

# Johanna den Hertog Transcript

Interviewer: To get things started, can you tell me your name and your background in terms of how it relates to the issue of free trade?

den Hertog: Well, my name is Johanna den Hertog. I was involved with the free trade issues and agreement in 1988, because at that time, I was the National President of the New Democratic Party, and also a candidate in Vancouver Centre in that election campaign. Of course, I was very focused on the free trade agreement itself, but—to give you a little bit of background—at that time, in 1988, being a Federal President was a volunteer position. I was working at that time for the Telecommunication Workers Union (TWU) and had been working in the trade union movement since 1977. I'd been a staff person with the BC Federation of Labor for legislation and policy since 1977 until around 1979. Before that, I had been very active in the women's movement here in Canada. I was one of the founders of Rape Relief here in Vancouver, which was the first rape crisis center in all of Canada actually. Following that, I was, for a number of years, with the Vancouver Status of Women. I was one of the ombudswomen for the Vancouver Status of Women that was very involved with policy and legislation at that time. I had been involved in the NDP in various capacities since about 1981—both the BC NDP on the executive and the Federal New Democratic Party on various policy issues and policy committees—and then I became president of the party federally in 1987. So, my main involvement came, I would say, directly in that period of time through my political activity, and also through the trade union activity. That is a bit of my background and my reason for involvement at that time in 1988 for the Free Trade Agreement issues.

I was asked as federal president at the time to participate in many panel conversations, both in BC and nationally. One of them was a national debate on *The Journal* [on CBC television] with representatives of the Liberal Party and the Conservatives who were in government to discuss on behalf of the parties, their positions on the free trade issue, and the free trade agreement. That debate preceded as far as I can remember, about a week or so before the debate by the national leaders, which was a highly watched debate between them. Mulroney at the time was Prime Minister and John Turner was the leader of the Liberals, as well Ed Broadbent was the leader for the New Democratic Party. So, there were a lot of debates about free trade in many, many arenas; in the papers on the streets, or on panels. I would say, in terms of that election campaign, it was not the only issue, but it was the most visible and highly publicized issue of that election.

Christensen: So, if we could just go back a bit in time, at what point did free trade emerge as an issue for you in the work you were doing at that time?

den Hertog: From my recollection, I would say in the previous two years it became more of an issue. What I remember is that in [the] trade union movement, in particular during the mid-80s, there were issues of friction with the United States on various topics. There was certainly

softwood lumber, that was a major issue here in British Columbia with countervailing duties being applied. There were concerns about pressure from the United States for access to Canada's water at that time which was very much an issue. There were a lot of concerns about water resources potentially being monetized. If in any way Canada opened itself up to exporting or using its water in a more beneficial way for Canada, it could also open up the opportunity for the United States to claim access to it as a monetized resource. There were concerns about environmental issues. I remember that there were discussions about environmental waste sites, where there would be concerns about North American standards potentially not having a positive impact on Canada or the fact that we wouldn't be able to retain our own Canadian environmental policies and issues. Obviously, there always is concern about our healthcare system. The fact that south of the border, the issues with the amount of the medical system being based on profit rather than on public management of the medical system. Those were still rumbling in the mid-80s. With a Conservative government at that time, from 1984 on, there were more and more initiatives being taken by the Mulroney government to prioritize American access, if I could put it that way, for Canadian environmental or economic opportunities. And concern that a very highly prioritized relationship with the United States would threaten our sovereign ability to do the kind of public policy that we want them to do. So, it started becoming alarming in the trade movement and in the women's movement that I still was connected to.

Generally, in civil society, there were more rumblings about “where are we going?” In a very personal way, I had already been asked to be and became a candidate in 1984 in the Vancouver Centre for the New Democrats (NDP). The first time I ran as a candidate, and kind of not necessarily intending to be a candidate at that point, I was actually asked to be a candidate and I did. At that point the person who was representing Vancouver Centre [was] Pat Carney. And in spite of being very much an unknown quantity, I think we managed to do quite well in that election campaign in 1984. We came second, but we definitely were able to organize a fair amount of resistance to the Conservatives with Pat Carney's approach. As International Trade Minister, that she was appointed as in post 1984—I'm not quite sure when it was, 1985-86—she became the International Trade minister, the face of Mulroney government's leadership on free trade. She took the arguments that this would solve Canada's problem on softwood lumber, which increasingly appeared that it wouldn't improve Canada's access to United States markets, which economists and others questioned very much. She was increasingly not seen as a successful proponent, I think, of the Free Trade Agreement. So, she was the face of it. In many ways, that ended up creating a pretty strong movement in British Columbia, in general, against the trade agreement.

I would say among all the regions in Canada, there was a lot of opposition in many different regions of Canada and there were concerns about what the impacts of agreeing to such an agreement would be. A lot of the activity was focused on British Columbia, partly because it didn't help the Conservatives that Pat Carney was the minister. So, that was another factor. My involvement—which is actually the question—was not only through the trade union movement and from a legislative and policy point of view that I was aware of, but also as the previous candidate in Vancouver Centre. The hopes for a new candidate in

1988 became very much involved in arguing panels and expressing views with others on free trade, especially in Vancouver Centre.

Interviewer: So, can you describe to me a little bit of the—like you were in both the 84 and 88 federal elections as an NDP candidate in Vancouver Centre. I know that you, as you just mentioned, were involved in a lot of panel discussions that were broadcasted nationally and provincially. That aside, what was the experience of running in those elections as an NDP candidate at the time, was there a difference between 84 and 88 quite different, or were there a lot of similarities? Can you speak to that at all?

den Hertog: It was different in 84. I would say 84 was a very long election campaign. It was called in July. At that time, there was no elections, no legislation that kind of determined the dates of elections unlike now, where we sort of have much more predictability. So suddenly, the election was called July 4, or something like that, September 8 and forth; anyways, it was a long summer election. I didn't expect to, but I enjoyed it immensely. It was a very motivating, very inspiring process to be a candidate. Partly as a woman and as a feminist, I had been involved in a lot of activities at the political level to encourage the participation of women to address the fact that there was still a huge disparity in the number of women that were elected at all levels. So, it was an opportunity in a sense to act about things that I'd been campaigning for years and actually be in the public eye, which, at first, I didn't really want to be, but I ended up enjoying it far more than I expected. The contact with constituents, the contact with people throughout the riding and even beyond the riding was a most rewarding and inspiring process -- the participation of others to work to get policy results, to get a government that people really wanted to have, whether it was social issues or environmental issues or training issues. Listening to the concerns of others and trying to help articulate them in a public arena was a very rewarding and positive experience. Then I realized that really to be successful, you have to do this in a more long-term way. So, it gave me a commitment to pursue it for the next election, which I did.

We worked very hard preparing for the 1988 election. We were very successful in BC for the 1988 election. The New Democrats both because of our regional campaign and campaigns nationally, we elected the highest number of New Democrats ever in this province: 19 individual—unfortunately, not for the Vancouver Centre, we lost by 269 votes, one of the closest ridings in all of Canada. In a funny way, we had kind of succeeded before the election, maybe unfortunately, because Pat Carney resigned before the election. She had been nominated as a candidate for the Vancouver Centre. We fully expected to run against her as the MP. She said she had been nominated, she was going to be the candidate and then just months before the election, she resigned and that opened up the nomination and Kim Campbell then became nominated for the Conservatives. Which took way away one of ... the problem areas, I think, for the Conservatives as Pat Carney was very unpopular at the time. She was no longer part of either the national or the local lineup for the Conservatives. So, these are things, that maybe from my perspective in the campaign, that I noticed strongly. Historically it is less familiar to people, but it was a hit against the Brian Mulroney free trade campaign because they lost their international trade minister just

two or three months before the election. That's why John Crosbie was appointed as the International Trade Minister from Newfoundland, very far away from British Columbia; so, he didn't have the same kind of profile that perhaps Pat Carney did.

1988 was an election that we, the New Democrats, went in from that spring with a very, very high polling. The level of organization going into the 1988 election campaign was far better than in 1984. I'm speaking out for our campaign, the NDP campaign. The Liberals were still in disarray. John Turner had a lot of internal conflict that he had to deal with: people questioning his leadership, which was even covered during the newscasts in 1988. There [were] some questions about whether he would be replaced in the middle of the 1988 election campaign. Going into the campaign, Ed Broadbent reached polling numbers of 40% prior to the 1988 election campaign, so we had a lot of momentum, we had a lot of strength across the country. As it unfortunately happens, in my view too frequently, in an election campaign within Canada since it is such a big country that has regional differences politically; political history also across the country. And a political debate that became very much around free trade. It also encouraged the idea of strategic voting in different parts of the country that helped us in BC, probably, but really hindered the New Democrats in other parts of the country like Ontario and Quebec. There were not by the parties, but those outside the parties, those that started to say, "whoever can potentially be a Conservative, one should vote for that candidate." The net result of that was the NDP vote increased by a lot, we certainly went back to third party status after the 1988 election results came in, but not in British Columbia and not in Saskatchewan. In British Columbia we were still the strongest party, we were the biggest popular vote, we [had] the most candidates selected. The same was true in Saskatchewan, but that was not true in the rest of the country. Although we won 43 seats nationally, 19 of them in British Columbia, we didn't increase our vote enough to be the official opposition, let alone the government.

Interviewer: So, you mentioned strategic voting during the 1988 election, and was that because many Canadians viewed the Liberal Party as the leader against the free trade question? In other words, the Liberal Party was seen as the better choice for defeating free trade. Is that a fair assessment?

den Hertog: I think it depends on what region you talk about. And I think as the campaign evolved, that it was definitely one of the messages by the Liberal Party. Definitely worked to some extent; it didn't work in British Columbia because we were able to send the reverse message that to defeat free trade vote NDP. There were parts of the message that was used here in British Columbia, and, it was true, it was Conservatives and New Democrats that were elected here, not Liberals in the province. As for the strategic messaging nationally, that has everything to do with the history of various parties' strengths in different parts of the country. Historically, the New Democrats have had strength in Ontario, but only once and only once since then, of course in 1993, a government that was NDP. Never in Quebec, a couple of times in Nova Scotia, but again, it was after 1988. So that message of strategic voting is very difficult for the NDP to fight nationally or it was at that time. Then let's talk about substance and the fight on free trade. I would say that the trade union's

relationship with the NDP is much stronger than with any other party. There were lots of campaigns in the trade union movement as well, that were political action campaigns and activities by the trade union movement to express concern about the impact. Also, even for the Auto Pact in Ontario, it could potentially weaken the sort of managed trade Auto Pact agreement benefits that we had. The trade union movement was very supportive of fights against free trade, but no one trade unionist votes necessarily for the New Democratic Party either; everyone makes their own decisions. I would say, the women's movement, environmental movement, community groups, etc., I think where depending on where individuals lived, were more or less affected by the strategic voting issue.

For the NDP, we very much tried to make it about free trade plus. I would say our views were that it was an election about the interests of ordinary Canadians, on taxation, on social services, and on benefits for ordinary working people, as well as free trade. I think that the fact that the Liberals were really struggling in that election campaign made them able to focus on free trade as a single issue more than we were. I would say, honestly speaking, we may have underestimated as a party how singular the focus on free trade would end up being and tried to present the many other policy issues that were important at that time. At the same time, unfortunately, at the very end of the campaign, the Liberals through Turner managed to create this image of being a stronger voice on the agreement. Would it have made a huge difference? I'm afraid I'm a little bit pessimistic about that. I think that the fundamental problem was strategic voting question and not having a strong enough core of support or base in some of the regions in Canada that makes the national prospects always difficult.

Interviewer: That's really interesting. Because one of the next questions I wanted to ask you was, for example, Marjorie Griffin Cohen submitted a very good article to a special issue of *Socialist Studies* we published last year, and she talked a little bit about how Ed Broadbent initially wasn't interested in focusing on free trade. Furthermore, he was a bit suspicious of the anti-Free Trade movement as being too connected to the Liberal Party. I was just wondering, is that something that you witnessed in terms of how the topic of free trade was viewed initially when the 1988 election was called, and how it evolved over the arc of that election?

den Hertog: I would disagree about feeling suspicious. I think that it was a concern—if I'm speaking from within the NDP—it was a concern that focusing the issue on the free trade agreement rather than the issues that matter to ordinary people that were either in the agreement as an issue or outside the agreement. The responsibility of the Mulroney government to have brought us down a path where people were very worried about social services, about taxation, fairness, energy policy, etc., would threaten the ability to be able to point out the other weaknesses of the Mulroney government, and the other worries people had about protecting the kind of Canadian values that we have. So, it was out of an interest to ensure that all those other issues did get play. That also depends on what region in Canada, whether it be softwood lumber as a good example, or fisheries, you know that those issues did not fall off the table that were very important—agriculture is another one; there was a

lot of suffering with agriculture in the prairie provinces. It was a worry that if the whole focus became only on the agreement that the other concerns of Canadians across the country would lose focus and lose attention. Then that would also be negative for us in terms of electing New Democrats that had been working on those issues and campaigning on those issues for the previous number of years. There was definitely, as I've already expressed, a concern that making an election an up or down on one issue, and then moving it towards a strategic voting focus would always be bad for us, at least at that time. I think it's that, rather than the concern about the free trade activities by various groups in the civil society being inherently Liberal. So, no, I don't think so.

Interviewer: Okay. So maybe we can switch gears a little bit. I'm curious, I did watch your debate at the St. Lawrence Hall in Toronto, which was a national debate with Lloyd Axworthy of the Liberal Party and John Crosbie of the Conservative Party. Can you describe what that experience was like for you, as I guess someone who is early in their political career. And how was your performance in that debate received by the NDP party. Yeah, if you could just talk a little bit about that experience in more detail for me.

den Hertog: It was kind of, at first, incredibly frightening, I got a call, I think it was just the week prior, not long before. As a candidate, the election was on the 20th—I think the 21st of November. I think the election was called on October 1st or something. So, we were already or had been in the pre-election period working really hard. It's not like the election starts when work starts, you have been working, all on volunteer basis, in addition to what you've been working very hard on for the constituency and nationally for a year or two prior.

Once the election was called and I as a candidate and also a Federal President working, being a candidate in British Columbia, it's practically a 24/7 kind of experience, you're working, you're canvassing, you're doing interviews, you're doing a lot of meeting with constituencies, a lot of events, especially since Vancouver Centre is always a high media environment. All the journalists are around there, and they say “who should we interview? Oh, Vancouver Centre is nearby, so let's interview the people here rather than going to Coquitlam or Kamloops,” or something like that. So, the media pressure to answer things are always very intense. And then about a week prior to this *Journal* process [on CBC television], I was called by the team in Ottawa, the full-time elections team in Ottawa said, “We're having this other national *Journal* debate on free trade and we've decided you should be the person who should be our spokesperson.” That meant traveling to Toronto, which takes time out of our campaign; preparing for it, being there, the pressure of it, and then flying back to getting back into the campaign and really preparing. At that point, I had a three-year-old son, so my whole life was complicated as well. But I said yes, and in the next period of time, in between doing all the other campaigning and preparation, I was preparing and thinking through the main messages, and thought, “what kind of questions could come up?” Of course, we had already identified our main messages, I would say, on the trade agreement, but you don't know how much time you're going to get and how much leeway you're going to have to either interrupt or be interrupted by others. It was a lot of

thinking and psychological preparation as the briefing to going there and then participating in that debate. It was interesting. I would say, each of the parties, myself included, got our main messages out. I felt that, at the time, John Crosbie looked like he was very uncomfortable. I enjoyed it. Looking back on it now, I would say it was too nice of a debate. I mean, nowadays, our debates are harder edged, I guess. At that time, the debate was, if I look back on it, was awfully nice and polite. I mean, I think I would be tougher now. But that was then. It got a good response. Obviously, you get an enormous additional profile. It heightened my profile in British Columbia and generally I got a positive response. I think Lloyd Axworthy and me, we were basically on the same side, talking about all the reasons that the Free Trade Agreement was not really about tariffs. It was about other issues, about investment, about a North American market potentially for energy, it had an impact on a variety of different things. Both of us had sort of different issues that we stressed, but they were very similar in theme. Crosbie's point of view was that we had to do it, "you have to keep access to the United States. Canada is a trading nation and that's basically the bottom line. All these other worries about the impacts for Canada are not true." That really was the fundamentals.

Interviewer: When I was watching that debate, I was looking at the issues that were being discussed, which ranged from jobs, to Medicare, to culture, Canadian values, ways of life and that kind of thing. The Conservative John Crosbie accused the NDP and the Liberals to be kind of stuck in the past and that they're the party that's going to take Canada into the future with this free trade deal. Free trade is the future and we're expanding the global market. Yes, Americans will be able to compete in Canada, but Canadian companies will be able to compete in the United States which is a good thing. Can you speak to the NDP's view of Canada's economy? Did you look at it through more of a nationalist lens, such as Canadian jobs and companies need to be protected? Did you see opportunities for Canada to compete globally? Were you looking at free trade through a nationalist lens or through or a more of a democratic lens? Can you speak to that for me?

den Hertog: Well, we looked at it, I think, from a nationalist lens, but also a changing economy lens. I tried, perhaps not entirely successfully, but we tried to say that, yes, Canada is a trading nation, fundamentally, and in the future we would like to trade more often. But Canada is not... first of all, if we are a trading country we should not look just to a North American lens, we are a country that should be looking in the future. We are a country in a multilateral environment and international environment. The economy is going to be changing and is already changing from not only being focused primarily on resources but on technology, environmental services, and various other things. Our needs as Canadians are, number one, to protect our sovereign rights to determine public policy for the good of Canadians, whether that is cultural, environmental, labour policy, social policy, or jobs and economic industries in the world. Given that we are a small country in the world, not a major country, we're going to have to ensure that we can support, assist, invest in, and make policies that will allow Canadian industries in the current and future decades to compete and be successful globally. So, it was nationalist in that way, but not necessarily protectionist in turn that way. I think we were and still very much of that view that we are,

we are very small—very large geographically—but small in population, small domestic market country, compared to the United States, and that can be a benefit in terms of access to that market, in theory, but in reality, the United States market is large enough for itself. It doesn't need a lot of external markets compared to Canada. The reality is that Americans are more likely to focus on America First policies that we experienced through softwood lumber or anything that really uses a lot of products from other countries. So we have to be very careful that we protect Canadian interests, whether it's in jobs or other aspects of our society from becoming entirely just part of a North American, integrated market. So that is nationalist. Absolutely. Let's see, what was your other question?

Interviewer: Did you look at the free trade question through a nationalist lens or through a democratic lens, etc.?

den Hertog: Well, from a nationalist lens the concern was on top issues of environment, on energy, water, and other kinds of things like that. We did not want us to be bound by the National Treatment rules in a free trade agreement that we would be restricted from making decisions about our own energy priorities for ourselves, for example. Culture was a major concern in the previous years leading up to the 1988 election, it still was during 1988. However, the agreement appeared to carve some of those things out. It was going to be very hard to predict whether those kinds of things would be protected or not. So, that's another part of looking at nationalist issues, of sovereignty issues through a free trade agreement. I think we were very concerned about environmental rules. Would our requirement of national treatment and investment requirements prevent Canada or make it difficult for Canada to set the kind of environmental policies, clean-up policies, requirements without threatening that the United States could claim things were not allowed under the—you know, basically, it's not just a free trade agreement, but an investment agreement. That was included. I guess the democratic elements were key in that.

We campaigned as well about dispute resolution. We were very concerned that just a North American dispute resolution mechanism would not be strong enough for Canada to protect its national interests. Unfortunately, I think to a large extent, some of those concerns have remained true. We continued to have softwood lumber issues all the time, right after the FTA agreement. Since then, we continue now to have buy American policies that prevent Canada from bidding on the vast majority of contracts that are deemed by American policies, by cities, states, and the national government of the United States. So, now the access that we were able—arguably and theoretically—to get through the Free Trade Agreement really didn't materialize to a large extent. I think our concerns about democratic control of Canada were justified. I don't think the worst worries were realized. Frankly, I think maybe one of the values of the Free Trade Agreement debate at the time was heightening Canada's awareness of those issues and making it a constant thing to ensure that we do what we can across most of the parties to protect Canadian interests.

Interviewer: That brings me to my next question. We've talked a lot about the 1988 election and your involvement in it and the issues. So, the election day happens, the Conservatives win a



majority. NDP wins, I think 43 seats, and remains in third party status in the House of Commons. Can you describe what the experience was after election day, I suppose for you individually as a candidate, but also as it relates to the free trade issue? The next major chapter in the free trade debate is the lead up to the signing of NAFTA, which of course was led by the federal Liberals. After the 88 election what were you and the NDP party worried was going to happen to Canada? Can you tell me what was the sentiment that was happening after the 88 election?

den Hertog: Okay, what was the sentiment? While there were many, just speaking very specifically about just after the election, I think it was enormous disappointment. Enormous disappointment in the NDP, where we had very much hoped with such a popular and effective leader as Broadbent who had received such support across the country for so many months prior to the election, on so many policy issues, that the free trade debate was lost in the election. In spite of that the vast majority, not vast majority, but the majority of Canadians at a popular vote level voted against the Conservatives if you add up the Liberal and New Democrat popular votes, they were 51-52% of the population. The conservative votes were 43%. So, if it was a referendum or an election about free trade, the majority of Canadians didn't want that agreement. Yet, because of our first-past-the-post parliamentary system in Canada the Conservatives did get the plurality of seats, although it diminished in number of seats from the 1984 election. The Liberals increased by not nearly as much as they hoped, and we increased but again by not nearly as much as we'd hoped. So, the disappointment was strong about the result with respect to the Free Trade Agreement a very, very strong disappointment about the results in general about the election, having again a majority Conservative government. I was definitely concerned about the impacts of that.

I think the only thing that I'm not in a position to analyze or judge is the amount of passion that had been raised about all the issues around the trade agreement. I think it probably caused even a Mulroney government to be careful what they did with it afterwards. I would say the Canadian electorate was very alive to incursions on Canadian sovereignty, on many of the social and environmental issues that are important to this country. Who knows, but it may have tempered the initiative to kind of go all in on everything North America, and that would have been a good thing. So, that's that. Well, what happened after that was essentially both the NDP and Broadbent, in 1989, decided not to continue as leader.

John Turner, also in 1990, stepped down as a leader [of the Liberal Party]. The political parties, Liberal and New Democrats went through change. The next real events in a sense were happening at [the] provincial level. Did you know in 1991 we elected a New Democratic government—after many, many, many years—here in BC under Mike Harcourt. And the level of New Democrat support that had been created in 1984 and in 1988 went into 1991 in some senses—the feeling of wanting to ensure, at a provincial level, a government that kind of reflected that preponderance of feeling in this province, I think. It was an indirect—I wouldn't say it was an impact, but it certainly didn't... it helped that they knew that we'd had such an incredibly strong campaign in 1988 at the

federal level, and it helped encourage and produce even more strength for the NDP at the provincial level.

Interviewer: That's an interesting connection.

den Hertog: So, let me add one other point. Again, it's very much my prism, but you asked for my prism. Over here, Mike Harcourt was elected. He was a mayor, previously had been a mayor, and previously very successful. He was elected very easily as leader of the New Democrats in 1986 and won in 1991. One of the things that was interesting, and has always been true of Mike Harcourt, but also was very important at that time in British Columbia—it gives you kind of flavor where did trade go after this: Mike Harcourt talked a lot about expanding our trade relationships with the Pacific Rim. Okay, let's not be just dependent on one market. He was very successful in the beginning to open up British Columbia opportunities with Asia, China, Taiwan, Taipei and other parts of the Pacific Rim. It was not that different from what we were talking about in 1988, sort of saying, yes, Canada is a trading country. We should be interested in the United States trade, obviously, it's very significant for us, but so is the rest of the world. We should be alive to that. He worked hard to, I would say, open British Columbia's eyes to opportunities there as well.

Interviewer: So, would this be increased trade, or would this be increased free trade? Was there a distinction with how Mike Harcourt was pushing this issue?

den Hertog: Well, the tariff reduction aspect of free trade was part of that. Certainly he participated in trade missions to talk about the lowering of tariffs in particular sectors. That had been consistent with NDP policy nationally for a very long time. So, tariff reduction—especially when it's agreed, negotiated, and bilateral—we'll see the impacts of it or not, it's a very positive thing. What may not be positive is sort of blanket agreements that diminish provincial or national capabilities to support key aspects of your economy or other aspects of the society.

Interviewer: I want to just move a bit past the 90s. How did your views of free trade shift as Canada moved into the early 90s and then closer towards NAFTA? Did you view the issue differently in terms of maybe not so much through a national lens? Did anything change for you as we got closer to NAFTA?

den Hertog: I have to be honest, not much, I still think I would look at the issues with a very similar prism. There is not a pro and con that is simple on trade; it's rarely only an issue of tariffs. The more complicated issues are, in a sense, the collateral issues of national treatment and limitation on public policy, government, public policy, and even civil situations in terms of what you are able to decide in a country. I've always looked with great interest at the EU's situation—EU Commission and the nations that belong to the European Union. They're very, I'm not a student of this, but my own impressions and knowledge of it is that the EU has been much more conscious in its development about what stays as a national competence and what in each level of agreement by the European Union becomes something that is governed at an EU level through legislation or through laws and regulation. In my view, we should have done that in any agreement that Canada agreed to

with the United States. We never did it, they were always sort of maxed packages that kind of left a lot of things unexplored and general and able to be interpreted pretty widely by either party, only then to be resolved by dispute resolution mechanisms that necessarily you have to have confidence in. Whereas in the European Union situation, there is a lot of domestic—they call it subsidiarity—domestic freedom still for setting policies and domestic rules at the most local or national level possible. It takes the countries in the EU affirmative action or conscious actions to actually submit their rules to an EU rule on something and then replace their national rules. That is a more sensible approach, I think, than what we have been forced to accept. The difference in the EU is you've got, you know, at the time 10 to 15, and now 27 to 29 countries, that are not of equivalent sizes, but lots of medium-sized countries that all have equivalent interests not to lose their entire sovereignty and are more able to in an equitable way say, “Okay, we understand why you want this protected and we want that protected. Let's all agree that we will do this together.” In the Canadian situation, and it's true for Mexico as well, is that we aren't equals, the three of us are not equals as countries in our opportunities financially, in terms of our wealth, in terms of our populations, and in terms of our power in many ways. So, it's a different negotiating context that makes it tougher. Our opportunities are different as well. So, I'm not saying it could be an easy situation. Do I think that have my views changed? Not really. I continue to feel, even then, that trade was very important for Canada. It was not something that we should say, “we can live on our own without trade.” That's not the way that it would be possible. However, what we do with agreements is terribly important, because it has an enormous impact on our country, larger than the average person is aware of. So, we have to be careful what we agree to.

Interviewer: So, I just want to now fast forward to the current context. What got us interested in this particular project was looking at the politics around Trump wanting to renegotiate NAFTA. He has been highly critical of NAFTA claiming it was a bad deal for America, a bad deal for American workers. He was going to essentially tear it up and ultimately, he renegotiated aspects of it, renamed it from NAFTA to CUSMA, From my vantage point at that time, I was looking at the politics in Canada. I wasn't seeing a kind of social movement that existed during the 1980s coming from the center-left-side of the political spectrum, rising up against this, and if anything, it was the Conservatives who were being the most vocally critical of aspects of free trade. So, for me, I was thinking, well, has there been a pivot in the politics of free trade, where now it's Conservatives taking up more of that anti-free trade discourse, perhaps for different reasons, but nonetheless, being the most vocally against it? Has the left become more accepting of free trade? Has the Conservatives become more against free trade? How would you describe the kind of current political context in Canada around the free trade issue?

den Hertog: Well, again, it's always tough, the word “free trade.” We're talking about the agreements that are in place. I think what's happened, frankly, is that the bigger picture in terms of how I see it is that the United States for a variety of reasons, isn't as preeminent as it used to be. Partly, that's technologically the fact that technology has been democratized in a way. I mean, it's way more widespread in the world, than it used to be certainly in the 80s. China

has evolved from a country that was very much a third-world developing country to a much more sophisticated country with a lot less poverty and lot greater capability. And the United States situation has changed and the impacts on the United States have been profound, in terms of its increased, I would say, inequality and a sense that it's not necessarily economically dominant, always in all aspects, even with respect to Europe, and I don't think that's necessarily a bad thing. I think all countries deserve to have a good quality of life and an equitable internal domestic environment, economically and socially. But the rise of protectionism in the United States has come together with this feeling that the United States is no longer always dominant economically. So, protectionism has risen, and then with protectionism comes blame, and comes an attempt to position or frame that argument as bringing jobs home. The free trade agreement by the United States will—if you want to put it that way—very much making it possible for them to place industries in Mexico and other places that were much lower in wages then in the United States, which makes it very profitable for American companies, etc. and was initially very advantageous from an American economic context. When those disparities diminish and other countries became more successful, the inequality within the United States was more apparent, then the protectionism comes. With that result, protectionism comes also because it's easy to blame any jobs that may exist in Canada or Mexico on the problem that the United States faces.

I think what then happens is that, in Canada, one of our major pre-free trade agreements was the Auto Pact, which was very important and is very important for Canada to basically produce cars in Ontario, and in the United States without national origin being important for parts for the whole car. That began to be whittled away through the treaty trade agreements, actually, and in essence, the wall has been replaced by the FTA. Now NAFTA is sort of maintaining what became the sort of integrated supply chains for Canada, which is now threatened by protectionist forces in the United States to cut those integrated supply chains that have been there for decades in some of our industries. I think that's where the feeling of, “Well, okay, it's not perfect, but let's hold on to what we have,” because Canada can't afford to start losing its contribution to these integrated industries. That would be devastating for many parts of the country. Where do the Conservatives line up on that? I think, it's more because it doesn't make sense from a trade point of view. I think it's more an ideological point of view, such as a point of view against China or against other countries that Conservatives tend to also be in support of some protectionist measures.

Interviewer: So, kind of picking up on a protectionist line or discourse, what you're saying is that as other economic powerhouses emerged, it shifted the economic dominance of the United States and the functioning of global supply chains. In the last few years this dynamic has been picked up along the more, perhaps, a protectionist nationalist line, if you will. Is that what you are describing?

den Hertog: Yes, I mean, it's the result of—if I can say, just for the United States having created this move to be able to put plants of whatever form in whatever country wherever the wages are the lowest is essentially what was happening for 10-20 years. Now. It begins to bite, in

terms of your own workers not having enough employment. Secondly, if there are disruptions to supply chain issues, that's very negative to the whole supply chain thing which was not an issue in 1988 that I can recall ever coming up. So, there's that. Logistically, it's an issue, but it also now begins to become a strategic issue for some countries, or for many countries. We saw that with COVID. Who makes what? How does that impact our ability to protect our own population? Well, I don't think we all worried about that a whole lot before. Now, unfortunately, it's something that we have to start worrying about, but the collateral damage of that is that it also fuels a lot of protectionist isolationist initiatives that are not always based on reason but are also based on sort of negative views of other countries. That's a worrisome sign as well.

Interviewer: Well, I'm done with asking questions for this interview. Is there anything you would like to say before we wrap things up? Is there anything other observations or thoughts you'd like to share before we end things?

den Hertog: Well, I would say that one of the things that I think when I look back on the 1980s time and now with the issues that we've come through recently, with the Coronavirus, but also the changing geopolitical situation in the world and how we're all so much more connected than we realize is that it would do us all good and for Canada to spend more time on really thinking through, debating, in a polite and calm way Canada's opportunities, strategic interests, how we can maintain trade, but also not end up participating in a world that just shuts down borders all over the place—how we manage political security, as well as economic and social security. We can't solve the problems of the world, but I think we have an important role to play. In a way, we benefited from a very affluent and safe time. Now it's time to do more thinking and talking about how we increase our own resilience in Canada on many fronts without it leading purely to protectionism.

Interviewer: So, remaining connected to the world?

den Hertog: Exactly.