

IN MEMORIAM



Bert Bolin, 1925–2007

Professor emeritus Bert Bolin passed away on December 30, 2007 leaving a great blank behind him. He became the Editor-in-Chief of *Tellus* after the death of Carl-Gustaf Rossby in 1957. After the journal split into two series (A and B) in 1983 he remained as Editor-in-Chief of *Tellus* A until his retirement in 1990.

Bert was born in 1925 in Nyköping, a city south of Stockholm, Sweden. He became interested in meteorology at an early age inspired by his parents, who were both school teachers. In his research career, Bert made fundamental contributions to both numerical weather forecasting and to the science of biogeochemical cycles. Bert began working on numerical weather prediction in 1950, when he spent a year at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey working with Jule Charney, John von Neumann and other leading scientists on the first computerized weather forecast using ENIAC, the first electronic computer. Shortly after finishing his PhD in 1956, on the advice of his supervisor Carl-Gustaf Rossby, Bert began working on atmospheric chemistry and the cycling of pollutants in the atmosphere. Bert's work in this area led to fundamental advances in our understanding of the carbon cycle—not only in the atmosphere, but also in the oceans and terrestrial biosphere. Bert was a key person in establishing the science of biogeochemistry.

In addition to his considerable scientific contributions, Bert also played a leading role in establishing and running many of the international research organizations we now take for granted. As early as 1963, Bert became involved in organizing an international effort to use the new satellite tools that were becoming available to study the general circulation of the atmosphere and develop new methods for weather forecasting. This effort led to the formation of the ICSU Committee on Atmospheric Sciences (CAS) in 1964, and Bert became its first Chairman.

This led to the development of a number of international environmental research organizations in which Bert played a leading role. The CAS initiated the Global Atmospheric Research Programme (GARP) in 1967, again with Bert as the first Chairman. This effort brought together scientists from all over the world, a major feat in the days of the cold war. It also produced an early example of what could be done to combine large coordinated international field experiments with model testing and development. The success of this effort led to the transition of GARP into the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP) in 1980.

During the 1980s, the need for better collaboration between geoscientists and biologists became evident. Stimulated by Mustafa Tolba (then the Executive Director of UNEP), Bert in 1983 began a UNEP-supported project to look into the links between physical climate and global ecosystems. In 1985–1986 Bert chaired an ICSU working group that produced background material used by ICSU in its decision in 1986 to launch the International Geosphere–Biosphere Programme—our own IGBP.

As if these contributions were not sufficient, Bert also played a central role in the formation and management of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). After the UN Commission on Environment and Development's report *Our Common Future* (the 'Brundtland report') was published in 1987, the need was recognized for an intergovernmental assessment panel on the issue of climate change. The WMO and UNEP governing bodies agreed to work together to form this panel, and in November 1988 the IPCC took form. Yet again, Bert Bolin was selected to be the first Chairman of an important new international organization. Bert chaired the IPCC from 1988 to 1997, through its first two assessment reports. He was instrumental in establishing IPCC as a model for how international global environmental assessments should be done.

During much of this time (from 1961 to his retirement) Bert Bolin was professor of meteorology at Stockholm University. Bert was an esteemed colleague to many leading scientists, and mentor and guiding light for many young minds who have since become leading scientists. While it is easy to document Bert's many scientific and organizational achievements, perhaps his most important contribution has been building the human capital we now enjoy within the science of the Earth System.

During Bert Bolin's years as Editor-in-Chief *Tellus* developed from being a broad geophysical journal, in accordance with the vision of Carl-Gustaf Rossby, to one with emphasis on atmospheric and oceanic sciences. In 1983 the journal was split into two series, one (A) focusing on dynamic meteorology and oceanography and the other (B) focusing on chemical and physical meteorology. Bert's strong commitment to *Tellus* contributed greatly to maintain its high quality and international reputation.

Bert Bolin leaves a great legacy not only of world-class science, but also of how international, interdisciplinary science can be organized and carried out. He will be deeply missed, and enduringly remembered.

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Editor-in-Chief, *Tellus A*

Henning Rodhe
Editor-in-Chief, *Tellus B*