STILL A SMALL SOUND OF THE ENGINES -)*

CONTROL: SDY – How do you read?

*SOUND: (THE FAINT SOUND CONTINUES BEYOND THE VOICE, THEN IS LOST. SHORT COMPLETE SILENCE.)*

CONTROL: SDY – How do you read? How do you read?

(SILENCE)

Calling SDY – How do you read? How do you read me, SDY?

(SILENCE)

*MUSIC: Cue 1*

NARRATOR: Dag Hammarskjöld was born into a Swedish aristocratic family. From the very beginning he was brilliantly successful at everything he took in hand – at school and university, as a lecturer, as a civil servant and government administrator, as economist and banker, as diplomat, as a member of the Swedish cabinet. In March 1953, when he was almost entirely unknown outside his own country, he was chosen to succeed Trygve Lie as Secretary-General of the United Nations. Five years later he was elected to a second five-year term of office. In September 1961, when he had almost two years still to serve and was on his way to intervene in the dispute on the Congo, his aircraft crashed near Ndola and he was killed. After his death, there was found in his house in New York the manuscript of a sort of diary – and with the manuscript an undated letter addressed to his friend Leif Belfrage.

HAMMAR(A): Dear Leif. Perhaps you may remember I once told you that, in spite of everything, I kept a diary which I wanted you to take charge of some day. Here it is.

It was begun without a thought of anybody else reading it. But, what with my later history and all that has been said and written about me, the situation has changed. These entries provide the only true ‘profile’ that can be drawn. That is why, during recent years, I have reckoned with the possibility of publication, though I have continued to write for myself, not for the public.

If you find them worth publishing, you have my permission to do so – as a sort of ‘White Book’ concerning my negotiations with myself – and with God. DAG.

NARRATOR: Leif Belfrage arranged for the diary to be published at once in Swedish, and in 1964 an English translation prepared by Leif Sjöberg and W.H. Auden was published in London.

COMMENTATOR: Whether it is, as Hammarskjöld claimed, “the only true profile” of the man may be questioned; but it is our only account of his inner life – the inner life of a man intensely solitary and courageous, a man arduous and imaginative service in the cause of peace kept him for almost ten years continuously and pitilessly in the eye of the whole world. The most striking thing about the diary is that it now contains no direct reference to his work as an international servant or to any of the momentous crises and conflicts in which, as Secretary-General of the United Nations, he played so distinguished and decisive a role. But it shows, not a second Hammarskjöld but the Servant of Peace in an unexpected dimension.

What was he like? “– that most rare of persons in human affairs –” one friend has said: “A man of true inner greatness in a position of high leadership. His interests were as wide-ranging as those of a man of the Renaissance: his sympathies for the human predicament drew their

inspiration straight from the ethics of the Gospels; his courage was that of the mediaeval mystics ....”

HAMMAR(A): The world in which I grew up was dominated by principles and ideals of a time far from ours and, as it may seem, far removed from the problems facing a man of the middle of the twentieth century. However, my way has not meant a departure from those ideals. On the contrary, I have been led to an understanding of their validity also for our world of today.....<sup>2</sup>

From generations of soldiers and government officials on my father’s side I inherited a belief that no life was more satisfactory than one of selfless service to your country – or humanity. This service required a sacrifice of all personal interests, but likewise the courage to stand up unflinchingly for your convictions.

From scholars and clergymen on my mother’s side I inherited a belief that, in the very radical sense of the Gospels, all men were equals as children of God, and should be met and treated by us as our masters in God.....

But the explanation of how man should live a life of active social service in full harmony with himself as a member of the community of the spirit, I found in the writings of those great mediaeval mystics for whom “self-surrender” had been the way to self-realization, and who in “singleness of mind” and “inwardness” had found strength to say *yes* to every demand which the needs of their neighbours made them face, and to say *yes* also to every fate life had in store for them when they followed the call of duty, as they understood it.<sup>3</sup>

COMMENTATOR: The man of public service and the man of the private journal are the same man; but the journal shows – below the level voice and studied manner of the impassive public figure – powerful tensions and unresolved conflict.

HAMMAR(A):                   What makes loneliness an anguish  
                                          Is not that I have no one to share my burden,

But this:

I have only my own burden to bear.

Incapable of being blinded by desire,

Feeling I have no right to intrude upon another,

Afraid of exposing my own nakedness,

Demanding complete accord as a condition for a life together:

How could things have gone otherwise?

Fatigue dulls the pain, but awakes enticing thoughts of death. So, *that* is the way in which you are tempted to overcome your loneliness – by making the ultimate escape from life. – No! It may be that death is to be your ultimate gift to life: it must not be an act of treachery against it. Pray that your loneliness may spur you into finding something to live for, great enough to die for. In our era, the road to holiness necessarily passes through the world of action.

NARRATOR: When W.H. Auden had finished his translation of the epigrams, reflections, and poems called *Markings*, he set down in his Preface to the book a personal record –

COMMENTATOR: My own testimony is unimportant but I want to give it. Brief and infrequent as our meetings were, I loved the man from the moment I saw him. His knowledge and understanding of poetry, the only field in which I am competent to judge the quality of his mind, were extraordinary, and, presumptuous as it sounds, I felt certain of a mutual sympathy between us, of an unexpressed dialogue beneath our casual conversation. The loneliness and the religious concern which his diary records, I sensed; indeed, I think the only two things which, while translating it, came as a real surprise, were his familiarity with the Anglican Psalter, and his fascination with the *Haiku* as a poetic form<sup>4</sup> ... It makes me very happy to

see that, in the last three years of his life, he took to writing poems, for it is proof to me that he had at last acquired a serenity of mind for which he had long prayed. When a man can occupy himself with counting syllables, either he has not yet attempted any spiritual climb, or he is over the hump.<sup>5</sup>

NARRATOR: Vägmarken – Trail Marks, Guide Posts – *Markings* –

COMMENTATOR: The entries for the early years stand in three groups: for 1925-30 (when he was between 20 and 25); for 1941 and 1942; and for the years 1945-1949 (when he was between 40 and 44). The first two of these groups are quite short in their present form – only two and a half pages and four pages in the printed version. The third group is rather longer, and the notes are of a different kind. The entries for the earlier years, even though they may have been much revised so that they look forward clearly to what he was to write towards the end, show that he did not come easily or without doubts and desolations to an assured sense of his destiny and dedication.

HAMMAR(A): I am being driven forward  
Into an unknown land  
The pass grows steeper,  
The air colder and sharper.  
A wind from my unknown goal  
Stirs the strings  
Of expectation.

Still the question:  
Shall I ever get there?  
There where life resounds,  
A clear pure note  
In the silence.

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Smiling, sincere, incorruptible –  
His body disciplined and limber.  
A man who had become what he could,  
And was what he was –  
Ready at any moment to gather everything  
Into one simple sacrifice.

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Tomorrow we shall meet,  
Death and I –.  
And he shall thrust his sword  
Into one who is wide awake.

But in the meantime how grievous the memory  
Of hours frittered away.<sup>6</sup>

COMMENTATOR: A few other aphorisms from the earliest period may be more typical of his early attitude, less like the tone of the latest diary entries –

HAMMAR(A): Life yields only to the conqueror. Never accept what can be gained by giving in. You will be living off stolen goods, and your muscles will atrophy.

Life only demands from you the strength you possess. Only one feat is possible – not to have run away.<sup>7</sup>

COMMENTATOR: In the section called “The Middle Years” the tension is not relaxed: neither is his fierce self-regard.

HAMMAR(A): There is only one path out of the steamy dense jungle where the battle is fought over glory and power and advantage – one escape from the snares and obstacles you yourself have set up, and that is – to accept death.

The more faithfully you listen to the voice within you, the better you will hear what is sounding outside. And only he who listens can speak. Is this the starting point of the road towards the union of your two dreams – to be allowed, in clarity of mind to mirror life, and in purity of heart to mould it?

COMMENTATOR: Sometimes when he writes in the third person he is clearly referring to himself; but usually he speaks in the journal directly to himself in the second person – you, you, you – more often in admonition than in surprise or admiration –

HAMMAR(A): Praise nauseates you – but woe betide him who does not recognize your worth.

You are your own god – and are surprised when you find that the wolf-pack is hunting you across the desolate ice-fields of winter.<sup>8</sup>

COMMENTATOR: – and together with the objective detachment, as he looks at himself with fascinated concentration, there is his stern sense of integrity – almost merciless – that was to give the distinctive character to his public life.

HAMMAR(A): You cannot play with the animal in you without becoming wholly animal, play with falsehood without forfeiting your right to truth, play with cruelty without losing your sensitivity of mind. He who wants to keep his garden tidy, doesn't reserve a plot for weeds.

COMMENTATOR: The notes for 1945-49, entitled "Towards New Shores?," were written in the years immediately after the second war, when he was forty years old and more, and wondering how his so tantalizingly successful and unsatisfactory life could conceivably fulfill itself. These notes are very different: many of them vividly sketched brief anecdotes, parables it seems, overshadowed with self-distrust, the shadow of possible self-deception,

and the chill of a self-isolating incapacity for human love. Some of the notes are like sketches for imagist poems –

HAMMAR(A):                    Here and now – only this is real:  
                                         The good face of an old man,  
                                         Caught naked in an unguarded moment,  
                                         Without past, without future.

COMMENTATOR: Glimpses – anecdotes: a wife prays for her husband’s freedom though she knows he is a failure and that what he wants is not freedom but “a child’s wish to conquer death.” A man is drowning in the undertow, more than half of his own will, and the watchers powerless to help. Another man who has “cut himself off from reality,” kills himself. There is a motor accident – in which the central person – as though Hammarskjöld himself – is annoyed to find that he has not died. What he seems most to want, is to lose himself, to find himself in another person, or in some undefined but superhuman sacrifice.

HAMMAR(A):                    To let go of the image which, in the eyes of this world, bears your name, the image fashioned in your consciousness by social ambition and sheer force of will. To let go and fall, fall – in trust and blind devotion. Towards another, another –.<sup>9</sup>

COMMENTATOR: Suicide is a recurrent theme. Outstanding among the early notes is a vivid half-grotesque account of a girl drowning herself ...

HAMMAR(A):                    It was probably a little too early for the snake’s-head fritillaries. But the May sky shone high above the plain. The sunlight and the carolling of larks were blended into one cool ecstasy. The thaw had come, and the clay-brown water of the river was swift and fresh.

Out in the main channel, a dark bundle turns slowly. A glimpse of a face, a cry. Of its own volition, again and again it thrusts the face under the surface. –

No cloud passed over the sun. The song of the lark did not stop. But the water is suddenly dirty and cold – the thought of being dragged down to the bottom by the heavy thing which is fighting out there for its death arouses a feeling of sheer nausea. And this nausea is more paralysing than the fear of danger. Cowardice? In any case, the word must be spoken. She walked to the end of the esplanade, and then waded out through the mud until the water was deep enough and the current swept her away. But she did not sink. The water pushed her back. Again and again, until her strength was exhausted, she opened her mouth and thrust her face under the surface. This time it must not fail. She heard cries from the bank. If they would ...

During their attempts at artificial respiration, they have laid bare the upper part of her body. As she lies stretched out on the river bank – beyond all human nakedness in the inaccessible solitude of death – her white firm breasts are lifted to the sunlight – an heroic torso of marble-blonde stone in the soft grass.<sup>10</sup>

COMMENTATOR: In 1949, at the age of forty-four, he stands on very uncertain ground –

HAMMAR(A): He seeks his own comfort –

and is rewarded with glimpses of satisfaction followed by a long period of emptiness and shame which sucks him dry. He fights for his position –

all his talk about the necessary pre-conditions for doing something worth while prove an insecure barrier against self-disgust.

He devotes himself to his job –

but he is in doubt as to its importance and, therefore, constantly looking for recognition: perhaps he is slowly nearing the point where he

will feel grateful when he is not criticised, but he is still a very long way from accepting criticism when he is.

You asked for burdens to carry. And howled when they were placed on your shoulders. Had you fancied another sort of burden? Did you believe in the anonymity of sacrifice. The sacrificial act and the sacrificial victim are opposite, and to be judged as such.<sup>11</sup>

**NARRATOR:** During the period covered by these last few entries – 1941 to 1949 – he was taking a prominent and distinguished part in the life of his country. He became chairman of the Bank of Sweden in 1941, having been Under Secretary of Finance under the Social Democrat government. In 1945 he left the Finance Ministry, renegotiated the trade agreement between Sweden and the United States in 1946 and in the next year was Sweden's senior representative in the meetings that prepared the way for the Marshall Plan and OEEC. In 1948 he left the Bank of Sweden to become Special Advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry. In 1951 he was to become Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister without Portfolio.

**COMMENTATOR:** In 1950 he is forty-five; it is still three years before he will be called to the United Nations. The entries in his diary are now arranged year by year. The parabolic and ambivalent anecdotes disappear and are replaced by reflections and epigrams, less trenchant than for the earliest years, and most of them now openly about himself or directed towards himself. They show an acute loneliness, a sense still of unfulfilled ambition, a longing to discover and make some complete personal sacrifice: yet life is slipping away from him, and perhaps in the end he may not fulfil either his inner nature or his outer destiny. Out of the enclosedness of his stern solitude he writes –

**HAMMAR(A):** Time goes by: reputation increases, ability declines.<sup>12</sup>

Hunger is my native place in the land of the passions. Hunger for fellowship, hunger for righteousness – for a fellowship founded on righteousness, and a righteousness attained in fellowship.<sup>13</sup>

A line, a shade, a colour – their fiery expressiveness. The language of flowers, mountains, shores, human bodies: the interplay of light and shade in a look, the aching beauty of a neckline, the grail of the white crocus on the alpine meadow in the morning sunshine – words in a transcendental language of the senses.<sup>14</sup>

COMMENTATOR: But his isolation from his fellow beings is acute and terrible –

HAMMAR(A): Do you really have “feelings” any longer for anybody or anything except yourself – or even that? Without the strength of a personal commitment, your experience of others is at most aesthetic. Yet today, even such a maimed experience brought you into touch with a portion of spiritual reality which revealed your utter poverty.<sup>15</sup>

Never let success hide its emptiness from you, achievement its nothingness, toil its desolation. And so keep alive the incentive to push on further, that pain in the soul which drives us beyond ourselves. Whither. That I don’t know. That I don’t ask to know.<sup>16</sup>

COMMENTATOR: With a cold instinct of certainty he is now even more sure than before that some exacting destiny calls to him, and that it will take all his strength and courage to meet it.

HAMMAR(A): There is a point at which everything becomes simple and there is no longer any question of choice, because all you have staked will be lost if you look back. Life’s point of no return.<sup>17</sup>

COMMENTATOR: He relies confidently and stoically upon his inner resources ...

HAMMAR(A): ... I feel an ache of longing to ... be united and absorbed. A longing like carnal desire, but directed towards earth, water, sky, and returned by the whispers of trees, the fragrance of the soil, the caresses of the wind, the embrace of water and light. Content? No, no, no – but refreshed, rested – while waiting.<sup>18</sup>

COMMENTATOR: But his desolation is almost absolute.

HAMMAR(A): What I ask is absurd: that life shall have a meaning. What I strive for is impossible: that my life shall acquire a meaning. I dare not believe, I do not see how I shall ever be able to believe: that I am not alone. Loneliness is not the sickness unto death. No, but can it be cured except by death? And does it not become the harder to bear the closer one comes to death?

NARRATOR: At the end of March 1953, Dag Hammarskjöld was being considered as successor to Trygve Lie, the first Secretary General of the United Nations. Lie had resigned almost a year before; the Organization itself was in danger of collapse and dissolution because of the interlocked manoeuvres of the Great Powers: McCarthyism was at its height and the FBI had moved into the United Nations building to screen the American members of the staff with the threat of automatic dismissal of all who pleaded the Fifth Amendment.

Among the British and French diplomats he was known to be completely fair as a negotiator, resourceful in devising compromises; that he had a “razor-sharp” mind, and that his unflagging intellectual energy was matched by a remarkable physical constitution. But for most people, Hammarskjöld’s choice as Secretary-General was an unexpected – even bewildering – choice. He was not known outside his own diplomatic and technical circle. But the person most startled by the choice was Hammarskjöld himself when he received on 1st April a cable expressing

the wish of the United Nations Assembly that he accept their appointment as Secretary-General.

COMMENTATOR: In *Markings* there is no *direct* reference to anything in his public life but there can be no doubt that many of the notes for early 1953 refer to his decision to accept the invitation to become Secretary-General. He can now be seen thrusting behind him his arid self-doubt with the assurance that he has at last been *chosen* – chosen perhaps as an instrument of God’s purpose. Previously there had been few open references to Christian dedication: now they come frequently.

HAMMAR(A): When in decisive moments – as now – God acts, it is with a stern purposefulness, a Sophoclean irony. When the hour strikes, He takes what is His. What have *you* to say? – Your prayer had been answered, as you know. God has a use for you, even though what He asks doesn’t happen to suit you at the moment. God, who “abases him whom He raises up.”

Will it come, or will it not,

The day when the joy becomes great,

The day when the grief becomes small?

It *did* come – the day when the grief became small. For what had befallen me and seemed so hard to bear became insignificant in the light of the demands which God was now making. But how difficult it is to feel that this was also, and for that very reason, the day when the joy became great. Not I, but God in me.

I am the vessel. The draught is God’s. And God is the thirsty one. In the last analysis, what does the word “sacrifice” mean? Or even the word “gift”? He who has nothing can give nothing. The gift is God’s – to God. To be free, to be able to stand up and leave everything behind – without looking back. To say *Yes* –<sup>19</sup>

If only I may grow: firmer, simpler – quieter, warmer.<sup>20</sup>

NARRATOR: Article 100 of the UN Charter embodies the ideal of impartiality and objectivity in the Secretariat:

“1. In the performance of their duties, the Secretary-General and the staff shall not seek or receive instructions from any government or from any other authority external to the Organization. They shall refrain from any action which might reflect on their position as international officials responsible only to the Organization.”

It is further enjoined that member nations will not “seek to influence (the Secretariat) in the discharge of their responsibilities.” To appoint the staff is the Secretary General’s duty, and his duty to secure from them “the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity.”

COMMENTATOR: As Hammarskjöld took over his duties, it seemed from his background and training, and from his early statements and his early concentration on putting “this house” in order, that he would be the detached civil-servant diplomat rather than the politician-statesman that Trygve Lie had proved to be. When he arrived in New York on 9 April and met the press he declined to make more than “a few general remarks.”

HAMMAR: I want to do a job, not to talk about it – not even afterwards, so much less in advance.

But further of course, I – like all of you, like all engaged in diplomatic or political activities – have my views and ideas on the great international issues facing us. But those personal views of mine are not – or should not be – of any greater interest to you today than they were just a couple of weeks ago. Those views are mine as a private man. In my new official capacity the private man should disappear and the international public servant take his place. The public servant is there in order to assist, so to say from the inside, those who take the decisions which frame history. Don’t think that he – in following this line of personal policy – takes but a

passive part in the development. It is indeed a most active one. But he is active as an instrument, a catalyst, perhaps an inspirer – he serves.<sup>21</sup>

COMMENTATOR: Speaking to the General Assembly the next day.

HAMMAR: I am here to serve you all. In so doing I shall count on your understanding, on your advice and on your will to give to what I have to say the attention that it may deserve..... my work will be guided by this knowledge.<sup>22</sup>

COMMENTATOR: And to the world at large, that day, he proclaimed his own realistic view of the task of the UN and its future.

HAMMAR: Those are lost who dare not face the basic facts of international interdependence. Those are lost who permit defeats to scare them back to a starting point of narrow nationalism. Those are lost who are so scared by a defeat as to despair about the future. For all those, the dark prophecies may be justified. But not for those who do not permit themselves to be scared, nor for the Organization which is the instrument at their disposal in the fight – an instrument which may be wrecked, but, if that happens, would have to be, and certainly would be, recreated again and again.<sup>23</sup>

COMMENTATOR: On one point he was inflexibly clear: he was Secretary General of the United Nations, an international organization, not the representative of any country or group of countries.

HAMMAR(A): My first job is to run this house.

COMMENTATOR: He immediately and peremptorily turned the FBI agents out of the United Nations building –

HAMMAR(A): You can't be here; whatever permission may have been given in the past is withdrawn.

COMMENTATOR: – and started at once to build up a body of common law – a method he was to use over and over again on the largest scale – a judicial procedure based on precise experience of individual cases, so that there should be “no anonymous testimony, no evidence that doesn't stand up in a court of law.” During the first months of his office he set about with great thoroughness to secure “the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity” of the Secretariat, and to establish its absolute independence. Negotiations in the national field always proceed from a position of strength; he must establish the strength of the Secretariat, so that the Secretariat would be in a position to negotiate effectively. So he set about to bring the United Nations back into the centre of serious diplomatic activity. He decided to pay a personal visit to Chou en Lai in Peking to try to secure the release of imprisoned American airmen: this was an unexpected and unprecedented interpretation of the General Assembly's instruction that he seek a solution “by the means most appropriate in his judgment.” The instruction was given to him on 4 December 1954: he visited Peking for four days of personal discussion with Chou en Lai, in April; in August the prisoners were released as a personal birthday present to Hammarskjöld. Members of the United Nations now realised that Hammarskjöld was a diplomat whose fine judgment and discretion made him exceptionally resourceful in finding solutions for difficult international issues. Hammarskjöld had now demonstrated that in the office of Secretary-General there would be found an agency that could negotiate and mediate – that could even initiate action whenever the Security Council failed to find an effective means of acting.

NARRATOR: Throughout 1956 the tension in the Middle East mounted, in spite of Hammarskjöld's efforts to secure peace. He had had nearly three years to prepare the strength and methods of the Secretariat, and from this secured the first great victory for the United Nations in averting a major war on the issue of Britain's seizure by force of the Suez Canal.

COMMENTATOR: Behind these events, the man's reticent, his scrupulous self-inquiry continues to show how deep and ominous these events were in his eyes.

HAMMAR(A): With all the powers of your body concentrated in the hand on the tiller, All the powers of your mind concentrated on the goal beyond the horizon, You laugh as the salt spray catches your face in the second of rest Before a new wave – Sharing the happy freedom of the moment with those who share your responsibility ...<sup>24</sup>

Tomorrow, you will have to play a much more difficult piece – tomorrow, when the audience is beginning to listen for wrong notes, and you no longer have me in the wings. Then we shall see what you can really do.<sup>25</sup> “If I take the wings of the morning and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea;

even there also shall thy hand lead me.”<sup>26</sup>

You are dedicated to this task – because of the Divine intention behind what is, in fact, only a sacrificial rite in a still barbarian cult: a feeble creation of men's hands – but you have to give your all to this human dream for the sake of that which alone gives it reality.<sup>27</sup>

For him who had responded to the call of the Way of Responsibility, loneliness may be obligatory. Such loneliness, it is true, may lead to a communion closer and deeper than any achieved by the union of two bodies, but your body is not going to let itself be fobbed off by a bluff: whatever you deny it, in order to follow this call, it will claim back if you

fail, and claim back in forms which it will no longer be in your power to select.<sup>28</sup>

It is not we who seek the Way, but the Way which seeks us.  
You dare your Yes – and experience a meaning.  
You repeat your Yes – and all things acquire a meaning.  
When everything has a meaning, how can you live anything but a  
*Yes.*<sup>29</sup>

NARRATOR: All through that year the Middle East was on the brink of war.

COMMENTATOR: Hammarskjöld saw his role as a double one: he had a clear instruction from the Security Council, but he still had the unlimited right, under the Charter, to raise with the conflicting parties any matter affecting peace or security. As in Peking, his personal dealing on the spot with the leaders – with Ben Gurion particularly – was a triumph of diplomacy and character.

NARRATOR: By 9 May a cease-fire, with all objectionable conditions removed, had been secured –  
In the middle of July Dulles withdrew the promise of help with the Aswan Dam; a few days later Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal. On 5 October Britain and France brought before the Security Council certain proposals to restore their national interests in the Canal; the Council passed the proposals but Russia vetoed them. Hammarskjöld flew to Paris to try to affect a settlement. But on 29 October Israel invaded Sinai; Britain and France issued an ultimatum to withdraw from the canal; the U.S. and U.S.S.R. in the Security Council called for a cease-fire, but Britain and France vetoed it and on the morning of 31 October opened their invasion of the Canal Zone.

COMMENTATOR: What Hammarskjöld's journal shows at this time is his consistent care for personal responsibility; he needed above all to define to himself the clear

vision and integrity of his own purpose and to sustain that vision and purpose as continuously as possible: and this personal vision had to be discovered in the realities of complex and large-scale situations.

HAMMAR(A):

Understand – through the stillness.

Act – out of the stillness.

Conquer – in the stillness.

“In order for the eye to perceive colour, it must divest itself of all colours.”<sup>30</sup>

COMMENTATOR:

He had always laid particular emphasis upon the responsibilities the Secretary-General held towards the ideals of the United Nations: if this had ever seemed to adverse critics a matter of personal bias or personal ambition, the Suez issue removed all possible doubt. On the afternoon of 31 October, the day of the Suez invasion, after a day and night when Egypt, Israel, Britain and France were at war and the authority of the United Nations seemed to have vanished, Hammarskjöld opened the meeting of the Security Council with a stern reminder to all members of the Organization, that their overriding obligation was to keep the peace. Seriously shaken by the events of the 30th, he had been up all night drafting his own statement. For the first time, and most memorably, Hammarskjöld was speaking in the person of the Secretary-General whose dominant responsibility is to insist upon the ideals of the Charter above the political and self-seeking conflicts of sovereign nations.

HAMMAR:

The principles of the Charter are, by far, greater than the Organization in which they are embodied, and the aims which they are to safeguard are holier than the policies of any single nation or people. As a servant of the Organization the Secretary-General has the duty to maintain his usefulness by avoiding public stands on conflicts between Member nations unless and until such an action might help to resolve the conflict. However, the

discretion and impartiality thus imposed on the Secretary-General by the character of his immediate task, may not degenerate into a policy of expediency. He must also be a servant of the principles of the Charter, and its aims must ultimately determine what for him is right and wrong. For that he must stand.... He should also be able to assume that those organs which are charged with the task of upholding the Charter, will be in a position to fulfill their task.<sup>31</sup>

NARRATOR: The cease-fire was honoured by the conflicting nations, and Hammarskjöld was instructed to prepare within 48 hours proposals for a United Nations force “to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities in accordance with all the terms of the (ceasefire) resolution.” Somehow by brilliant stall work and improvisation, this proposal made by Lester Pearson was carried through by Hammarskjöld. By the middle of November the UN had moved into Egypt.

COMMENTATOR: The episode had proved that a truly international force was possible. It had shown that such a large field operation as the clearing of the Suez Canal was possible under international organization and those nations which had been obliged by their international undertaking to sacrifice their personal interests, had learned that the law of restraint was also a law of protection. To this Hammarskjöld added the emergent principle that “the work for peace is basically a work for the most elementary of human rights: the right of everyone to security and to freedom from fear.”

HAMMAR(A): From injustice – never justice  
From justice – never injustice<sup>32</sup>  
Hallowed by Thy name – *not mine*  
Thy kingdom come – *not mine*  
Thy will be done – *not mine*  
Give us peace with Thee

Peace with men  
Peace with ourselves,  
And free us from all fear.<sup>33</sup>

NARRATOR: A year later, when Hammarskjöld entered on his second term of office as Secretary-General, the Middle Eastern troubles were still not completely settled and there were still modifications to be made to the United Nations' ways of dealing with these issues; and the Cold War had started, and the conflict over disarmament. And as the British Commonwealth kept faith with its earlier promises by releasing one by one its colonies to a state of sovereign independence, the United Nations was faced with the question of universal membership and the change from its earlier character as a dominantly Big-Powers Club.

COMMENTATOR: But over all this, Africa is the shadow and obsession that colours all Hammarskjöld's second term, that preoccupied him day and night, and in the end brought him to his death on a mission of conciliation. In this setting he was to carry much farther the principle of the Secretary-General's initiative in securing the conditions of peace. The phrase "Let Dag do it" was a more and more frequent appeal to impartial mediation as against adversary proceeding in Council. Through the Suez and Hungary crises, Hammarskjöld had acted only under specific United Nations mandate. He was now to go beyond that, and gave notice of this in his statement to the General Assembly on re-election on 26 September 1957.

HAMMAR: In the multi-dimensional world of diplomacy, the Euclidean definition of a straight line as the shortest way between two points may not always hold true. For the Secretary-General, however, it is the only possible one. I do not believe that the Secretary-General should be asked to act, by the Member States, if no guidance for his action is to be found either in the Charter or in the decisions of the main organs of the United Nations;

within the limits thus set, however, I believe it to be his duty to use his office and, indeed, the machinery of the Organization to its utmost capacity and to the full extent permitted at each stage by practical circumstances.

On the other hand, I believe that it is in keeping with the philosophy of the Charter that the Secretary-General should be *expected* to act also without such guidance, should this appear to him necessary in order to help in filling any vacuum that may appear in the systems which the Charter and traditional diplomacy provide for the safeguarding of peace and security. The many who, together, form this Organization – peoples, governments and individuals – share one great responsibility. Future generations may come to say of us that we never achieved what we set out to do. May they never be entitled to say that we failed because we lacked faith or permitted narrow self-interest to distort our efforts.<sup>34</sup>

COMMENTATOR: In 1956, the year of most intense and continuous crisis, he continued to accumulate in his journal aphorisms that helped him keep a steady eye on his purpose, his integrity, his view of himself.

HAMMAR(A): You ask yourself if these notes are not, after all, false to the very Way they are intended to mark out.

These notes? – They were sign posts you began to set up after you had reached a point where you needed them, a fixed point that was on no account to be lost sight of. And so they have remained. But your life has changed, and now you reckon with possible readers, even, perhaps, hope for them. Still, perhaps it may be of interest to somebody to learn about a path of which the traveller who was committed to it did not wish to speak while he was alive. Perhaps – but only if what you write has an honesty with no trace of vanity or self-regard.<sup>35</sup>

COMMENTATOR: After Suez, he reflects on his success –

HAMMAR(A): Thanks to your “success,” you now have something to lose. Because of this – as if suddenly aware of the risks – you ask whether you, or anyone, can “succeed.” If you go on in this way, thoughtlessly mirroring yourself in an obituary, you will soon be writing your epitaph – in two senses.<sup>36</sup>

COMMENTATOR: We catch a glimpse of his stern self-discipline in the way he keeps watch over himself, as though he were an instrument for a purpose not entirely his own. Here, inside himself, is the ground for the occasional prophetic or apocalyptic note in his public pronouncements:

HAMMAR(A): Your responsibility is indeed terrifying. If you fail, it is God, thanks to your having betrayed Him, who will fail mankind. You fancy you can be responsible *to* God; can you carry the responsibility *for* God?  
...<sup>37</sup>

Yes to God: yes to Fate: yes to yourself. This reality can wound the soul, but has the power to heal her.

“Endless the series of things without name

On the way back to where there is nothing.”<sup>38</sup>

Did’st Thou give me this inescapable loneliness so that it would be easier for me to give Thee all?<sup>39</sup>

Still a few years more, and then? The only value of a life is its content – for *others*. Apart from any value it may have for others, my life is worse than death.

Therefore, how incredibly great is what I have been given, and how meaningless what I have to “sacrifice.”<sup>40</sup>

COMMENTATOR: Poems, rare before in the diary except as transitory fragments or sharp outbursts, accumulate now almost to the exclusion of everything else – short-lined, terse, elliptical crystals, intensely self-centred in spite of the sacrificial impulse – or because of it – desiring release from himself. From

August 1959 until December 1960, almost exclusively, he writes his verse in the *haiku* form, the strict discipline of the three-line 17-syllable forms –

HAMMAR(A):                 Seventeen syllables  
                                  Opened the door  
                                  To memory, to meaning.

COMMENTATOR: His only rhymed poem is a prayer of dedication, written on 3rd December 1960.

HAMMAR(A):                 The road,  
                                  You shall follow it.  
                                  The fun,  
                                  You shall forget it.  
                                  The cup,  
                                  You shall empty it.  
                                  The pain,  
                                  You shall conceal it.  
                                  The truth,  
                                  You shall be told it.  
                                  The end,  
                                  You shall endure it.<sup>41</sup>

NARRATOR:                 In the autumn of 1960 the Secretary-General came under repeated and bitter attack from the Russian representatives, with demands that he resign and that he be replaced by a three-man-directorate. On 3 October 1960 he replied before the General Assembly directly to virulent Russian attacks upon his conduct of affairs – on their behalf – on the Congo, and the demand that he “muster up enough courage to resign.”

HAMMAR:

... I regret that intervention to which I have found it necessary to reply has again tended to personalize an issue which, as I've said, in my view is not a question of a man but of an institution.

The man does not count, the institution does. A weak or non-existent executive would mean that the United Nations would no longer be able to serve as an effective instrument for active protection of the interests of those many Members who need such protection.

I said the other day that I would not wish to continue to serve as Secretary-General one day longer than such continued service was, and was considered to be, in the best interest of the Organization. The statement this morning seems to indicate that the Soviet Union finds it impossible to work with the present Secretary-General.

This may seem to provide a strong reason why I should resign. However, the Soviet Union has also made it clear that, if the present Secretary-General were to resign now, they would not wish to elect a new incumbent, but insist on an arrangement which – and this is my firm conviction based on broad experience – would make it impossible to maintain an effective executive. By resigning, I would, therefore, at the present difficult and dangerous juncture throw the Organization to the winds. I have no right to do so because I have a responsibility to all those States Members for which the Organization is of decisive importance, a responsibility which overrides all other considerations.

It is not the Soviet Union or, indeed, any other big Powers who need the United Nations for their protection; it is all the others. In this sense the Organization is first of all *their* Organization, and I deeply believe in the wisdom with which they will be able to use it and guide it. I shall remain in my post during the term of my office as a servant of the Organization in the interests of all those other nations, as long as *they* wish me to do so.

In this context the representative of the Soviet Union spoke of courage. It is very easy to resign; it is not so easy to stay on. It is very easy to bow to the wish of a big Power. It is another matter to resist. As is well known to

all members of this Assembly, I have done so before on many occasions and in many directions. If it is the wish of those nations who see in the Organization their best protection in the present world, I shall do so again.<sup>42</sup>

NARRATOR: It was on 3 October 1960 that Hammarskjöld refused to submit to Russian pressure by resigning. The procedural struggle continued; but the conflict over the Congo was still to be resolved.

COMMENTATOR: In his Statement on UN Operations in the Congo, made to the General Assembly on 17 October 1960, Hammarskjöld quoted the President of Guinea speaking a few days earlier from the chair of the Assembly:

HAMMAR: “The Congo is part of the life of humanity; the fate reserved for millions of men, women and children should be looked at more closely. Let less be said about Messrs. Lumumba, Kasavubu, Mobutu, Ileo and the others, but let more be pondered seriously to find a true and just solution for the problems of the people which only yearn for well-being, peace and progress, as do all people all over.”<sup>43</sup> End of quote.

COMMENTATOR: He could dismiss lightly “as a part of a political game” – “all the misunderstandings, all the willful misrepresentations,” all the efforts to bring under suspicion or contempt whatever positive action the Organization had taken, if it were not for the effect of this on the Organization and its authority, and the consequent disarming of the only reasonable bulwark against a war that would engulf the whole of civilised society. He therefore refused absolutely “to compromise, in any political interest, with the aims and principles of this Organization” – the United Nations.<sup>44</sup>

In February 1961 he warned the Security Council again that they were standing into danger:

HAMMAR: For seven or eight months, through efforts far beyond the imagination of those who founded this Organization, it has tried to counter tendencies to introduce the big Power conflict into Africa and put the young African countries under the shadow of the Cold War. It has done so with great risks and against heavy odds. It has done so at the cost of very great personal sacrifices for a great number of people. In the beginning the effort was successful, and I do not now hesitate to say that on more than one occasion the drift into a war with foreign power intervention of the Korean or Spanish type was avoided only thanks to the work done by the Organization, basing itself on African solidarity .... Now, under basically identical although superficially more dramatic circumstances, we have again reached the point where a local armed conflict is threatening in forms which are only too likely to lead to a widening of the conflict into the international arena. I have no new solutions to offer to you ... – except to “rally around common aims within the framework of the United Nations.”<sup>45</sup>

COMMENTATOR: Ten days before his death he spoke to the Secretariat staff in the General Assembly Hall. It was his last speech; and again he turned upon the power of individual devotion, of the struggle against cynicism and despair, uttering again his inflexible confidence in the Secretariat and the individual persons that it comprises.

HAMMAR: In a situation like the one now facing all peoples of the world, as represented in this Organization, it is understandable that staff members should sometimes feel frustrated and even depressed. In that they are not different from their fellow beings in other positions influenced by the trend of world events. There is only one answer to the human problem involved, and that is for all to maintain their professional pride, their sense of purpose, and their confidence in the higher destiny of the Organization

itself, by keeping to the highest standards of personal integrity in their conduct as international civil servants and in the quality of the work that they turn out on behalf of the Organization. It would be too dramatic to talk about our task as one of waging a war for peace, but it is quite realistic to look at it as an essential and – within its limits – effective work for building dams against the floods of disintegration and violence.<sup>46</sup>

COMMENTATOR: Behind and underneath these public words, this continuous demonstration before the world of his own faith in the United Nations and the possibility of peace, moves the stern private liturgy by which his courage was sustained, his energy continuously restored, his resolution tempered, and with it his “faith that the future will be all right because there will always be enough people to fight for a decent future.”<sup>47</sup>

NARRATOR: Whitsunday 1961.

HAMMAR(A): I don't know Who – or what – put the question, I don't know when it was put. I don't even remember answering. But at some moment I did answer *Yes* to Someone – or Something – and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, therefore, my life, in self-surrender, had a goal. From that moment I have known what it means “not to look back,” and “To take no thought for the morrow.”

Led by the Ariadne's thread of my answer through the labyrinth of Life, I came to a time and place where I realised that the Way leads to a triumph which is a catastrophe, and to a catastrophe which is a triumph, that the price for committing one's life would be reproach, and that the only revelation possible to man lies in the depths of humiliation. After that, the word ‘courage’ lost its meaning, since nothing could be taken from me. As I continued along the Way, I learned, step by step, word by word, that behind every saying in the Gospels, stands *one* man and *one* man's

experience. Also behind the prayer that the cup might pass from him and his promise to drink it. Also behind each of the words from the Cross.<sup>48</sup>

COMMENTATOR: Sacrifice and immolation are now dominant themes, despite habits of self-renunciation. Did he think he would be assassinated like Count Bernadotte? Did he think he could secure that by an act of Will? by an act of faith? How – after all – could he meaningfully give up his life? In a few of the last poems he sets himself in imagined heroic episodes.

HAMMAR(A):

He will come out  
Between two warders,  
Lean and sunburnt,  
A little bent,  
As if apologizing  
For his strength,  
His features tense,  
But looking quite calm.

He will take off his jacket  
And with shirt torn open,  
Stand up against the wall  
To be executed.

He has not betrayed us,  
He will meet his end  
Without weakness.  
When I feel anxious,  
It is not for him.  
Do I fear a compulsion in me  
To be so destroyed?  
Or is there someone

In the depths of my being,  
Waiting for permission  
To pull the trigger?<sup>49</sup>

Tired  
And lonely,  
So tired  
The heart aches.  
Meltwater trickles  
Down the rocks,  
The fingers are numb,  
The knees tremble.  
It is now,  
Now, that you must not give in.

On the path of the others  
Are resting places,  
Places in the sun  
Where they can meet.  
But this is your path,  
And it is now,  
Now, that you must not fail ...

The way chose you –  
And you must be thankful.<sup>50</sup>

Almighty ...  
Forgive  
My doubt,  
My anger,  
My pride.

By thy mercy  
Abase me,  
By thy strictness  
Raise me up.<sup>51</sup>

COMMENTATOR: And at night in mid-September as his aircraft flies over Ndola airfield and picks up the lights there, and makes a routine turn to approach for a landing, has Hammarskjöld come at last to the vision of the world that, through the last weeks of his life, seems to have been taking shape before the eyes of his mind? “Is it a new country?” he asks in the last poem he ever wrote –

HAMMAR(A):

Is it a new country  
In another world of reality  
Than Day’s?  
Or did I live there  
Before Day was?

I awoke  
To an ordinary morning with grey light  
Reflected from the street,  
But still remembered  
The dark-blue night  
Above the tree-line,  
The open moor in moonlight,  
The crest in shadow.  
Remembered other dreams  
Of the same mountain country:  
Twice I stood on its summits,  
I stayed by its remotest lake,  
And followed the river

Towards its source.

The seasons have changed  
And the light  
And the weather  
And the hour.  
But it is the same land.  
And I begin to know the map  
And to get my bearings.<sup>52</sup>

NARRATOR: 17 September 1961 – (*SOUND: AIRCRAFT IN FLIGHT, AS P 1*)

PILOT: SE-SDY calling NDO Ndola – Estimate abeam Ndola at 47, Ndola at 20.

CONTROL: Roger, confirm ETA Ndola in 20, or at 2220.

PILOT: 2220.

CONTROL: Roger, Ndola weather wind 120 at 7 knots. Visibility 5 to 10 miles with slight smoke haze. At what time do you wish to make your descent?

PILOT: Request descent clearance at 57.

CONTROL: Roger, clear to descent and maintain 6000.

HAMMAR(A): The longest journey  
Is the journey inwards.  
Of him who has chosen his destiny,  
Who has started upon his quest  
For the source of his being...  
He is still with you,

But without relation,  
Isolated in your feeling  
Like one condemned to death  
Or one whom imminent farewell  
Prematurely dedicates  
To the loneliness which is the final lot of all.<sup>53</sup>

PILOT: 2210. Your lights in sight. Overhead Ndola, descending.

CONTROL: Roger. Report reaching 6000.

PILOT: Roger.

HAMMAR: Future generations may come to say of us that we never achieved what we set out to do. May they never be entitled to say that we failed because we lacked faith or permitted narrow self-interest to distort our efforts.<sup>54</sup>

CONTROL: BDY – How do you read?  
*(SOUND OF ENGINES CONTINUES FAINTLY UNDER)*

HAMMAR: It is not the Soviet Union or, indeed, any other big Power who need the United Nations for their protection; it is all the others. In this sense the Organization is first of all *their* Organization, and I deeply believe in the wisdom with which they will be able to use it and guide it. I shall remain in my post during the term of my office as a servant of the Organization in the interest – (applause interrupts his speech) – I shall remain in my post during the term of my office as a servant of the Organization in the interests of all those other nations, as long as *they* wish me to do so. (Applause).<sup>55</sup>

*SOUND: (AFTER THE APPLAUSE ENDS THERE IS A LONG SILENCE, NO ENGINES)*

*CONTROL: BDY – How do you read? How do you read?*

*(SILENCE)*

*Calling BDY – How do you read? How do you read me, BDY?*

*(SILENCE)*

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<sup>1</sup> *Markings p 169*

<sup>2</sup> ? tape from Murrow *This I Believe*

<sup>3</sup> *Servant of Peace p 23-4*

<sup>4</sup> *Markings p 13-14*

<sup>5</sup> *Markings p 22*

<sup>6</sup> *Markings p 31*

<sup>7</sup> *Markings p 32-3*

<sup>8</sup> *Markings p 36*

<sup>9</sup> *Markings p 42*

<sup>10</sup> *Markings p 43*

<sup>11</sup> *Markings p 50*

<sup>12</sup> *Markings p 53*

<sup>13</sup> *Markings p 62*

<sup>14</sup> *Markings p 54*

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- <sup>15</sup> *Markings* p 58
- <sup>16</sup> *Markings* p 63
- <sup>17</sup> *Markings* p 70
- <sup>18</sup> *Markings* p 78
- <sup>19</sup> *Markings* p 88
- <sup>20</sup> *Markings* p 89
- <sup>21</sup> Tape to press, 9 April 1953: SP 27
- <sup>22</sup> Tape 10 Apr 1953, General Assembly: SP 29
- <sup>23</sup> Tape 10 July 1953, to UN Correspondents Association: SP 31
- <sup>24</sup> *Markings* p 90
- <sup>25</sup> *Markings* p 91
- <sup>26</sup> *Markings* p 94
- <sup>27</sup> *Markings* p 100
- <sup>28</sup> *Markings* p 107
- <sup>29</sup> *Markings* p 110
- <sup>30</sup> *Markings* p 111
- <sup>31</sup> Tape 31 October 1956, Security Council: SP 124
- <sup>32</sup> *Markings* p 122
- <sup>33</sup> *Markings* p 123
- <sup>34</sup> Tape 26 Sept 1957, General Assembly: SP 149-50
- <sup>35</sup> *Markings* p 124-5
- <sup>36</sup> *Markings* p 109
- <sup>37</sup> *Markings* p 133

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- <sup>38</sup> *Markings* p 135
- <sup>39</sup> *Markings* p 139
- <sup>40</sup> *Markings* p 140
- <sup>41</sup> *Markings* p 167
- <sup>42</sup> Tape 3 Oct. 1960, General Assembly: SP 318-9
- <sup>43</sup> Tape 17 Oct. 1960, General Assembly: SP 319
- <sup>44</sup> Tape: SP 326
- <sup>45</sup> Tape. 15 Feb. 1961, to Security Council: SP 327-8
- <sup>46</sup> Tape 7 Sept. 1961 to General Assembly: SP 376-7
- <sup>47</sup> Tape: SP 166
- <sup>48</sup> *Markings* p 169
- <sup>49</sup> *Markings* p 174
- <sup>50</sup> *Markings* p 175
- <sup>51</sup> *Markings* p 178
- <sup>52</sup> *Markings* p 181
- <sup>53</sup> *Markings* p 65
- <sup>54</sup> Tape 26 Sept. 1957, General Assembly: SP 150
- <sup>55</sup> Tape: SP 319