

About the Author

Johan Kaufmann (1918) spent his youth in Amsterdam. He combined studying economics with working at the Amsterdamsche Bank, Amsterdam. The Second World War interrupted these activities. He spent eleven months, illegally, in France, for some time as a bookkeeper in Clermont-Ferrand. He was able to observe Vichy-France from various angles. In November 1942, when the Germans occupied Vichy-France he went “underground” to Spain, but was sent back to France by the Spanish authorities. After crossing the French-Swiss border near Chamonix in late November 1942, he was returned to France by the Swiss. Arrested by the French, who were about to deliver him to the Germans, he simulated an appendicitis attack and a cooperative French doctor had him operated on in the hospital at Chamonix. From there he managed to go to Lyon, and eventually, in late February 1943, he reached Geneva, where admission by the Swiss had, this time, been pre-arranged. He got permission to resume his economic studies at the University of Geneva. He graduated in economics at the University of Geneva, on a Ph.D. dissertation dealing with economic problems of socialist societies.

He entered the Dutch foreign service in 1945 and started in Washington DC at what was officially called the Economic, Financial and Shipping Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Dutch Indies, the Netherlands Antilles and Surinam. Housed in a villa transformed into an office (at 1620 Belmont Street NW, Washington DC), this Mission had a number of tasks in the economic field: supervising the policies of a separate Netherlands Purchasing Mission in New York, reporting on economic developments in the USA, negotiating with United States authorities on “lend-lease” (the aid programme which preceded the Marshall Plan), etc. The Dutch Embassy in Washington saw the Mission as a competitor. This led to the joke that the Dutch Queen, having heard of the difficulties between Her Embassy and Her Economic Mission in Washington DC, decided to merge the two offices into a single representation, to be called **AMBITION!**

The Economic Mission was dissolved in 1947 and Kaufmann was taken over by the Embassy, where his specialities became trade policy and aid programmes. In 1947 he spent several months in Geneva and participated, as a specialist in US tariff and trade policies, in the first round of multilateral trade negotiations under the auspices of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). He also attended the next round of GATT negotiations in 1949 in Torquay, England.

At the Embassy in Washington his work became increasingly centred on the Marshall Plan (1948-52). This involved both general policies (often

discussed in the group of OEEC countries), and detailed matters as to the eligibility of goods to be imported with Marshall Plan funds. In Washington DC, Kaufmann met and married Marianna Loeté, who had also worked at the Embassy.

In 1953 Kaufmann was transferred to Mexico City, as first commercial secretary at the Dutch Embassy. Work there had elements of pioneering: all sorts of Dutch products were to be tried out on the Mexican market. For seed potatoes a large experimental programme was set up: the difficulty was to convince the Mexican farmers that they should plant, not eat these potatoes. In a joint research programme with the Rockefeller Foundation new races of seed potatoes were produced. This demonstrates that under certain circumstances, Embassy work distinctly transcends cliché conceptions of routine diplomatic activity. Day-old chickens and an apple variety called the "Belle of Boscoop", were among the new products Kaufmann helped to launch on the Mexican market.

In 1955 he assisted a high-level Dutch economic mission led by professor Jan Tinbergen, later a Nobel Prize winner, which was to review a harbour development programme of the Mexican Government. This contact with Tinbergen became a factor in Kaufmann's transfer to New York in 1956, where he was to be economic counsellor at the Dutch mission to the United Nations. The five years in New York were exciting: it was the time of the Suez crisis, the Soviet Union invasion of Hungary, but also of a grand debate on the United Nations role in financing economic development. The United States wanted Bretton Woods institutions to do all the financing of less developed countries, with the exception of technical assistance. In a compromise, the UN Special Fund was created (1958) with a mandate that included "small capital projects". The Netherlands had a progressive position in this matter, and Kaufmann was fully involved in the negotiations in the Second (Economic) Committee of the UN General Assembly on these matters. In the first two years, he was vice-chairman and later Acting Chairman of the Governing Council of the UN Special Fund. Most summers Kaufmann attended the July session of the UN Economic and Social Council. Some of the useful and pioneering activities of this Council, e.g., in the field of technical assistance, were hidden behind endless sessions on subjects of secondary importance!

In 1961, Kaufmann was transferred to Geneva to become permanent representative to the European Office of the United Nations and to the UN specialized agencies in Geneva (at that time ILO, WHO, ITU, WMO). Work in Geneva meant a lot of running from one meeting to the other. Delegations from the home front were often large, encouraged by the fairly generous *per diem* payments the delegates enjoyed. Kaufmann became the Dutch representative in the Economic Commission for Europe (of which he was chairman for two years), at that time important as the only multilateral body where, in spite of the Cold War, Western and Eastern countries (including the United States and Canada) could discuss and sometimes solve problems on a large variety of subjects.

In 1969, Kaufmann was transferred to Paris to become permanent representative (ambassador) to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Housed in the Chateau de la Muette in the 16th arrondissement, OECD is one of those closed organizations whose useful work on exchange of information and coordination of policies on a large variety of subjects rarely becomes known to the general public. In 1973 the OECD set up emergency procedures during the oil crisis. Famous was "Working Party 3" (of the Economic Policy Committee) where top level officials of the Finance Ministries and the central banks came to coordinate policy and exchange confidential information. Even the Permanent Representatives were not allowed to attend these meetings.

In 1974, Kaufmann was again posted to New York, this time as ambassador and permanent representative to the UN. The "New International Economic Order" (NIEO) was a "hot subject" in 1974 and 1975. Discussed in the aftermath of the oil crisis at special sessions of the UN General Assembly, it fairly soon became clear that there could be no question of a single new international economic order (the hope of Algeria and others, to enforce a new system through commodity cartels, turned out to be illusory). This period in New York was also conspicuous for certain aspects of the Middle East conflict, such as the status of the Palestine Liberation Committee (PLO). The PLO was admitted as an observer to and later as a participant in the work of the UN General Assembly.

In 1978 Kaufmann was appointed the Dutch ambassador to Japan and transferred to Tokyo, a post he held until his retirement from the Dutch foreign service in 1983. The work in Tokyo was centred largely on trade matters: hidden and open trade barriers hampered Dutch exports. Fresh flowers, for example, were kept so long at Japanese airports for inspection, that when finally approved they could no longer be sold. This was also the time foreign-made skis could not be imported into Japan because Japanese snow was uniquely different from any other snow! The Kaufmanns managed to travel to many regions of Japan. It is surprising that in spite of considerable uniformity there were so many local differences. The Netherlands has a special link with Japan because for more than 200 years (from about 1630 to about 1850) the Dutch settlement on the small artificial island of Deshima was Japan's only link with the western world.

Kaufmann had throughout his career considerable contacts with the academic community, often in the form of lectures or participation in study groups. In his first period in New York (1956-61), he was visiting scholar at Columbia University.

In 1963, he was consultant to the United Nations (New York) on the establishment of the UN Research Institute for Social Development. In 1968, he lectured on conference diplomacy at the University of East Africa (Makerere College) in Kampala, Uganda. After his retirement from the Dutch foreign service in 1983, he was professor (Cleveringa chair, 1983/1984) at the University of Leiden on the "new international economic order", and in 1985 visiting professor on the same subject at the International University of Japan (in Niigata province). In 1987, he was consultant

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

of UNDP and UNIDO (on questions related to so-called senior industrial development field advisers). He is a frequent lecturer on United Nations subjects, and senior special fellow of UNITAR (United Nations Institute for Training and Research). From 1985 through 1996, he was a member of the Netherlands National Advisory Council on Development Cooperation. He is the author of books and articles related to the United Nations, including *Conference Diplomacy* (1968, 1988, revised edition MacMillan, Basingstoke, England 1996), *United Nations Decision Making* (revised edition 1979), and (as editor) *Effective Negotiation, Case Studies in Conference Diplomacy* (1989).

Other publications include:

- For the Academic Council on the United Nations: *Changing Global Needs, Annual Report 1989/1990* (with N. Schrijver), and *The World in Turmoil, Testing the UN's Capacity, Annual Report 1990/1991* (with D. Leurdijk and N. Schrijver);
- *The Evolving United Nations: Principles and Realities* (John Holmes Memorial Lecture, The Hague 1994).