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BERNARD FRASER'S MEMOIRSS

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Memoirs of Bernard H. Fraser: Dr. John Holm; Prof. Debre;
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B. H. Fraser

11 July 1983

For the record, here is an incident which I told to Prof. Fruchtbaum recently: Shortly before Christmas 1949, Dr. Johs Holm and I went from Copenhagen to Paris to visit Prof. Debre. Upon leaving, I wished him a Merry Christmas. He replied sternly: "I am an Orthodox Jew." I have been careful since then extending holiday wishes.

This is a brief footnote to the UNICEF History: Retired staff are overlooked. There is no line of communication. Attempts to accomplish a mailing list have been failures. Though I am supposed to get selected documents, I received one in 1983. It is hopeless to expect more, and I am not making any more requests for material. It is a sad sidelight.

Rather I would suggest that someone be entrusted to follow through on personal contacts with retired staff. I am thinking of Joan Dydo to take on such a task once the History Project is finished. Such a desk, call it the Veteran's Desk, would require only nominal financial support. It is the personal relationships which remain important to retirees as the years go by.

Lest one forgets his name, it should be added to the Front Office personalities whom I mentioned at the end of the dictation on 8 June. It was Karl Borders. One recalls him as a person with warmth. He was particularly understanding of some situations I encountered in my first few months in Copenhagen.

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Though not a Catholic, I found that some of the easiest letters to write for Maurice Pate's signature were those to his Eminence, The Secretary of State of the Holy See. The texts were hardly ever changed. We always received beautiful replies on behalf of the Pope, along with checks for \$1,000, and this support has been of great value.

Upon my suggestion, Maurice Pate once asked the late Ali Khan, to whom UNICEF could write to get similar support from the Muslim religion. The reply was that there is no single head for the Muslim religion. Like the Christian religion, it is divided into sects. That's where that matter ended.

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One factor which meant so much in UNICEF's early projects was "Internal Matching". The matching principle is described in the History of UNICEF written by John Charnow in 1964-1965, starting on page 10. The matching principle was helpful in fund-raising, if only to imply that UNICEF was not a give-away organization. It was phased out, but one wonders whether the self-help features in UNICEF's work should not again be stressed more today than they presumably are.

Does a fund-raising officer have to travel? Not when the work is set up as it was in my relations with Maurice Pate. After having started my fund-raising work in February 1953, I made one trip on fund-raising business to Europe in 1956. No other travel authorization was ever issued in my name after 1956, and for twenty years I stayed moored to my desk, being entirely happy in providing useful material to those who would go out begging.

It was always our practice to acknowledge contributions by thank-you notes. No matter how small the amount involved was, thank-you notes were sent to governments or individuals alike. In fact, substantial donors were likely to receive routine acknowledgments, rather than special expressions of gratitude, on the assumption that too much praise would make them conclude that they had done enough, which in fact they had not. In other words, our appreciation was measured.

Fund-raising was not limited to cash. We know, of course, that UNICEF received vast amounts of dry skim milk. But we were also accepting at one time or another meats from Australia and New Zealand, fish from Iceland, raisins from Greece, coffee from Guatemala, and Thailand gave 1,000 tons of rice annually for many years. At times this may have caused programming problems, but donor governments had a chance to give us in kind what they could not give us in cash.

There is a saying that the bird flies through the air without leaving a trace. I am going to fly away, leaving no more traces ... until, maybe, I think of something more to record.

