

EYVIND HYTEN
Via di Vermicino, 331
00044 Frascati (Roma)
Italia - Tel. 06 - 9464366

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Dear Maria de Lourdes,

I don't quite know how to explain, or how to apologize for my silence during the last several months. It turned out that resigning from the United Nations, moving things from Vienna and Geneva to Norway and to Italy, getting established here in a house (otherwise beautiful) that has not been lived in for 14 years, and getting all my papers and formalities in order with a government that is now suspicious of any foreigner - all that took more time and worries than I had reckoned.

Anyhow, I did do something after our last meeting, but I only recently discovered that my ex-secretary in Vienna had failed to mail you a copy of the attached letter. It is, as you will see, to John MacDonald who, in the Department of State in Washington, was not only the U.S. co-ordinator for the World Assembly on Aging (my last UN job) but is also the US representative on the Commission for Social Development, the policy-making body of the CSDHA and due to meet again next February in Vienna. I hope the letter is not too inaccurate as regards your curriculum; I had to put it together in a hurry. Later on, I showed it to Gian Picco, a personal aide to Pérez de Cuéllar, who said he had met you and was happy to have an alternative to the present lady - they were in Vienna for the closing session of the WAA and she had submitted a draft for the S.-G.'s closing speech which he asked me to re-draft - my last and glorious task in the UN! (She learned about it and did not even say good-bye when I left.) - MacDonald later told me that he had approached the S-G. about this, and also the new ASG for personnel, Leila Doss (of Egypt, you may know her) had said that you were her favourite candidate for the job. I have also been in touch with Ambassador Lagerfelt of Sweden who will probably attend the next Commission meeting where they have a lot of influence, and who is equally desperate to have changes made in the top management of the CSDHA.

In the meantime, however, president Marcos has been in NY and met with Pérez, and Shahani's brother, the lurid chief of the Manila police (!) has again been around in Vienna to pull strings for his sis. Pérez de Cuéllar certainly does not have the same



problems that Waldheim had in getting rid of Sipilä. He has already nominated three women to cabinet posts in the UN and has shown his independence of national and sectoral influences, - still, unfortunately, the social area in the UN is now so devalued that he might just keep the lady in order to avoid trouble with Marcos, the Phillipines and the group of 77.

Have you got any fresh information about this, or have you been approached in some ways? I got the neat impression that the people in the S-G's office (Picco, Olivarez etc.) were definitely interested, but of course they too have to bend to the political influences in the G.A. and in the commissions.

I received your letter of 5 July with the attached project, and also had a short talk with Margarida Gama Santos just before my departure. I also read Garaudy's article, which is inspiring and somehow points the ways to what one might do as a follow-up. Frankly, however, I am not that much impressed by the Project Proposal on your administration: I told so to Gama Santos but, in the very intensive weeks just before my departure from Vienna, there was no time and calm to elaborate on this. Also, I thought that I did not quite recognize the ideas we discussed during our last talk at your place in Lisbon.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

In other words: I can well understand that a detailed, point-by-point record and analysis of your administration, at that crucial stage of your recent history, would be useful and would attract due attention within Portugal and among those people who closely follow internal political matters. But you will not take it as an insult if I say that, in those limited terms (politically-historically), your administration was but an episode in a small and as yet not too important country (don't get angry now.) What I try to say is that the record and analysis of the Pintasilgo experience in 1979 deserves more and better: a point-by-point record, with documents, interviews, testimonials and various other papers, would only call for comparison with other and maybe better remembered episodes of the turbulent history of your country since 1974. You should not compare or ask to be compared: you were and you did something original during those few months, and your record of this should be equally original. Also, the fact that you happened to be the Prime Minister for a short time in 1979-80 was only a part of your history and career; that experience should be put in a larger context, before and after this particular period.



What I say may be gratuitous and not to your liking, but you did ask for an opinion and maybe for co-operation, and it is because the idea of co-operation (having already been somehow present at the outset) that I venture to make these remarks.
(is still attractive)

I would, in your place, make it much more into a personal testimonial: your own voice, your own experience, as a woman and as a Portuguese with certain ideas and convictions and experiences who has lived the history of your country not only as a private citizen but in various professional and political positions up to that of Prime Minister, and also with the background of your international experience, and who somehow represents something very stable and valid in the new society you have tried to create from 1974 and onwards. Maybe I am talking out of tune, but this, at least, is how I (and other foreigners) have seen you and your performance and "présence" in Portugal. And I believe that this would be the basis for a work, a book or whatever, not just to describe a relatively short governmental experience, but to put together a human testimonial going far beyond the geographical or temporal borders of Portugal at the end of 1979. D'accord? - I also believe that a project along these (still vague) lines would attract support and attention from foundations and/or publishers.

When you have a moment, let me first of all have your general reaction. If you think there is anything valid in what I have tried to say, let us then see what the next steps could be. Maybe my help will not be necessary, but I would certainly like to be there in a corner. (If you go to Vienna after all, I'm afraid all this will be fichu, but who knows.)

- As planned, I am now happily retired in this beautiful house in the vineyards outside Rome, and still have not had one second of regrets. Mostly, I am busy with the various problems of re-settlement, getting back to calm reading and writing on my own, and hoping that my small savings will last for some time. Among the few concrete projects, I may organize some events on behalf of the Institut Jacques Maritain; at some future point, I may even bother you about that. Why don't you come and visit us here, - we have a nice guest room, the place is stupendous and calm, and we might do some serious work together. Please let me hear from you, and let me know if you see some sense in my remarks.

Je vous embrasse
A. L.

