

Transcription of the interview with Henri Werner (Sanem, 1 June 2010) — Full version

Caption: Transcription of the interview with Henri Werner carried out by the Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe (CVCE) on 1 June 2010 at the CVCE's base in Sanem. Conducted by Elena Danescu, a Researcher at the CVCE, the interview particularly focuses on the personality and political action of Henri Werner's father, Pierre Werner.

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I. Pierre Werner and Henriette Werner-Pescatore — a family portrait

[Elena Danescu] Hello Mr Werner. We are delighted to welcome you to the Château de Sanem today, 1 June. Thank you so much for taking the time to shed some light on the personality and work of your father, Pierre Werner. You grew up in a family environment steeped in politics. Could you paint us a picture of your family background?

[Henri Werner] Well, my family originally came from Niedercorn, which is very near here. My father was from a family of millers, who were a somewhat privileged class in those days. There were the farmers and the aristocracy, and the millers were the industrialists of the time. So he was from a semi-industrial background, as it were. His father was a salesman who represented an oil company in Luxembourg, so my father came from a relatively well-to-do background. My mother was from the Pescatore family, who were virtually members of the European aristocracy and enjoyed a great reputation in Luxembourg. When I tell you about his origins, you could be inclined to think that my father was a member of high society. But I would have to disagree. My parents were ordinary people, just like you and me. They belonged to the group of people who made up the social fabric of the modest Rollingergrund district where we lived. The world into which I was born — i.e. the post-war world — was a place where everything was in order and where society was coherent; there was work for everyone and we managed with very little. I recall that for breakfast, we ate breadcrumbs and drank a little milk. We didn’t have a car or a TV, yet our quality of life was excellent. So I have fond memories of my early childhood days.

[Elena Danescu] Mr Werner, what are your earliest memories of your father, his personality, his nature, his concerns, and what was family life like at the time?

[Henri Werner] I remember him as being happy, enthusiastic, young and very dynamic. He took care of us; he was interested in his family. I also saw him as a distinguished man, because he sometimes received important people who already seemed distinguished to me at the time. He had a lovely little drawing room where he liked to talk with his visitors. And when we walked down the street with him, we used to see men dressed in black and wearing hats, and when they saw my

father they would raise their hats and bow to him, even if they were on the other side of the street. So it was always impressive going for a walk with him. People knew him and liked him.

[Elena Danescu] As a result of his personality and his political action for over three decades, Mr Werner stood out as an architect of dialogue who was willing to cooperate and as a guarantor of stability and continuity. Who was the real Pierre Werner? What are your most poignant personal memories of his personality?

[Henri Werner] He was a direct and honest man. He was a good listener, so he took others seriously. He listened to what they said and tried to understand what they were saying before talking himself. He thought before he spoke. For example, during a conference when he was a member of the Opposition he objected to an abortion law because it went against his morals. He said, 'I will not lay down any law, but there are rules of democracy. My party is against abortion and we are going to defend our cause against the liberalisation of abortion.' There was a conference at the Centre Convict on abortion ethics, and when he was about to take the floor, demonstrations began at the back of the room, with placards and protestors who started making a noise. So he said, 'Listen, why are you making a noise? Come to the podium and tell us what you have to say.' Everything suddenly fell silent. They replied, 'But Mr Minister of State, we came here to demonstrate.' 'About what?' came the reply. Then they started explaining their views on this and that, so my father entered into dialogue with them. 'Ah, so you see? You do feel that abortion in itself is not a good thing.' 'No, it's not a good thing, certainly not.' 'So you do think that abortions should be avoided?' 'Yes, they should.' Finally, my father said, 'The only point on which we disagree is the fact that you want to allow the mother to decide whether or not she wants an abortion, whereas I think the law should not allow it. Such is the case. So do you agree that abortion is something that definitely needs to be fought?' 'Yes, definitely.' So in the end, there was a real dialogue rather than a dialogue of the deaf. Something happened during that conference. The people who left the conference room were different afterwards.

Once, he went to Paris to celebrate the anniversary of his university, Sciences Po, the political faculty of the University of Paris. He was obviously happy to see all his political friends there, including Giscard and Raymond Barre, they were all there. Everyone was waiting for a great celebration in the room when all of a sudden, a group of leftists stormed the room raising a hubbub and throwing tomatoes and rotten eggs. He said to me, 'The French are so tactless, they don't know how to talk to each other.' He told me, 'I was just a guest, I wasn't in a position to do so, but if I were the organiser, I would have climbed onto the podium and said, "Hey there, come and explain yourselves, why throw tomatoes? Come with arguments, not with tomatoes, and explain what's wrong. Tell us about your experiences; we'd like to know what motivates you. We're interested in that, we're interested in you, come and talk."'" Then he said to me, 'I would have had a podium debate with them. I would have said, "Here you go, explain all of your arguments to all of these gentlemen." And in the end we would have instigated communication and had a celebration which was worthy of a school of political science. We would have shown that we were capable of engaging in political dialogue. What could have been better?' But he said that he wasn't able to do that because he was just a guest, not the organiser. He said, 'That's how the French could have done it.' That was his approach. Once, some teachers came to his house. They were dressed in sportswear, jumpers and sandals. He said to them, 'Why are you coming to see me?' 'To discuss our future.' 'Ah, so you want to discuss serious matters?' 'Yes, of course!' 'Well then why aren't you dressed as such? You look like you want to be on holiday, like you want to relax. Yet you want to have a serious discussion? Why aren't you dressed according to the situation, why don't your clothes express your intention to have a serious discussion with me?' They didn't utter another word.

[Elena Danescu] So this ability to listen to others, and to understand, but certainly also his personality, his ideas and his entire education were the keys to his successful approach.

[Henri Werner] When he was thinking, no one said a word. You could hear a pin drop. People said to themselves, ‘The Minister of State is thinking.’ Then when he spoke, he said things that made sense, and when he made a speech he never offered platitudes. He wouldn’t settle for trite remarks, he always expressed a new idea, something creative, something new. And sometimes he found it hard. He always said to me, ‘All of these end-of-year speeches. How am I going to find a new subject each year? How am I going to make this speech interesting? How am I going to create added value with this speech?’ That was his concern: he wanted to be a thinker who created ideas, who knew how to attract and motivate people and, above all, who knew how to listen to what motivates people and then bring them together. That was his approach and that’s what made him a unifier.

[Elena Danescu] He also dedicated himself to his country and to Europe, as we can see today with so many of his projects having taken shape and become reality.

[Henri Werner] And that was politics in the truest sense of the term. He always wanted to be a servant, in the spiritual sense. Being a minister is like being a servant. He wanted to serve his country and Europe.

[Elena Danescu] Was family life affected as a result of these new circumstances?

[Henri Werner] In some ways, yes, in other ways, no; at any rate he still remained present. He was always present in the family, even at the most difficult times. He drew his energy from his family. In fact, he wrote himself that his family was his source of inspiration. And maybe having contact with us, his children, was important to him, too. His contact with his wife was particularly important; family life continued as before. The only difference was that we saw him less and less often, but the intensity of our connection remained the same, as did his affection. But it was hard for us children, because in a way we were somewhat deprived of our father. Also, people saw us differently all of a sudden. I remember when I was six, I was in my first year at primary school, and my teacher suddenly looked at me differently. I don’t know if he felt awkward or jealous, but it was a very strange look, one in fact which still haunts me today. So there was this change for us. It was a turning point. I can remember that in 1953, we could go for walks with my father at our leisure, but in 1954 we already had to choose our moments to spend time with him.

[Elena Danescu] As the Prime Minister’s wife, did your mother have various official obligations at the time?

[Henri Werner] That’s a very important question that I’d like to dwell upon a little. My father said himself that without his wife, he would never have been able to have to carry out his term of office. What’s more, my mother didn’t simply accept this difficult life of being the wife of a prime minister, she encouraged my father and inspired him. She was his muse. She talked to him, they discussed all the thorny issues, sometimes highly confidential matters, and she advised him. She knew the people very well and knew how to see their true colours. She told him to ‘be careful of so-and-so, bank on so-and-so, this person is very capable’. So she played the role of chief adviser. She played a distinguished role as both an initiator and organiser. She organised very formal meals at home and invited the diplomatic corps, members of the government and foreign dignitaries. During these luncheons, many very important matters were discussed, the setting was extremely prestigious and there was also this kind of family atmosphere which is lacking today during these business meals. I think that here, my mother was a great inspiration. Her role cannot be underestimated. And when my father said that to journalists, they always thought he was simply complimenting his wife, but he really did feel that his wife’s support was essential for him to carry out his role.

[Elena Danescu] And yet she was rarely seen in public. She didn't appear much in public.

[Henri Werner] She didn't appear much before the general public, but she was very active in diplomatic circles and at home with us. So she was very much present with us and very active in dialoguing with my father. When he came home in the evenings, she would say, '*A Pierre, lo kenne mer iessen*' (Ah, Pierre, now we can eat.) Then, straight afterwards, she would ask, '*A wat gëtt et neits?*' (What's new?) So he would start telling her everything that had happened during the day, and she would advise him, listen to him and make comments.

[Elena Danescu] She also was also very actively, yet very discreetly, involved in cultural and charity organisations.

[Henri Werner] That's right. She instigated the Jewish–Christian dialogue in Luxembourg, together with Mr Israël and other key intellectual figures. I would say that she was the driving force behind this moment. My father also shared this very ecumenical, very open attitude. They were progressive believers. I'd even say that they were more modern than us. I feel as though we have regressed in the meantime. They were at the pinnacle of progress in terms of dialogue. I am still the treasurer of this inter-denominational association, which still exists to date. My mother was also involved in community service. She used to look after fairground people. Our house was opposite the fairground in Luxembourg, and the parish priest asked my mother to hand out the parish newsletter to the fairground workers. So my mother took the leaflets and went round the little caravans to see the fairground families, one by one. She found that she couldn't simply hand them the document, she engaged in conversations with them. They told her about their lives and she was fascinated. She also saw that there was a problem with the children of these fairground families. She saw that no one took care of their schooling. So she arranged for classes to be held for those children throughout the duration of the Luxembourg fair. The families were so grateful that even today some of those children, who have now grown up but still work in the same trade, come and greet us when we go to the fair and say to us, 'Your mother did such great things for us!'

II. Pierre Werner — his early days in politics, his mentors (Joseph Bech, Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet) and the European idea

[Elena Danescu] After the Second World War, bolstered by his banking experience, Pierre Werner joined the newly established Finance Ministry as an attaché, responsible in particular for the new organisation of the banking system. He then became Pierre Dupong's adviser and Deputy Secretary-General of the government. In this capacity, he was involved in the financial project related to the administrative and regulatory reorganisation of the country as well as in negotiations and representations connected with regional and international organisations. Are you aware of the issues of urgent interest for which he was responsible at the time?

[Henri Werner] I was just a small child at the time and was completely unaware of the important things my father was doing. I knew that he travelled a lot. Once, he went to Bretton Woods in the United States to accompany the Prime Minister. He flew there in a Boeing Stratocruiser, which was a double-decker aircraft. I was fascinated by America when I was a child. When he returned home, he brought us presents from the States. That's the image I had of his activities and trips. Later on, I learned that it had been a very important period of his life and that he had been very proud of the loan he negotiated with the International Monetary Fund for the reconstruction of the country. This reconstruction was extremely important to him. It was a way of putting right what had happened beforehand — this terrible war which he had unfortunately had to endure. So he did his utmost to remove the traces of this horrendous war.

[Elena Danescu] During the same period, Pierre Werner joined the Christian Social Party. Do you know who his mentors and peers were at the time? Did he maintain his contacts and continue the exchanges of ideas that he had at the very beginning?

[Henri Werner] Before joining the Christian Social Party, he already played a very active role in Catholic organisations. Even back in his student days, he was involved in the *Akademiker Verein*, or the AV as we called it, an association of Luxembourg university students. He even became President of the association. In a way, this must have helped prepare him for his introduction to the world of politics after the war. I remember that once, when I was just five years old, I went with him to the *Volkshaus* where a Christian Social Party congress was being held, and I saw a crowd of men in the cloakroom, all dressed in black. The cloakroom was full of black coats and black hats; it was a bit dull. There were all these men talking, and as a child, I didn't know what it was all about. I found these people terribly dull and boring in comparison with our life at home which was so — how should I put it — so happy and so appealing.

[Elena Danescu] So Pierre Werner drew a line between his public life, professional life and private life?

[Henri Werner] Intentionally, yes, because he didn't want his family to be a victim of his political career. He made allowances for this and wanted to guarantee that we, his children, would have a normal childhood, like everyone else.

[Elena Danescu] And to whom was he closest out of his colleagues and peers at the time?

[Henri Werner] He was very close to one friend, Tony Biever, who was a lawyer, like him, and who also worked in the same law firm. So he was definitely someone my father was very close to. Another was Émile Lemmer, who was also a member of the Christian Social Party. Then there was Léon Schaus, Director of the Tax Administration, whom he knew very well.

[Elena Danescu] On his birthday in 1953, Pierre Werner was appointed Finance Minister. Then he took on the ministerial portfolios of finance and the armed forces in the government led by Joseph Bech. How did this appointment come about?

[Henri Werner] It was according to the wishes of the Prime Minister, Pierre Dupong. He said that if ever there was an interim position to be filled, Mr Werner should be the one to fill it. That's specifically what he requested, and alas Mr Dupong unfortunately suffered a fatal fall on a ship during his journey back from the United States. As there were only a few months left before the next elections, Pierre Dupong's request was fulfilled and my father was appointed Finance Minister. So he wasn't voted in, he was granted the position thanks to Mr Dupong's wishes. And there's a story behind this. My father often told us about the time when he was sitting with Mr Dupong in front of the Rockefeller Center in Manhattan, sipping a whisky, and Mr Dupong said to him, 'Mr Werner, let's discuss your future now.' And that became a key moment in his life. At that moment, he understood that Mr Dupong had great plans for him.

[Elena Danescu] How did Mr Werner view this appointment at the helm of the government?

[Henri Werner] If I remember rightly, he saw it as a great honour, a tremendous joy. The Grand Duchess announced to him, 'Mr Werner, I have a birthday present for you, you're going to be appointed minister.' And I think he really saw it as a present, as an opportunity. I think this motivated him a great deal. I remember this when I look at the portraits from that period. He is

simply beaming. I recall not really understanding what a finance minister was when I was a child; I was a bit lost. But despite this, I could see that my father was flourishing.

[Elena Danescu] You have mentioned some of the key figures of the time, such as Pierre Dupong and Joseph Bech, but did you actually know them yourself? Do you have any personal memories of them?

[Henri Werner] Yes. Joseph Bech was a very close friend of my father's. He was, one might say, the master, the person he turned towards. My father always followed Mr Bech's advice. Mr Bech was really his point of reference. He was a jovial man, a talented diplomat with a lot of experience in the government. He had had to face the pre-war period, which was extremely hard for him, and we often overlook this nowadays. I don't think he's given enough justice. He fought well against the rising Nazism and no one talks about that any longer today. It's not fair. People always talk about the famous 'muzzle law', but we must understand the full context of the time. My father always regarded Mr Bech as a great statesman. He was one of my father's great inspirations. Another great statesman was obviously Pierre Dupong, my father's mentor, who shaped my father's social thinking. Pierre Dupong was a great social thinker; he represented the Christian social movement, as opposed to the socialist movement. It was a movement which was in favour of social justice and the development of the workforce, but was also deeply inspired by Christianity. From this perspective, Pierre Dupong had an enormous influence on him. Joseph Bech often spoke to him when they were travelling together. My father told me about the time when he was sitting on a hill in Rome with Joseph Bech, and they could see the Vatican and St Peter's Basilica, and Mr Bech said, 'Mr Werner, just imagine, the entire human race is looking at this place!' My father found that thought interesting, because Mr Bech was not a very devout man, but he did see how important the Church was.

[Elena Danescu] The time when Mr Werner joined the government coincided with a pivotal period of European integration, considered as an existential challenge for a small country like Luxembourg. Do you know how Mr Werner came into contact with the European idea?

[Henri Werner] That's a very important question that you've just asked and I think I might be able to provide a key to the answer. Actually, when I was preparing my files for your collections, I realised that he participated in several congresses of the Pax Romana movement, an international intellectual Catholic movement, which still exists to date, in fact, and for which my father acted as a key promoter. He used to take part in the congresses of the movement, and one particular congress was attended by all the European nations as well as some countries outside of Europe, and this is where I believe he forged some very close contacts with representatives of other European countries. When I read the congress proceedings it seems to me that this feeling of being European stemmed from that movement. In a Christian context, imagine the post-war period when people had to bury the hatchet — well this very idea of reconciliation is a Christian one, of Catholic origin. He suddenly saw this reconciliation as the only long-term solution to European problems. I think this is a vision which emerged during these meetings that he had.

[Elena Danescu] Could you tell us exactly when he first participated in these Pax Romana congresses?

[Henri Werner] It was back in the 1930s. Then the meetings started up again in 1945 and he participated regularly until 1953. When he became a minister, he was no longer able to take part, although he did go to the odd event.

[Elena Danescu] Do you know anything about his meetings with Jean Monnet at that time?

[Henri Werner] Yes, he described Jean Monnet to me first and foremost as a spiritual man, a visionary with kindness written all over his face; someone who believed that there is good in mankind, that peace is possible, that reconciliation could follow the war and cancel out the effects of the war. He always considered Jean Monnet as a great visionary and a great thinker. In fact, when looking at their faces I can even see a resemblance in their expression, a certain clarity and a certain openness. So I can see some character traits that he shared with Jean Monnet, also in terms of their Christian view of the world and of society. In contrast to Jean Monnet, he saw Robert Schuman as a pragmatist, the man who knew how to translate Monnet's visions into a real political project, who had this incredible idea of pooling coal and steel — which were the instruments of the war, because these raw materials were used for making cannons — this idea of transforming these tools into tools pooled among several countries.

[Elena Danescu] Let's go back to Robert Schuman, another great Luxembourger, another instigator of European integration. Do you know when the two men first met?

[Henri Werner] They met in 1935 in the Paris University halls of residence, which were in the middle of being built. My father was one of the first students to live in the Biermans-Lapôte house, which is still the house for Belgian and Luxembourg students today. This is where he met Robert Schuman, who always retained his close rapport with Luxembourg and never rejected his country of origin. In fact, Schuman went as far as to spread pro-Luxembourg propaganda in the Parisian intellectual world. He also wrote an article on the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in the Paris University journal in 1935. Robert Schuman also gave my father an initial insight into the world of public administration by taking him to a French administration office where he saw how the ministries worked. That was my father's first contact with the world of public administration.

[Elena Danescu] Did they stay in touch afterwards?

[Henri Werner] Yes, they did, because there are photos of them both together. He never gave any details about these meetings, but they did meet up repeatedly.

[Elena Danescu] As Minister for the Economy, Finance and Defence, Mr Werner became increasingly prominent at European and international level, both bilaterally and multilaterally. He was also involved in international official events hosted by the Grand Duchy. What relationships did he forge with key European and international figures, his peers at the time?

[Henri Werner] When he became a minister, he was obviously regularly in contact with the members of European governments, and I know that he was in touch with Konrad Adenauer. I believe he was also in contact with Alcide De Gasperi. At any rate, he had an in-depth file on this leading figure. Naturally, he also had contacts in France, Belgium and the Netherlands, especially with Mr Spaak.

[Elena Danescu] Considering the longevity of Mr Werner's political career, did his initial contacts develop into friendships?

[Henri Werner] In some cases, yes. I could name, as one example, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, whom my father already knew when he was a senior official at the Finance Ministry. Mr Giscard d'Estaing was his French counterpart, also working for the state at the Finance Ministry. So in fact they had already met each other at meetings before my father had even begun his political career. So, he followed the career of Mr Giscard and vice versa, then afterwards they met again in the European Council. Therefore, we could say that my father had a very long-standing friendship with Mr Giscard d'Estaing.

[Elena Danescu] Their relationship was in fact very beneficial to the progress of European monetary questions.

[Henri Werner] Quite. My father always made a lot of progress whenever he had Mr Giscard d'Estaing as his negotiating partner. The two men worked very well together.

[Elena Danescu] Moving on to 1959, on 1 February Grand Duchess Charlotte entrusted Pierre Werner with the task of forming a new government. Pierre Werner took over at the helm of this coalition government between the Christian Social Party and the Democratic Party, while remaining Finance Minister. This became a tradition for Luxembourg prime ministers. What memories do you have exactly of that time? How did he approach his new role as head of government and how did he manage to assert his authority?

[Henri Werner] Before answering your question, I'd like to explain the circumstances. You have to remember that he was appointed minister towards the end of 1953, that he was elected for the first time and was immediately one of the best, if not *the* best candidate in the 1954 elections, and that he straight away became Prime Minister in 1959 — that's very fast progress. It's quite exceptional to see a politician come from a non-political background and face an electorate who take to him and welcome him immediately. He must have been extraordinarily influential. He had this influence over people which earned him an overwhelming number of votes. There was also a prophecy made in 1935, when he became President of the Association of Catholic University Students. When my father finished his first presidential address, the man who would later become Bishop Lommel told my father, '*Pierre, du gëss nach eng kéier Statsminister*' (Pierre, one day you will be Minister of State). And sure enough, in 1959 it became a reality. At that time, His Lordship Lommel was Bishop of Luxembourg and my father, Minister of State.

[Elena Danescu] So the prophecy came true, and above all he became Minister of State at the young age of just 46.

[Henri Werner] Yes, and at Parliament people made comments about this. I don't remember if it was Mr Schaus who said, 'With all these young ministers ...' To which my father replied, 'I am young, it's true, but for souls nobly born, valour does not await the passing of years.' [Laughter] Then later on, he always said, 'People have always had a problem with my age. First I was too young, then in 1979 I was too old. What did I do? I'm always the wrong age.' [Laughter]

III. Pierre Werner, statesman, and the affirmation of Luxembourg's role in the European integration process

[Elena Danescu] In 1961, the Luxembourg Government decided to build an administrative centre dedicated to Europe. And this is how the European Kirchberg district came into being. Do you remember the discussions related to this project? Was the Kirchberg European centre part of a headquarters policy or a strategy aiming to establish the definitive headquarters of one or more European institutions in Luxembourg?

[Henri Werner] The Kirchberg project certainly had a symbolic value. It was the growth of a city. You know that Luxembourg is a fortress city, and several city walls were built throughout the ages because each time the wall had become too small. Well, we could say that this project opened the last city wall, opening up the city onto a new plateau. The decision was taken to construct this very elegant steel bridge which represented, to some extent, the modern, steel-producing Luxembourg of the 20th century. Also, the steel itself was another reminder of the first European Coal and Steel

Community. The idea was to start building an administrative centre, and there's this tower block, which still stands, which had a symbolic value. It was Luxembourg's first 'skyscraper', if we can call it that. This marked a milestone for the future and the connotations were resolutely European, so we can really talk about that idea. It was a construction project, but also a project to turn Luxembourg into an administrative centre of the European Community.

[Elena Danescu] Do you remember any discussions on the key European issues for Luxembourg, with regard to the Kirchberg plateau?

[Henri Werner] Yes. My father often spoke about this. His ambition was to make Luxembourg a European capital. He always refused to make Luxembourg the only capital in Europe. In fact, Mr Bech had already taken that stance, by saying, 'Luxembourg is too small to be the capital of an entity as vast as the European Community'. If Luxembourg had been in favour, my father could have built premises at the European Parliament. But he didn't do it; this was also a conscious effort. My father's ambition was to make Luxembourg one of the centres of Europe, but not the only one. Given the scale of the country, he always explained to me that if we were the capital of Europe, like Brussels, and were home to all of the European administrations, there would be no room left for the rest of the country. There would be nothing other than the administrations. It would be like Washington D.C. The country itself would be like an administrative district of a greater Europe, and he didn't want that. He didn't want to erase the Luxembourgish identity. So that's why he wanted Luxembourg to have some administrations, but not all of them. He was also ... in terms of his choices ... he made determined choices. The Court of Justice ... he saw a great future — so in this case too he was a visionary. He saw a great future for the European Court of Justice. And look how right he was! Having the European Investment Bank in Luxembourg was also his idea. He negotiated all of that because he thought that these organisations were important and made Luxembourg very important, while providing an attractive labour market for qualified people.

[Elena Danescu] But he always ensured that the Luxembourgish identity was not lost in this European mass.

[Henri Werner] That's right. If it had been lost, it would have been a shame for Europe. After all, if Luxembourg has the virtue of being a crucible of European unification, it would have been almost suicidal to have killed off this culture which gave rise to the European idea. He wanted to maintain his country and he wanted his country to keep its identity.

[Elena Danescu] Now, let's move on to the period from 1964 to 1967, during which Mr Werner was President of the Government, Minister for the Treasury, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Justice. Following the elections of 7 June 1964, Mr Werner formed a new government, a coalition between the Christian Social Party and the Socialist Workers' Party. Defending Luxembourg's position as the European headquarters was one of the country's priorities. Pierre Werner was also assigned the foreign affairs portfolio so as to directly defend Luxembourg's interests on both the political and technical fronts. At the same time, Luxembourg was once again called on to hold the Presidency of the Council. In this context, Pierre Werner managed to secure the Luxembourg Compromise that put an end to a serious crisis for European integration. First of all, what are your memories of that period?

[Henri Werner] This was a period when he was ... — well, he was always brilliant — but when we could see the fruit of his talent. So indeed, there's this example of the Luxembourg Compromise when he managed to break the deadlock after very long discussions. We should also mention the empty chair crisis, which prevailed during same period, when France boycotted the European Community. My father was able to incite the French to resume negotiations, particularly thanks to his relationship with Mr Faure, I think. At this point, I remember people considering this a

tremendous success. I recall people saying to me at the time, ‘Now, we have to use Mr Werner for all negotiations with the Soviet Union; we need a negotiator like him for the negotiations between the European Community and the Soviet Union, to confront the Russians.’

[Elena Danescu] Mr Werner is said to have obtained the Luxembourg Compromise thanks to his personal relations. Who were his correspondents at the time? Who were his dialogue partners who helped to put an end to this deadlock?

[Henri Werner] I’m afraid I can’t tell you, I don’t know who those people were. But I do know he was excellent at forging links. Whenever there was a reception, he was always there. Even if an embassy in Luxembourg gave a reception, he was there. If there was a chance to make contacts — today we call it networking — he was already networking back then. He built up bilateral contacts. He was always easy to approach. He was a jovial man who attracted people. And he always had a topic of conversation, his horizons were so broad that you could put him together with anybody and he’d always find something to talk about. He always had something in common with the people he met because he had such a broad cultural outlook. I think that this cultural knowledge played a very large role here.

[Elena Danescu] We mentioned Mr Werner’s term as Minister for Foreign Affairs. At that time, the illustrious professor and legal expert, Pierre Pescatore, took on the role of Secretary-General of the Ministry. Pierre Werner continued to involve him in the implementation of Luxembourg’s foreign and European policy and in the organisation of Luxembourg’s own autonomous diplomacy. What memories do you have about how the two men, who were related as well as connected by a great intellectual complicity, jointly prepared the major European and international projects of the time?

[Henri Werner] The example that you’ve just given is another one of those coincidences which made the phenomenon of Mr Werner’s career possible, because in fact, Mr Pescatore was a brilliant mind. He can be considered as one of Luxembourg’s main intellectuals. He published much more than any other Luxembourger and was an accomplished expert in international law. Furthermore, Mr Pescatore himself helped to draw up the Treaty of Rome. I think he was the one who duplicated the Treaty of Rome [Laughter]. He had stories to tell about that. He had an in-depth knowledge of international treaties and was therefore a key person. But what’s strange is that he was actually my father’s brother-in-law, because Mr Pescatore was my mother’s brother. So we used to see him at all the family gatherings, and Mr Pescatore used to come to our house during the period you referred to. He used to pop by every day after lunch, for a cup of coffee. I recall my father reading *La Libre Belgique*, *Luxemburger Wort*, *Le Monde*, with Mr Pescatore sitting opposite him, the two of them debating international issues. Mr Pescatore would advise him, and I’d say this enabled him to benefit from free advice from an eminent expert. As my father was also good at listening and learning, this helped him to shine on the international stage. Mr Pescatore, just like my mother, should be considered as one of those people, part of that circle in which my father felt good, where he felt supported, on which he could ... You know, sometimes he would say to me, ‘When you are a politician, sometimes you feel as though you’re all alone. You have to take decisions, all on your own, which could drastically change the future of millions of people.’ So Mr Pescatore acted as an adviser to my father and was someone to whom he could tell very confidential things. I can remember their friendly relations, and I’ll never forget those great moments when Mr Pescatore was around, when I would sit discreetly in the corner of the same room and listen to their conversations. It was an extremely fruitful exchange. My father liked to listen to Mr Pescatore’s advice, but sometimes he would also tell me that Mr Pescatore was too stuck in the mindset of a legal expert. He would say to me, ‘Politics isn’t just about law. To be a good politician it’s very useful and very important to be a legal specialist, but the focus shouldn’t be exclusively on the science of law. Politics is more than just the science of law.’ He said to me, ‘Mr Pescatore sometimes has a

tendency to be a brilliant legal expert, so he no longer sees the more psychological, more political side of things — the communication and sociological aspects, and so on.’ Politics is a highly complex science, and he revelled in that. My father used to say, ‘I like politics because it’s a universal science. Politics deals with everything; it deals, amongst other things, with law and even with technology in the event of a satellite launch, for example; it also deals with sociology, psychology and communication. Politics is really a universal science.’

[Elena Danescu] It’s also about ethics and morals.

[Henri Werner] Yes, but law also has these elements. In law, there is an ethical and moral project. And in politics, the political project per se obviously has that side too. This was the driving force behind his political work; it was his view of the world, a Christian view of mankind. He believed in all that is good. Having lived through fascism, he knew that there was good in mankind because he saw how people put up a resistance and how, despite an atrocious power, people managed to resist. So I think he believed it was possible to do something better. He believed that progress was possible, and because of this very belief he was able to initiate progress.

[Elena Danescu] We mentioned the fact that the finance and treasury portfolios were jointly assigned to the Prime Minister and Head of Government as of the beginning of Mr Werner’s terms of office. As such, he was able to participate in many Councils of Finance Ministers at which he was also the President. These meetings were often likened to those of a club. Did he share this idea, and if so, which peer was he closest to in this club?

[Henri Werner] Yes, he did see it as being a bit like a club. There were all these people who belonged to his political camp. There was, for example, Emilio Colombo, Italy’s Finance Minister and one of my father’s best friends. They often took counsel together. During meetings, my father would often refrain from speaking first, because Mr Bech had always advised him, very usefully, that Luxembourg was an extremely small country and should act accordingly. The big players don’t like it when we want to be like them. We are a small country and we should show that we are aware of this. We are a sovereign country, but a modest country. So I believe that he adopted a modest approach and liked to listen first of all. He also told me that the Italians and French tended to talk too much. This often went against them, because once they had taken a stance, they could no longer go back on what they had said. This is how he managed to obtain leeway in negotiations, by allowing the others to talk. He would also let the Germans talk, and at the end, he would say, ‘I see these things that go well together between you here, and I see differences here.’ He took things into consideration; he helped these groups of countries to find common solutions. That was the mediating role that Luxembourg has played ever since. This was partly thanks to the language skills of our ministers, who could speak at least three languages. My father also spoke Italian, so he could understand his colleagues when they were speaking in their own tongues and speak whenever he wanted to. He could also perceive the misunderstandings. He could understand the French mentality; he knew about the French and German social realities and could therefore understand where the misunderstandings occurred between these two neighbours who always have such trouble dialoguing with one another. The problem still persists to date, as we have seen [Laughter]. Once again, before Mrs Merkel took her decision, it would have been useful to have a Luxembourger to bring her together with the French and ask, ‘And how are we going to do that?’ Thanks to my father’s modesty and intelligence, he was accepted right away as an equal partner. And from that time on — I also remember that before that time, Luxembourg was virtually a nonentity; the country was practically unheard of, even in Strasbourg they didn’t know Luxembourg — and suddenly, from that time on, Luxembourg started playing a political role on the international stage.

[Elena Danescu] You mean the time in 1966 when ...

[Henri Werner] Yes, at that time, when Luxembourg suddenly emerged. Pierre Pescatore undoubtedly also had something to do with that.

[Elena Danescu] You have cited Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Emilio Colombo as his peers. Who was he closest to on the German side?

[Henri Werner] He was very close to Chancellor Erhard. He liked him a lot. Once, in 1962, a terrible event took place. A former Nazi judge was acquitted in Koblenz. When my father heard about it, he immediately protested on behalf of the Luxembourgish people, because this person had served as a military judge in Luxembourg during the war. Then Chancellor Erhard said, '*Ich bin absolut mit Ihnen einverstanden*' (I completely agree with you). He often quoted those words. By that, he meant that Erhard's approach ... He meant that it was a new generation of men who had nothing to do with this terrible past; these were men who were rebuilding their country — a new Germany. So I'd say that Chancellor Erhard represented to some extent this new Germany. My father always found Adenauer too old. Well, he was of course convinced of his virtues — and Konrad Adenauer had a lot of virtues — but he also told me that he had stayed in power a little too long; at some point he should have left the stage. But he had very cordial relationships with Adenauer's successors. He found it a bit harder when the socialists came to power. Willy Brandt and also ..., well, Helmut Schmidt — I think he was a socialist, wasn't he? — he still had a very good relationship with Helmut Schmidt. Willy Brandt was more alien. However, Helmut Kohl considered him as a friend, and always referred to him as *Mein lieber Freund Pierre Werner* (My dear friend Pierre Werner). He liked dealing with this new generation of German politicians, and in this respect he actively worked towards the exemplary reconciliation between Luxembourg and Germany. For example, at the time he was launching a plan to set up the Société Électrique de l'Our in Vianden, a giant dam with a giant reservoir, turbines and everything. First of all, the capital had to be raised and he knew how to do this as he used to be a banker. He was also a legal expert and knew which international treaties were necessary for such an undertaking. He allowed himself to be guided, and it was a great German–Luxembourg achievement, i.e. a Luxembourg factory which bought German electricity, turned it into peak current, then sold it — and indeed still sells it — back to Germany. And now, with the wind turbines, this plant is becoming ever more important. That was a specific project which represented the German–Luxembourg friendship. I'd say it's one of the symbols of the new relationship between Luxembourg and Germany.

[Elena Danescu] In his memoirs, Pierre Werner relates that during the first half of 1967, there were rumours that he would stand as President of the Commission of the European Communities. The general public know nothing of this. Could you tell us a little more?

[Henri Werner] Yes, I knew that too. But he secretly told me that such a position didn't interest him. At the time, the Commission was a purely executive body whose role was to make sure that the treaties were complied with and to operate the administrative machinery. My father wanted to be a real politician; he wanted to shape Europe at a political level, and as head of the Luxembourg Government he had many more opportunities than as President of the Commission. In fact, Mr Juncker shares this view today. I think that Mr Juncker prefers being Prime Minister of Luxembourg because as such, he is Prime Minister of a sovereign state. PMs have the right to vote and can participate in all the councils; they can communicate and exert their influence. So they have much more political clout.

IV. Pierre Werner, the Werner Report and monetary Europe

[Elena Danescu] Now, if you would be so kind, let's discuss the topic of the Belgo–Luxembourg Economic Union and the Benelux. This is the period when cooperation within this Economic Union gained new momentum with new substance in terms of harmonising economic policy, with a redefined monetary regime and the introduction of a political body, the Committee of Ministers. As I said earlier, the monetary aspect was a prominent feature given the specific situation of Luxembourg and Mr Werner's personal preoccupations in the economic and monetary field. What was your father's view of European integration and when did he come up with the idea of a monetary vector as a vector of European integration?

[Henri Werner] The monetary vector idea dates back a very, very long time. In fact, he was a banker when the Nazi occupiers arrived. As director of the bank, he was forced to convert the Luxembourg franc into the Reichsmark. At the end of the war, he had to do the opposite: convert the Reichsmark back into the Luxembourg franc. So this was his first contact with a view to monetary union with Belgium after the war. He witnessed the monetary problem. He held the notes in his hand and observed the monetary phenomenon. He also saw the cooperation between Luxembourg and Belgium. He said to himself that if it worked on a small scale, it could also do so on a larger scale. If it involved two currencies, it could also involve 15 currencies. So I'd say this idea progressed gradually, and he was in a position whereby he was naturally the first to come up with the idea of a European monetary union. It was because of his unique situation of having been a banker before and after the occupation, then a senior official at the Finance Ministry. He was also the first inspector from the banking sector, so he had very in-depth, unrivalled knowledge of the monetary phenomenon.

[Elena Danescu] At the time, among his political partners, with which peers did he engage in intellectual exchanges? With whom did he hold discussions, conferences and meetings on economic and monetary issues?

[Henri Werner] I know that he had a lot of meetings with Professor Triffin — I believe he was from Harvard University — so he was in contact with several specialists. He also participated in congresses where such exchanges of ideas took place.

[Elena Danescu] With the same goal of economic diversification, this first government led by Pierre Werner paid particular attention to the financial centre. In light of his role, but also his personal preoccupations and approach in favour of a single European currency, Mr Werner set up a sort of informal economic and monetary think tank in the early 1960s comprised of bankers and other specialists in Luxembourg. Do you know about or remember this group? If so, what do you remember about the participants, topics and proceedings of these discussions?

[Henri Werner] I don't have any details about that. I didn't know that group existed. I do know that he often mentioned certain bankers; I recall someone named Toto Schleimer, then there was Mr Kremer of the Banque Générale du Luxembourg, and Mr Israël was surely one of these figures. There was also the director of the Banque Internationale à Luxembourg, but I can't remember his name right now. I remember that he had close relationships with those people.

[Elena Danescu] Let's now move on to 1969, to the Hague Summit, where the Heads of State and Government of the Six decided to create a group of experts to explore the path towards an economic and monetary union by stages. In early March 1970, Mr Werner was made chairman of this group, which organised 14 plenary sessions between 20 March and 8 October, nine of which were held in Luxembourg. The Werner Report drawn up by this ad hoc group was submitted on 8 October and published on 15 October of the same year. Regarding the objectives of the Hague Summit, Raymond Barre declared, 'This decision of the Heads of State and Government is the fruit of an agreement between Mr Pompidou and the German Chancellor, Willy Brandt, as well as Jean

Monnet.’ Do you know any more about the political and monetary negotiations led by Mr Werner, who was leader of this ad hoc group?

[Henri Werner] No, I don’t, but I do find it quite natural that he was appointed to this position, because he knew the topic well and had proven himself to be a good negotiator. I was very proud of him. We were proud and found it quite natural that he was entrusted with such responsibility given the results he had already achieved in other respects.

[Elena Danescu] Do you know what his relationships were like with President Pompidou and Chancellor Brandt?

[Henri Werner] Yes, I found an extremely cordial letter that Chancellor Willy Brandt had sent to him to congratulate him on his plan. It’s full of praise and Chancellor Brandt said that he would give his full attention to this venture. He enjoyed a good, cordial relationship with Georges Pompidou. It’s true that at the time, there was the matter of the nuclear power plant in Cattenom; there were discussions, but nothing which tarnished their bilateral relations. My father spoke very highly of Georges Pompidou, and I recall my mother’s cries when he passed away.

[Elena Danescu] Despite being launched on 22 March 1971, the Werner Plan only achieved results 32 years later with the introduction of euro coins and notes. Do you remember how Mr Werner felt about the gradual abandonment of the Werner Plan?

[Henri Werner] He remained in fine fettle, and I admired him for it. His face gave away no signs of discouragement. He simply said to me, ‘You know, the big players aren’t interested. They want to retain their power. France and Germany feel that they have got more power when they are autonomous states and they aren’t too keen on sharing their sovereignty. They are afraid of losing it. It just goes to show that they haven’t understood the idea of Europe, that’s their problem.’ That’s more or less how he said it. He also said to me, ‘As long as there’s no political will to create a monetary union, there won’t be one. Full stop.’ These comments weren’t scientific or economic, but rather political. He said, ‘From a political point of view, they aren’t ready for the euro.’ And I can tell you that his astonishment knew no bounds when the Treaty of Maastricht was concluded. He said to me, ‘Well, that’s incredible. Good sense has prevailed. What happened? They’ve changed their minds. They’ve suddenly understood. How is that possible?’ He was absolutely delighted about the Treaty of Maastricht.

[Elena Danescu] The idea and objectives of the Werner Plan therefore became a reality 30 years after they were conceived. In the Delors Committee report, Jacques Delors said, and I quote, ‘We have reached an agreement on the three stages taken fully from the Werner Report: stage one involves strengthening coordination as from 1 July 1990, stage two is a transition phase towards the final stage, preparing the definitive institutions of the European Economic and Monetary Union, and the final stage involves irrevocably fixing the exchange rates between the currencies and with the single currency.’ Which of the leading figures who followed him did Pierre Werner see as the upholders of his monetary thesis?

[Henri Werner] Well, there’s the person you just mentioned, and there was also Raymond Barre, whom he was also very close to. There was Leo Tindemans and Raymond Barre, who was to some extent the person who continued his work. Unfortunately, he was a member of the Opposition for a certain period, so he was no longer operating at such a high level.

V. Luxembourg on the path to European integration: improved relations with Germany, economic synergies and monetary tension with Belgium

[Elena Danescu] One of the first events which Pierre Werner's first government had to face was the social conflict sparked in the mining industry. As Prime Minister, Werner set up a mediation system which would later represent the foundations of Luxembourg's social peace. This was an initial action dedicated to the dialogue and compromise that Pierre Werner would perform brilliantly later on. I would like to ask you if you know about any informal meetings or discussions that Mr Werner had at the time, both internally and with his Belgian counterpart, or with other prime ministers who were partners in the ECSC.

[Henri Werner] I don't have any information about his contacts. I would like to make a minor amendment to your statement. You mentioned compromise, and it's important to know exactly what is meant by 'compromise'. He wasn't someone who made false compromises. He wanted what we call today 'win-win solutions' which benefit everyone. He always wanted greater solutions. So if we understand compromise as a greater solution, then yes, he knew how to create compromises. He tried to have a full view of a situation. He always said, 'There are two sides to every coin. And you have to see both of them, you have to see all the interests at stake and establish which are the legitimate interests and the most important interests.' Among the contradictions which may arise in life, it's necessary to make allowances and find a balance which best corresponds to the various partners' expectations. So in this respect, he was a master of mediation to a certain extent. He was also a master listener. He let people speak and thought before he replied. He tried to find the points in common, to highlight the various differences and, on that basis, he had a certain way of bringing people together to brainstorm ideas and look for original solutions. I think that this approach suited him perfectly, but I don't know who inspired him in it.

[Elena Danescu] The cooperation within the Belgo-Luxembourg Economic Union and the Benelux was referred to as a genuine laboratory for European integration. Did he share this view?

[Henri Werner] Yes. For him, the Benelux was exemplary in several ways. First of all, it was an economic union which worked, at a time when Europe wasn't yet an economic union. And it was also a political union. We tend to forget that the Benelux is a political body. What's most extraordinary in the Benelux is that the political aspect is informal. It consists of a Benelux Parliament, where delegations of the national parliaments meet on a more or less informal basis. This idea, this somewhat spontaneous cooperation works very well. The Benelux practically operates without administrative fees, and my father saw this spontaneity as the expression of a political desire to cooperate. And in fact the Benelux appeared on the international scene as a partner. This fascinated my father, who also viewed it from a historian's perspective. He saw it as a certain extension of the history of our three Benelux countries which have historical links — for example, we were together under the Austrian domination. There were times when Luxembourg belonged to the Netherlands; there was a part of Luxembourg which was handed over to Belgium. So there are all these historical links, which my father also saw. And from that point of view too, he was very much in favour of Belgo-Luxembourg exchanges. He often thought of the former Duchy of Luxembourg, whereas most Luxembourgers suppress that period and think that Luxembourg came into being when the German-speaking sector of Luxembourg became independent. My father believed that the former Duchy was Luxembourg's model. A bilingual state with a Walloon sector and a German-speaking sector. And he saw this state as a model, which is why he continued to cultivate links with our cousins in the Belgian Province of Luxembourg. That's also one of the starting points which led to the Belgo-Luxembourg Economic Union.

[Elena Danescu] Earlier on, you mentioned the period when Gaston Thorn was promoted to President of the Commission. This is the period when Pierre Werner gained an overwhelming

majority in the 1979 elections and once again took on the roles of Head of Government, President of the Government, as well as Minister for the Treasury and Minister for Cultural Affairs. After his time on the Opposition bench, the beginning of this new term of office, which ran from 1979 to 1984, was characterised by two overlapping crises, namely a new phase of the iron and steel crisis and Belgo–Luxembourg monetary tensions. Do you remember how these events unfolded, particularly the aforementioned monetary crisis, and how Mr Werner managed this period of tensions within the Belgo–Luxembourg Economic Union?

[Henri Werner] I was a direct witness of this affair. We were on holiday by Lake Garda, I believe, and we had a beautiful day ahead of us. We were at the lake when a fax arrived — at the time we didn't have e-mails — from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, saying, 'Problem: the Belgian Government is devaluing the Belgian franc.' My father was furious. He said it was a breach of confidence. He seriously envisaged uncoupling the Luxembourg and Belgian francs and wanted to introduce a parity of 1.25. But at the time, the majority of Luxembourgers had invested their money in Belgian francs. He wasn't sure whether the savings accounts were in Belgian or Luxembourg francs. Because of this incertitude, he couldn't do it, but he would have liked to have done it, for political reasons — to teach Belgium a lesson. He wasn't able to do it, but I'd say that this event had a negative impact on his image of Belgium and I believe the politicians said to the Belgian ambassador, 'You don't realise the damage that the Belgian Government has done. It has lost all of the Luxembourg Government's trust.' The political weight of this decision, this breach of a treaty with a small nation; it was a scandal. It remains a scandal which tarnishes Belgium's image. My father was always very fond of Belgium. For my part, I studied in Belgium and was also very fond of the country and indeed still am, but Belgium's political actions here were really quite scandalous.

[Elena Danescu] So, on the basis of Prime Minister Werner's train of thought, Luxembourg envisaged quitting the Belgo–Luxembourg Economic Union.

[Henri Werner] That's right.

[Elena Danescu] Even despite the fact that Luxembourg had no central bank?

[Henri Werner] Yes, indeed. He would have literally created a central bank in one ... He seriously considered it.

[Elena Danescu] In fact, didn't the idea of the Luxembourg Monetary Institute emerge as a result of this event?

[Henri Werner] That's exactly right. Also, accounts became denominated in Luxembourg francs. From then on, my current account at the Banque générale was in Luxembourg francs. My salary was suddenly in Luxembourg francs. This at least gave a clear message that things couldn't happen like that and that it hadn't been the right thing to do.

[Elena Danescu] Aside from the development and modernisation of the country, another priority of Pierre Werner's first government was to normalise relations with Germany. This was among the prime objectives of the Werner–Schaus Government, which thereby continued the reconciliation initiated under Joseph Bech. However, the treaty regulating the German–Luxembourg dispute was strongly opposed by those who had been conscripted by force, who felt discriminated against in relation to the resistance fighters. Tensions broke out in society, which were only really appeased 20 years later by another Werner government. Do you know how Mr Werner reacted to these moments of confrontation on such a painful topic?

[Henri Werner] He suffered enormously, because his own brother had been forcibly conscripted and I think it was the most tragic part of his life. My father lost his brother on the Russian front, following advice that he had given him. His brother had to be enlisted, but there was no more room to hide him in the mines. The Americans were already in Normandy and my father thought that they would be here before long, so he said to his brother, 'Go for it, by the time you arrive in Poland or Russia, the Americans will have already finished the war.' But he was wrong. He always blamed himself for the fact that his brother had to suffer a dreadful death in a foreign uniform — the dishonour, this inhumane deportation. So as you see, he was involved in the situation himself. This is why he couldn't understand the objections and I remember he voiced this with vigour, saying, 'Listen, look at what the Dutch had to endure, look at what martyred Rotterdam has done. Look, they are reconciling with the Germans. And why wouldn't the Luxembourgers be capable of doing the same?' At one time, when President Heinemann was on an official visit, he was ashamed to see these demonstrations. He found that they weren't fair. He also felt that the tragedy was as much for the resistance fighters as for those forcibly conscripted. They were all as courageous and as honest as one another. He knew this from his own experience. He had been a member of the resistance movement, his brother had been forcibly conscripted, but there was no difference between them, they were both courageous and honest people, it's just that their destinies were different. And he didn't understand how people could turn that into an almost political opposition between two groups. He suffered a great deal as a result of that.

[Elena Danescu] Within the same society; within Luxembourgish society?

[Henri Werner] Within the same Luxembourgish society, which was actually quite united in face of the occupying forces. Actually, I think we should dwell on this matter a little. My father had an aversion to fascism. He was supposed to spend his honeymoon in Italy, but when he witnessed the rise of Mussolini he said to my mother, 'Listen, we're not leaving Switzerland. We'll stay in Tessin. We're not going to Italy.' He really didn't want to go to this fascist country. It was the same when Hitler rose to power. My father had a natural aversion to Nazism and he obviously also suffered morally; he suffered terribly as a result of the lack of freedom and expression under the occupation and of the fear that prevailed. So he had experienced all of that. What's more, he had had a senior position in a bank, so he had really been exposed to the occupying forces. He had experienced some very hard times. I should also add that he was against Francoism. He never set foot in Francoist Spain. We never went to Spain on holiday. He also hated the South African apartheid regime. I remember that once we were in Bolzano, which is actually in South Tyrol, so it's an Alpine region with a Tyrolean feel. There's an Italian district in the city, which Mussolini artificially grafted. And my father immediately recognised the fascist style. 'Look at those arches built in a fascist style!' He said, 'I don't want to see this anymore, we have to leave!' He couldn't stand seeing it. He couldn't stand hearing Hitler's voice; it made him tremble. My sister studied history, and whenever she listened to Hitler's speeches on records my father would ask her to stop as he couldn't stand listening to them. He also had an aversion to the Soviet regime and the regime of the dictators of Central and Eastern Europe. I'd say that the only communist statesman for whom my father had a little respect was Tito, because he said, 'At least Tito had the courage first of all to unite and create the country of Yugoslavia, to overcome nationalism and to confront the Russians rather than doing everything they wanted.' He never said anything about Ceaușescu, so I can't imagine that he admired him very much [Laughter]. So there's that side of things, that whole fascist world and communist world, and that wasn't reconcilable with his view of things.

[Elena Danescu] Everything associated with dictatorships, disrespect for humans, demonstrations of force.

[Henri Werner] He saw that as a counter-example, as bad politics. We could also say, conversely, that having experienced the bad, very bad politics during the war, he had counter-examples of everything that shouldn't be done. And maybe that clarified his ideas.

VI. Pierre Werner — Crown Counsel

[Elena Danescu] In his role as Prime Minister, Mr Werner was also called upon to serve as Crown Counsel, bearing in mind that the PM has regular contact with his sovereign. He started his term as Head of Government under the reign of Grand Duchess Charlotte. He was even assigned one of the most delicate tasks, i.e. preparing for the dynastic transition and the accession of Grand Duke Jean. Do you have any personal recollections of the preparations for these events?

[Henri Werner] Yes, they met each week with the Head of State. He would go to the grand-ducal palace for about one hour each week to update the Head of State on political affairs. Grand Duchesse Charlotte and, after her, Grand Duke Jean were very interested and listened to him attentively. He had a relationship of total trust with the Grand Duchess and Grand Duke. I'd almost say a familiarity; not a distant familiarity, but one which followed the protocol. What I mean is that he didn't want a false familiarity. He wanted to respect the sovereign character of the Head of State and, in this way, he always strictly observed the protocol, while remaining very cordial and open. As a result, my father and the sovereign genuinely liked and trusted each other. He was also one of the main lawyers of the monarchy in general. Because the monarchy was called into question at the beginning of the 1960s, I can remember that. And he was terribly angry. The communist party wrote jokes about the Grand Duke; even the socialist newspaper wanted to abolish the monarchy. And my father fought against that. In the meantime, however, the socialists have changed their tune, because they respect the monarchy now. But at the time, it wasn't the case. My father, for his part, was a great defender of the monarchy. Once, he was in Rome with my mother and the grand-ducal couple, i.e. Grand Duke Jean and Grand Duchess Joséphine-Charlotte. There was an opera showing at the Colosseum, which was something exceptional. My parents had two tickets, which my father gave to the Grand Duke. He gave precedence to the sovereign and forfeited his trip to the theatre. He always gave precedence to him, in all respects. My father never spoke on behalf of the nation, because this was the Grand Duke's role. He never considered himself as Head of State. That was the Grand Duke. He was very clear about that. So as for the succession of Grand Duchess Charlotte, it was quite tricky, for the pure and simple reason that she was endowed with an absolutely exceptional charisma. First of all, she was an intelligent and beautiful woman, who represented Luxembourg during the occupation. She was a living symbol of the nation. So it was hard to know how to say to the people, 'This symbol is now going to change hands.' It was hard to know how to make this transition with Grand Duke Jean, who was also a remarkable person. So my father came up with the idea of a 'lieutenant representative'. He researched the history of Luxembourg and saw that Prince Henri of the Netherlands was Lieutenant Representative of the King of the Netherlands for Luxembourg. So he said to himself, 'Why not adopt this idea and say that Grand Duchess Charlotte will have a representative who will exercise all of her powers? So there will be a transition period during which there will be the sovereign plus her representative.' This idea was put into practice and for a certain time, the Grand Duke of Luxembourg also served as Lieutenant Representative of his mother, the Grand Duchess. And this was probably a very good way of making the transition; by gradually relieving the Grand Duchess of her responsibilities and passing them on to Grand Duke Jean.

[Elena Danescu] But this status required prior constitutional work in order to provide for this significant position in Luxembourg legislation. There was also all the international work of

introducing this key figure who had just obtained a new status in Luxembourg society within political circles and in the context of the time.

[Henri Werner] That's exactly right, and as a legal expert my father had the necessary knowledge to sort out all of those things. I wouldn't go so far as to say that he was infallible in his legal knowledge, but he certainly had solid foundations of the science of law, and he knew how to translate that into legislation. That was his key asset. I should also say, while we are on this subject, that he would undoubtedly be unhappy to hear that the Grand Duke lost some of his powers some time ago. He would never have let such a thing happen. He would never have done that. Never.

[Elena Danescu] Do you know anything about the attention that the sovereigns and Grand Duchess Charlotte, then Grand Duke Jean, paid to international issues and particularly European issues?

[Henri Werner] They were very interested in the European project, because in general the sovereigns knew each other at European level. Grand Duke Jean was married to the Princess of Belgium. Royal families have had European links for centuries. They were all naturally inclined to support the European idea with all their might. This being said, they couldn't actually take a political stance, as this was the governments' role. They never took a position in favour of Europe as such, but they always supported the formation of Europe with a great deal of generosity and confidence.

VII. Pierre Werner and his time in the Opposition (1974–1979)

[Elena Danescu] Let's now look at 1974 and at what Mr Werner referred to in his memoirs as a desert crossing. This was the time when the electoral context meant that the Christian Social Party became the Opposition party and Pierre Werner, elected as an MP, became the head of the Christian Social Party parliamentary group in the Chamber of Deputies. How did Mr Werner feel about this electoral failure and how did he start a new political life?

[Henri Werner] It was a huge challenge in his life and was extremely hard for him. I remember being at his first session at the Chamber of Deputies when he became Leader of the Opposition. All of a sudden, the government chauffeur came and said, 'I'd like to talk to the Minister of State.' 'But that's Gaston Thorn,' we replied. To which he responded, 'No, no, that's not who I mean, I want Mr Werner.' So people still called him the Minister of State when he no longer held that position. You see, he had become a bit of a symbolic figure really. I wouldn't say that he was a symbol for the country, because that was the Grand Duke's role, but he was like a father of the nation in some way. I remember my chaplain saying that my father had become the nation's father. That was just before the elections. And then, at the elections people voted for him; his party lost the elections, not him. He received an enormous number of votes. And because so many people had voted for him, some voters got angry and said that he didn't have the right to stand down with so many votes. He had more votes than Gaston Thorn, which meant that he should have taken on the role of Prime Minister. But my father wanted to teach the electorate a lesson on democracy. He wanted to say, 'Listen, if you don't support my party, you don't support me either. The votes you have given me are not credible, because if you support just me and not my party you're not worthy; I'm not meant to be your Prime Minister.' I recall that he took his decision very quickly. We were in the Ardennes, in my uncle's garden. We children were playing; it was a joyful party until suddenly the election results came in. We were dumbfounded. Claude Pescatore was there too. He didn't look too good and said to me, 'Henri, this is serious.' Claude Pescatore had his ears glued to the radio, Pierre Pescatore was there, then all of a sudden, the party was ruined and my mother started crying.

[Elena Danescu] The party had been in power for 25 years, so the Opposition had a low-profile status.

[Henri Werner] It was her opus and she felt humiliated, whereas my father remained in good shape. He said, 'Now, you're in for a surprise.' 'What?' 'Just watch the telly!' [Laughter]. He consulted with his fellow party members, went on TV and said, 'In these conditions, I'm moving to the Opposition,' which led to a general outcry. He was criticised, but he kept his word. He became a member of the Opposition. At first, I felt that he was ill at ease. I was there when he addressed the Chamber for the first time and I felt that he was uncomfortable. But he changed with time. He became someone else; by that I mean he called himself into question, and he was able to do that. Not everyone can do so, but he could. After a while, he found a good work pattern. He didn't like objecting, it wasn't in his nature. Instead, he carried out a lot of important activities for the country. The government asked him to sit near Luxembourg, which is what gave him the idea of the satellites. So this entire idea came about during his years in the Opposition.

[Elena Danescu] The lift from the 'Ville Haute' to the 'Grund' also took shape during the Opposition period.

[Henri Werner] Yes, well, that's a minor detail. There was an entire project that came into being during that period. And he also saw things differently. He became less authoritarian as a father; he changed, he became more collegial. I remember that when we were at secondary school he didn't give us many words of encouragement. But when he was in the Opposition, he suddenly became more humble and was capable of learning a lesson in humility. Most people wouldn't have been capable of doing that, but he was. He rethought his role and found his role. He also devoted more time to his family and hobbies. Finally, he also had the chance to have some spare time, for once in his life, and he made the most of that too. I'd say that it was an extremely important time for him and for the country. It was a time when things cleansed themselves, when his party had to try out new ideas, the socialists had to show what they were capable of and people saw the difference compared to the previous government. The difference was striking. There was not the same professionalism. I remember that this socialist liberal government profited from the laurels that my father had won but didn't introduce anything. It was able to live off of my father's laurels for a certain period, but the electorate gave its verdict in 1979, and I think that was one of the happiest moments of his life. He was on TV and when he saw the first results he started smiling whereas Mr Thorn became nervous. He won six seats for his party, who lionised him, of course.

[Elena Danescu] In fact, he achieved the highest personal score ...

[Henri Werner] ... ever obtained.

[Elena Danescu] During his period in the Opposition, he provided the acting government with ideas for large-scale parliamentary projects, in particular the idea of the steel tripartite, which remains an institutionalised form of social dialogue to date.

[Henri Werner] Yes, I didn't know that he had come up with that idea himself, but if you say so. I can certainly believe it, because it ties in with his view of things. He also had some experience of this with the social partners at a certain point in his career. Once, there was a general strike against him. And I think he learned from that too. So he really knew how to learn. I think he learned that dialogue doesn't cost much but can lead to big rewards. I can imagine that he was one of the instigators, but I didn't know for sure that the idea was down to him. I also know that he was very meticulous in his work as an MP. He read all of the bills. Once again, I admired him, because there was a lot to read. He also participated in parliamentary committees. It's a period which remained full of positive memories because he was able to make the most out of it.

[Elena Danescu] You mentioned that you were at his first session at the Chamber of Deputies after the elections. At the beginning of this desert crossing, do you know exactly how the powers were transferred to the new Minister of State, Gaston Thorn?

[Henri Werner] I'd say that these two men were very different in nature. They were almost the opposite of one another.

[Elena Danescu] Gaston Thorn used to be your father's Minister for Foreign Affairs.

[Henri Werner] That's right, and it was a tough time. My father suffered a great deal because Mr Thorn didn't care much for governmental discipline. For example, when Mr Thorn was in Moscow once, the Russians asked him if a state visit of the Grand Duchess or Grand Duke could be organised in Russia, and he agreed to this. He should have discussed this with my father. My father was angry about this, saying, 'Gaston Thorn is not Prime Minister, he doesn't have the right to make commitments to the Soviet Government at the time.' I'd say that there was animosity between them because they had very different personalities. My father had a broad culture, an ability to think and intellectual strength. Mr Thorn was rather an extravert who knew how to create an effect, but let's say the metaphysics behind his effects weren't necessarily inspiring. He could make lovely speeches, but I had trouble grasping their meaning. I found it hard to feel engaged by his speeches. I saw in him an entirely different type of politician. He was a man of the media, someone who wanted to shine. My father was the opposite, remaining ever the modest man. Their approaches were diametrically opposed, yet there was a certain sympathy between them. I must also admit that I had a certain affinity with Gaston Thorn, as did my mother. At first she was very jealous, but then ... So there was something ... let's say my father went to great lengths to accept this person and work positively with him. They did some good things together, but their working relationship had its limits, so when Gaston Thorn had the opportunity of going to Brussels, it was a win-win situation. Mr Thorn had always had that ambition and was glad to have that opportunity. He always thanked my father for enabling him to take up that position. My father said, 'So Gaston, I have to give you up.' But it's true that my father was also quite happy that his government no longer comprised a member who didn't always maintain governmental discipline. It's a bit tricky to say, but it was the case, or at least that's the impression he gave me. But he was also happy for Gaston to have a good career. At the same time, he was happy that Gaston would no longer put him in delicate situations by making promises that the government wasn't prepared to keep, confusing the issue; my father didn't appreciate things like that. So in the end, it was a good solution for everyone.

[Elena Danescu] Luxembourg also had an influence abroad.

[Henri Werner] Luxembourg had an influence, yes, that was also in my father's interests. So it was a win-win situation. And from that time on, Gaston Thorn always spoke of my father in a very cordial manner. He always said, 'Mr Werner enabled me to have a career.' I think they became friends in the end; so they went from being rivals to friends, in a way. Even if they were different from a philosophical perspective, they had some things in common. Gaston Thorn was also a member of the AV, the Catholic academic association, so he also had a Catholic background, even if he was in the liberal party. So this was something they had in common. I remember that my parents and the Thorns spent Easter night together at Clervaux Abbey. We travelled there from our home in Lac de la Haute-Sûre and Mr Thorn travelled from Luxembourg City. They went to the Abbey together to attend the service, and we could sense this friendship there. We were very sad when the Thorns passed away.

VIII. Pierre Werner — economic diversification and Luxembourg's cultural identity

[Elena Danescu] In the same vein of economic diversification, there were very important projects which targeted the United States of America, on the other side of the Atlantic. And Mr Werner, as Governor for Luxembourg at the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, but also thanks to his personal relations, actively participated in organising an economic assignment for American bankers in Luxembourg. This assignment led to the formation of the Luxembourg international financial centre. Do you have any memories of Mr Werner's efforts relating to this, of his strategy and his personal contacts as well as the difficulties and objections he may have encountered?

[Henri Werner] Yes, he was looking for gaps which Luxembourg's banking activity could fill, and he found a very important one when the dollar's convertibility was abolished. Americans were having trouble finding capital in Europe, so he set up the Eurodollar market, and in general the Eurocurrency market, and this served a very important purpose as regards the financial centre towards the end of the 1960s. And this bore his hallmark. At that time, a great number of holding companies devoted to the Eurocurrency market were founded in Luxembourg. I know, for example, that Dupont de Nemours used this system at the time for financing its first sites in Germany, particularly its factory in Westphalia, which still exists to date.

[Elena Danescu] The Board of Industrial Development was also created and Prince Charles of the grand-ducal court became involved, as the court enjoyed enormous prestige in the United States. This Board helped to create a link between American businessmen and Luxembourg and to promote Luxembourg's assets to the US market.

[Henri Werner] I would say that the Board of Industrial Development was the joint brainchild of the Minister for the Economy, Paul Elvinger, who was one of my father's best friends, and my father himself. My father had seen that the Netherlands had been taking similar initiatives. The Netherlands was the first European country to carry out economic prospecting activities. So my father and Mr Elvinger came up with the idea of following that example. We should also mention Prince Félix, the husband of Grand Duchess Charlotte, who spent time in the US during the war and enjoyed great authority in Luxembourg. Prince Félix also played a prominent role. He was the one who advised my father when the BID was set up in 1959. He was also in contact with Mr Joseph Gurley, whom I had the honour to meet in the United States. Joe Gurley was the first Director of the BID in New York, and went on to become one of my father's best friends. I know that Mr Elvinger and Prince Charles went to the US several times to canvass the economy by means of their personal contacts. They also went to Dupont de Nemours, my current employer. And my father carried out the final negotiations with this company himself while in Wilmington, Delaware, on one of his trips to the United States to complete the negotiations and pave the way for this extremely important investment. I remember him proudly showing me the first Mylar polyester films made in Luxembourg. It was very interesting that when he inaugurated the production lines in our factory, he spoke precisely of transatlantic cooperation. He said, 'At the moment, our transatlantic relations are one-sided — the Europeans are learning management methods and new technologies from the Americans.' So it was all coming to us from the other side of the Atlantic. In his address given in 1974, he said that the relations should also go the other way and that the US should also adopt European methods. And I think that these were prophetic words, because I am a witness that this is happening today. We have the new REACH legislation on chemical substances, which is opening up new horizons in the field of chemical security and is being practically imitated by the US. We got ahead of them and the US is adopting a similar system. Our company, our group is working at global level according to this new European standard. So this prophecy of bilateral exchanges between the United States and Europe has become a reality today. Relations are no longer between 'mother' and 'child', but between two adult regions — this is what my father wished for.

[Elena Danescu] What's more, this also led to industrial diversification for Luxembourg and provided a solution to the declining steel industry, which was vital to the Grand Duchy both at the time and afterwards.

[Henri Werner] Yes, that's right. When my father became Prime Minister in 1959, he saw that Luxembourg mainly depended on the iron and steel industry. The country had lost its leather and slate industries as a result of employers' contributions which had become quite high, even at that time, and because of the fairly high salaries. So certain industries had already moved to other regions and he saw only the steel industry. He asked what the country would do if ever the steel industry collapsed. This is why industrial diversification was one of the 1959 Government's main objectives. As a result, he carried out this canvassing work and took very brave initiatives which some people almost criticized him for at the time. To name one example, our group, Dupont de Nemours, wanted to set up a nylon factory in Luxembourg. For this to be possible, the company would have needed enormous quantities of fresh drinking water. So my father literally decided to build a large-diameter pipe running from the plant in Esch-sur-Sûre to Contern to supply this factory which never ended up coming to Luxembourg. But it was in fact a huge asset for Luxembourg. This SEBES pipe still supplies the entire region of Luxembourg City and has helped to avoid major droughts and water shortages, thanks to my father's courageous initiative of making these infrastructures available to investors. He also decided to make a modern electricity network available to the new industry, the Cegedel network, which became the global standard. Before that, Luxembourg didn't have electricity networks which met international criteria, but he instigated all of these innovations as a result of the new industry. And this was not exempt from criticism. Some people found that too much was being done for industry and for these new immigrant industrial workers, whereas in actual fact, these workers were contributing to the country's well-being and generating economic activity. Afterwards, it has to be said that it was a totally successful operation. We also need to see the parallel between the unification of Europe and these American investments in Europe. I was able to demonstrate through historical research that the Dupont Group came to Europe because of the Treaty of Rome. Following the Messina Conference, our group decided to gain a foothold in Europe to avoid losing the European market. So European unification made Europe attractive to investors. All these things need to be viewed as a whole. Luxembourg's economic diversity and the unification of Europe were not contradictory processes, but ones which supported one another mutually.

[Elena Danescu] The same period, one of coinciding crises, was also a time of great inspiration in terms of the country's economic diversification. The rise of the audiovisual sector was seen as both a new vector of Luxembourg's development and a means of extending its cultural reach. This was the period when the idea of creating a satellite project came to light. We know that this project was based on Mr Werner's idea and his cooperation with the US, particularly with the American expert, Clay Whitehead. Can you tell us exactly how this project took shape?

[Henri Werner] Thank you for asking me this question, because it's very interesting to see how it came about. When analysing the documents I put aside for you, I saw that in the addresses on economic policy, the successive Luxembourg governments, including my father's, always forgot to mention the media industry. At the time, the world was not yet surrounded by the media. Here, we have the media all around us [Laughter], the world is different nowadays. But this new media world was emerging onto the scene at the time. So in this respect, my father had unique assets. First of all, as you correctly mentioned, the fact that he remained Finance Minister meant that he was also in charge of telecommunications, because they were part of the post office, which in turn was part of the finance department. As a result, he was also Minister for Telecommunications; therefore, he dealt with questions regarding Radio Luxembourg, an area of the economy that people didn't talk about much. But when my father was in the Opposition, the government wanted him to sit on the CLT's Board of Directors for political reasons. In fact, the government had realised that RTL's

shareholders no longer had anything to do with Luxembourg and that these shareholders tended to dictate Radio Luxembourg's policies, meaning that the government had lost its control over the company. The company just had its registered office in Luxembourg, but nothing else. As a result, the government wanted experienced politicians on the Board of Directors, something which the French shareholders also criticised, but my father was there, and in this connection he realised how important the media industry was. He also realised what Luxembourg had done wrong. Luxembourg hadn't been on its guard and the command of the company had been taken over by foreign groups, Havas, etc. Naturally, this was also the period when people were talking about telecommunications and telecommunication satellites, and what's really interesting is that when looking through these documents I came across the Board minutes which reported on the French satellite project, TDF1. My father started taking an interest in it and suddenly understood that new technology was no longer about land-based antennas — that was his vision in some way — he suddenly understood that new technologies were in space. That was his intuition. He saw that radio was petering out a little and said to himself that a new niche needed to be found for Luxembourg. So when he returned to power in 1979, he instructed the Luxembourg embassies to explore the opportunities of making contacts in the space industry, harnessing the world of telecommunications so as to look into the opportunities of a Luxembourg telecommunications system in space. This was a brave move because the large countries saw space as their prerogative. This idea was never going to be popular with the French or with the French and German shareholders of the CLT. He was breaking new ground and I believe that he initially came up with these ideas when he was in the Opposition and had the time to develop them. Ambassador Meisch told me that he had received a formal order from the government to explore these opportunities. Adrien Meisch happened to be engaged to a charming lady called Candace Johnson, whose father was a great US soldier. So it wasn't actually thanks to the US Government, but to a friendship between the ambassador, his wife-to-be and her family which put Adrien Meisch on the trail of Candace Johnson's father. Mr Johnson gave advice to Adrien Meisch. He said, 'As you have received this request from your government, I can make you an offer. There's an eminent specialist called Clay Whitehead in the US army and he's making our telecommunications system. He's at the cutting edge of progress. Listen to him.' And at home, I found the letter that Adrien Meisch wrote to my father in his beautiful handwriting; I could also give it to you too sometime. It read: 'Dear Mr Minister of State, this is a unique opportunity.' He also said, 'We must organise a meeting between you and Mr Whitehead.' This meeting took place a few weeks later and my father had a very long discussion, longer than ours, with Mr Whitehead. He wrote in his memoirs that he was a little dumbfounded by this technical expert's monotone explications of satellite technology and where developments were heading. Mr Whitehead said that developments were heading towards medium-power satellites and that the French were on the wrong track. The TDF were high-power satellites; that wasn't the right track. Technology was heading in another direction. Mr Whitehead was right and my father was right to have listened to him. What's also very special about this case is that Mr Meisch knew my father well. He contacted the Head of Government directly, whereas he should have gone via the Minister for Foreign Affairs who was, I believe, Mr [sic, Mrs] Flesch at the time. He preferred not to, because it was necessary to maintain the utmost discretion. So his talks with Mr Whitehead were secret and no one was to know anything about them, not even the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Later, my father shared the information with the government, all the while stressing its confidential nature. He acted extremely quickly.

[Elena Danescu] Did this satellite project also have a European dimension or was it simply a future means of influence for Luxembourg?

[Henri Werner] That's an excellent question. As it happened, the French said to my father, 'You're a nationalist. Now you want to have a Luxembourg satellite. We need European media.' To back this up, they said, 'Look, all of our media are showing nothing but American films.' At the time, there was a stronger anti-American sentiment than nowadays. In those days, the French were

bothered that there were more and more American films in the media. On top of this, they said, ‘Ah yes, you have Mr Whitehead, another American.’ The French Minister, called Filloux, not Fillon, coined the expression ‘Coca-Cola satellite’, saying that this satellite would further consolidate the American image in Europe. He also said, ‘I don’t recognise Luxembourg any more, I don’t recognise Mr Werner any more, you’re no longer a European, you’re a staunch nationalist who now wants to establish America in the media.’ So my father turned the argument around and said, ‘On the contrary, we want to create a European platform. We have a type of satellite which can cover several regions of Europe at once and technology which, from one position, can work on a high number of channels, and we can provide, we can create these missing links in the audiovisual landscape.’ Secondly, he added, ‘After all, the Council of Europe’s charter stipulates that there must be great freedom of expression in the media. In the name of freedom of expression, we mustn’t create artificial barriers at the level of audiovisual players.’ So my father quoted the Council of Europe, he said, ‘Do you see? We want freedom of expression, Luxembourg wants to express itself, it wants to create a European voice. And that’s what it’s going to do.’ Afterwards, my father took real action; he entered into agreements, reserved the frequencies. People were astounded. He did it in record time. It was in 1983, shortly before my mother passed away. It was hard. But anyway, he made his mark. In the end, the project was at such an advanced stage that there was no going back. My father made sure that the state gave a financial guarantee so that Luxembourg could build a rocket, invest in a satellite and a rocket. It was a substantial amount of the country’s budget. He took a crazy risk with this and managed to convince Jacques Santer to continue the work in 1984. He later carried out the follow-up work with Jacques. Jacques did everything right. So in this respect, too, we can see that he always saw Jacques Santer as his successor. He always said, ‘People won’t cease to be amazed with Jacques Santer,’ and I think he was right. Jacques Santer handled the affair well and faithfully pursued the work according to my father’s indications.

[Elena Danescu] Today, SES (Société Européenne des Satellites) covers almost 99 % of the world’s satellite frequencies.

[Henri Werner] Luxembourg is now a space power. No one would have thought it or imagined it at the time. And President Mitterrand wasn’t too happy about it. When he last met my father he said, ‘Hey, Mr Werner, are you still on the radio?’ [Laughter]

[Elena Danescu] The idea of the Luxembourg maritime flag, another of Luxembourg’s very original and unexpected projects, also dates from the same period.

[Henri Werner] Yes, he talked about it. I wasn’t very much in favour of it myself. I said that Luxembourg was a continental nation. I found it ridiculous. I called it a flag of convenience. My father saw opportunities in it. Anyway, the flag has a certain importance. At least he had the creativity to launch the project — that much is true.

[Elena Danescu] Everything that developed in terms of insurance policies, consultancy firms and law firms specialising in maritime law gave Luxembourg a new means of economic development.

[Henri Werner] Yes, sometimes he did things that I couldn’t accept, even as a child. When he first embarked on his space project I thought he was mad! I found the conquest of space exciting myself. I was really interested in astronautics and thought to myself, ‘What on earth is he going to do there?’ Pardon the expression. But with hindsight, I have to take my hat off to him! I would never have thought it. He found the right solution, even from a technical point of view, which goes to show that he was also a good technician. He was an all-round genius insofar as he knew about everything, even technology. He knew how to tell the difference between good and bad technology.

[Elena Danescu] At the same time, during Mr Werner's term of office as Minister for Cultural Affairs, the linguistic law was drafted and adopted, making Luxembourgish the national language. This was also a means of confirming Luxembourg's national identity in an increasingly diverse Europe. Against this background, I'd like to ask you how your father viewed Luxembourg's national identity in the context of European identity.

[Henri Werner] That's a crucial question which was very important to him. First of all, he wasn't a nationalist because he didn't believe that any particular nation was superior to another. That wasn't his attitude. On the other hand, he knew that the national identity was also part of a European identity, and that one did not exclude the other. He also knew that Luxembourgers have a natural inclination, for convenience, to listen to and improve their German, because this language is closer to Luxembourgish, and that there was a certain danger that Luxembourg would lose its Latin character to some extent. He was afraid ... he lived through the Germanisation of the Second World War and he once said to me, quite frankly, 'Ultimately, as a last resort, Luxembourg's *raison d'être* is to be a country which shares two great cultures, one Latin and one Germanic, and which can understand both cultures, thus acting as a bridge and builder of Europe.' Luxembourg can also create a national identity of its own, which is also reflected in the Luxembourgish language with its many Latin characteristics — we have to talk to linguists about that. Luxembourgish has a lot of Latin characteristics, especially in terms of its phonetics. So the language is a bit like cement holding together this quite original local identity. My father wanted to maintain this local originality. He was a great specialist in Luxembourgish literature and music; he knew all of the works like no one else. He developed them and wanted to cultivate this entire heritage, without a hint of nationalism. He wanted to show that it's possible to cultivate an identity without building walls around us and without excluding people. So this was a new vision of our national identity, and the law which was voted in the end ... I don't know if he was really happy with it, I think he would have maybe preferred not to have this law. At any rate, he was adamant that Luxembourg's national identity should be supported, particularly by cultivating the French language and creating links with Latin countries. This was what led him to consciously encourage Portuguese emigration, after Luxembourg's positive experience with Italian emigration. He always said, 'The Italians have given us a great deal. Their warm nature has made Luxembourgers a little less cold. Luxembourgers have become a bit more dynamic thanks to the Italians. Perhaps more creative.' He also saw Portugal's contribution not only as source of labour input, but also as a cultural contribution from our fellow Portuguese citizens. He saw it in a positive light. It didn't call into question our national identity, it rather enriched it. That's how he saw our national identity.

[Elena Danescu] Was it ever envisaged that Luxembourgish might become an official language of the European Union — the European Communities at the time?

[Henri Werner] Luxembourg waived this because it wasn't necessary. Luxembourgish is a living language, and as specialists can confirm, it's not going to die out any time soon. It's in the media, it is being cultivated, it has its own literature and there's a growing population that speaks it. Luxembourgish has its own dynamic. It doesn't need to be protected by European laws. We should also encourage French/German bilingualism among Luxembourgers. We shouldn't neglect the major cultural languages. And that also reminds me that when I was at school, my father didn't used to look only at my French marks, but my German ones too. If my German marks weren't up to scratch, he was annoyed. He wanted Luxembourgers to cultivate the major languages of French and German. And these should remain the main means of expression for everything related to culture, science and art. Their presence and the ability to be able to think in both these languages are essential for Luxembourg to be in a position to play its European role. I'd say that this law reflects this reality to some extent.

IX. Withdrawal from the political stage, key encounters and those who took up his ideas

[Elena Danescu] In late 1983, during the national congress of the Christian Social Party, Mr Werner announced his decision to refrain from participating in the June 1984 elections and to step down from the political stage. Everyone was sorry about this decision, but respected it. Do you remember how Mr Werner prepared his continuators?

[Henri Werner] I'd like to start by explaining why he took this decision. It was because his wife was seriously ill. He told me, 'I have to look after my wife now. I can't reasonably stand for election now that my wife is ill.' It's true that my mother subsequently passed away and he could have stood for election in principle, but he didn't want to. He said, 'I've made my decision. In politics, it's important to know how to leave at the right time. Now Jacques Santer is there, he is mature enough; he can do the job well.' Juncker was also already on the scene. He said to himself that those two men could do the job well.

[Elena Danescu] In fact, he had Jean-Claude Juncker join the government in 1982, as part of the Finance Ministry. He said in his memoirs, 'This decision disgruntled some of the elder members of the party.'

[Henri Werner] Yes, because Jean-Claude Juncker was very young indeed, even younger than my father was at the time, and he didn't have any experience in the world of work. He had entered the political scene right from the start, which is something he always regretted. Once, he complained to me that I worked in industry and knew what life was about, whereas he'd entered the world of politics directly and didn't know what life was. [Laughter] It's true! But Mr Juncker was so dynamic that I think my father wanted this asset in his party. He wanted to have an asset for the future. He felt this dynamism and believed he should support him.

[Elena Danescu] Did they engage in conversations and exchanges and meet each other regularly?

[Henri Werner] Mr Juncker held my father in very high esteem. I remember him coming to see my father when he was ill. He always called him 'Mr Minister of State'.

[Elena Danescu] Having retired from politics, Mr Werner remained very active in public life, in the audiovisual, cultural and monetary fields — three areas which were particularly important to him. Do you know how he dedicated himself to promoting and explaining European monetary integration after 1984–1985, and how he felt about the materialisation of the Werner Plan?

[Henri Werner] He gave many lectures, which I haven't yet had the privilege to present you with. There are files containing all of his lectures, providing original and interesting retrospective insights and new information. He also participated in several seminars, for example the Lyon seminar, which my sister will expand on. So, he was happy to see the currency come into being and be able to participate in the celebration efforts, while savouring this great success. When the euro became a scriptural currency, there was a small ceremony at the post office by Luxembourg station, attended by Jacques Santer, as President of the Commission, and Mr Juncker, as Finance Minister, and they were thoughtful enough to invite my father along, too. At the event, Jacques Santer presented him with the original treaty establishing the single currency. This little presentation brought great credit to my father, he was very touched. There's a lovely photo on the CD I gave you showing the three statesmen together — a very meaningful photo. The first thing he did when he returned home was to write a cheque in euros for each of his children. Unfortunately, he was already ill when the euro became the currency of payment. But I recall being at his home at the Pescatore Foundation, watching TV and him seeing that the lottery was in euros. I saw his face light up when he saw the euro symbol used for the horse racing, all those things. It also touched him a great deal when the

euro became part of everyday life. He was able to see the first euros and touch them; he held a 500-euro note in his hand. So he was able to savour this success.

[Elena Danescu] The progression of his ideas — from a thought to a reality.

[Henri Werner] An idea conceived during the occupation in 1940 which finally became a currency. The reverse situation was war. So in the end, it was a work of peace. The single currency. Progress was slow, but my father witnessed it from beginning to end.

[Elena Danescu] Which of your father's European and transatlantic meetings left the greatest mark?

[Henri Werner] Certain European meetings made a great impression on him. Edward Heath was one of his best friends, and my father was helping him so that the UK could become part of Europe. You'll be able to see that for yourself soon when I give you my documents. I suspect that my father was secretly behind the UK's accession to the Common Market to some extent. At any rate, he worked closely with Edward Heath on this matter. Later, the men had a conflict of interest, because my father wanted Luxembourg to be the seat of the future European Central Bank, it had always been his dream, whereas Edward Heath wished for it to be in London. So, although they remained friends, they were at loggerheads about this. In the end, Frankfurt was chosen as a compromise. London and Luxembourg both lost this role. Another person whom he found interesting but could never agree with was Margaret Thatcher. Mrs Thatcher held my father in very high esteem because she valued his unparalleled experience and said he was the only statesman to act according to his status. She criticised the Council ministers for behaving like children at times, for using vulgar expressions that should not be uttered on such formal occasions, and she always gave my father as a positive example. Once, she received my father at 10 Downing Street and was a little condescending towards him, saying, 'Mr Werner, can you please tell me what monetary union is?', as though he were one of her pupils. [Laughter] So he explained to her what monetary union was.

One of the other key figures who inspired him was General de Gaulle. My father said that de Gaulle did a great deal for France. He admired some of his talents — his talent as a unifier, his image of a strong France, which my father also upheld. He also wanted a strong France. But he didn't like General de Gaulle's authoritarian side. Once, he was at the Élysée Palace, at an audience with General de Gaulle, when a door opened and one of the President's advisers came in and said, 'Here is such-and-such, a political rival of yours whose name escapes me, he dealt you a low blow once, Mr President.' He looked towards the fireplace disdainfully; he must have looked at my father. De Gaulle uttered the person's name with such contempt. My father didn't appreciate this way of saying someone's name, but at the end of the day, he admired the General a great deal and was very sad when he died. So he did have a certain liking for him really.

He also had an affinity with US President Kennedy. He was just his type, and he mentions him in his memoirs. In fact, he always wished for this chapter to be in your translations. I don't really understand why personally, but he was so impressed with Kennedy. He also liked Bush Senior. He received him in Luxembourg once and they got on very well. It was a bit trickier with Johnson. He always saw Johnson as a Texan who is hard to understand and speaks in a rather difficult way. So they weren't always on the same wavelength. But in general he was obviously a great friend of the US. The communists always said that Mr Werner was more Catholic than the pope and more American than the Americans. It's true that he was always loyal to America. I remember that during the Vietnam War, my brothers and sisters and I were always arguing against the war. We said that someone had to put an end to the war and wondered why my father didn't tell the truth to President Nixon so that he would stop the carnage! My father said to us, 'Listen, the President of the United States is waging this war and it isn't up to Luxembourg to give lessons to the President. I respect the

Americans, I see their difficulties, I don't want to create problems for them. They gave us freedom, we're not going to go against them now'. So he always remained loyal to and supported America, even at the worst times. However, as for Bush Junior, when he saw him on TV standing for election he said to my sister Marie-Anne, 'Look at him, he's a warmonger, we have to watch out for him.' So he could sense Bush Jr's character before he even came into power [Laughter].

X. Conclusion

[Elena Danescu] Mr Werner, I can't thank you enough for taking the time to talk to us today and for sharing your personal memories which shed some light on the unknown aspects of Pierre Werner's personality. I'll hand over to you for a few words of conclusion.

[Henri Werner] I'd like to thank you for your immensely valuable research work. I would also like to pay my genuine compliments, which really reflect my opinion, that your work is precious, because Europe has a soul and this soul needs to be preserved. Your remembrance work is creating a collective memory which is the soul of Europe. My father is just a small part of this bigger picture. And this Europe is a unique work in history. Your work makes it possible to consolidate this unique achievement so that it remains an asset for all of humanity. Your work is very important and I'd like to congratulate you on your historical accounts and your highly professional work.

[Elena Danescu] Many thanks once again, Mr Werner.