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Interviews with

MARTHA MAY ELIOT, M.D.

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Jeannette Cheek: This begins our tenth session today, and we're going to continue with the international scene. I'll let you just go ahead.

Dr. Eliot: I think we wound up the other day talking about UNRRA and my relationships with the beginnings of the United States' activities with UNICEF. Is that right?

JC: I think we did. We'd hardly begun it.

MME: My relationships to the international organizations related to the United Nations have been varied and covered quite a period of time. The first contact I had with any of the United Nations organizations was in 1947 when I began to work with UNICEF. It seems to me that the best way for me to proceed would be to go back of that to 1946.

JC: Good.

MME: I think maybe that first statement is not correct. I think the first contact I had with the UN organizations was in 1946 in Geneva when the executive boards of UNICEF and WHO were both meeting at the same time there.

JC: Yes. Now this was not that first international health conference that you told us about which preceded your trip to the different European countries, visiting the six or seven countries to learn about maternal health and child care and their practices? That was earlier?

MME: Oh, that's earlier. That was in 1936 [when I went to Geneva to a meeting on nutrition sponsored by the League of Nations International Health Organization].

JC: That's much earlier. That was, of course, then pre-World War II and was with the old League of Nations.

MME: That was pre-War II.

JC: Yes. So what we are talking about now is the United Nations and 1946.

MME: Yes. The 1936 trip was really invaluable to me because it gave me background with respect to the children's programs in these countries long prior to the war and before there were any major international UN activities.

JC: Yes. So we start with 1946.

MME: We start with 1946, June, when the First International Health Conference was held in New York. This conference had been recommended to the United Nations International Conference for the Organization of International Activities in San Francisco in April 1945.

JC: Yes.

MME: At that first UN conference in San Francisco a proposal was made by the delegations from Brazil and China that an international health conference should be held for the purpose of establishing an international health organization which could be organized under the resolution adopted on specialized agencies by that San Francisco conference.

JC: I see.

MME: I'm not clear from what records I have whether that original United Nations conference recommended to the Economic and Social Council that they should undertake the task of calling an international health conference. What I do know is that ECOSOC in a meeting on the 15th of February, 1946, did adopt a resolution recommending that an international conference be called. The ECOSOC not only made that recommendation but they established a technical preparatory committee.

The Committee was to prepare a draft of an agenda and proposals for the organization of a specialized agency in the health field.

JC: I see.

MME: In the field of public health.

JC: They probably wouldn't have done that unless they had been authorized so to do by the original conference, would they?

MME: No. The original UN conference in San Francisco, I am sure, adopted a resolution following the declaration--as it's called in the documents, by the delegation of China and Brazil--asking that such a conference be called. The United Nations conference accepted this proposal and recommended to ECOSOC that they proceed. At least, I am assuming that was the process.

JC: Yes.

MME: I'm also assuming that at that San Francisco conference UNRRA was established. Now I'm not quite sure about this. My documents don't show it. But it may be that the original conference recommended to ECOSOC that a United Nations relief and rehabilitation organization be established at once, as as soon as peace was declared. Plans had been laid for this. I think I spoke about that at the last session we had. These two recommendations of that original conference laid the ground for the development of both WHO and UNICEF, the two organizations with which I have had the greatest contact.

JC: Yes.

MME: The International Health Conference was called by ECOSOC for June of 1946. This conference was held in New York at Flushing Meadows. It was attended by 51 nations as full members of the conference and by 13 other nations as observers. So that, all told, there were 64 nations at this conference. The United States, of course, had a

- MME: delegation, a fairly large one. Dr. Thomas Parran was the chairman of the delegation and I was the vice-chairman. The conference had before it the documents of the technical preparatory committee that ECOSOC had also set up.
- JC: Yes.
- MME: That preparatory committee had met in Paris and had drawn up the first draft of the constitution of the World Health Organization.
- JC: Had they?
- MME: The report of this international conference includes a statement of the final acts of the conference, which gives the general outline of their work. It also includes the constitution as adopted by the conference, based on the draft constitution of the preparatory committee. The documents also include a statement of arrangements that were concluded by the governments represented at the International Health Conference with respect to how WHO could come into being. The constitution of WHO made it clear that it must be accepted by at least 26 nations before it could come into existence and begin to hold world health assemblies.
- JC: Yes.
- MME: The period between July of 1946 when this first International Health Conference ended and the actual beginning of WHO was 20 months. It was a long period, much too long and unnecessarily long. But the gap was filled by an interim commission which went to work almost immediately exactly as if it were the basic organization. [The report of this interim commission tells of a number of specific programs and plans for the work of WHO as soon as its constitution was ratified by the 26th government in April 1947. A program of health work was aided in China and a few other projects were instituted. It established a method of work which was "project" oriented, not general aid to overall organization of a public health service that would be nationwide attempting to include a plan for a total program of coordinated health activities such as those in the highly developed nations. That type of assistance to governments was put off until later.] It had to operate in a rather informal way.
- JC: Yes.
- MME: I had no specific relationship to this interim commission. But before leaving the discussion of the International Health Conference, I would like to speak about two items that were finally included in the constitution because they relate to children...which of course was my interest.
- JC: Yes.
- MME: The draft constitution had a section in its preamble which drew attention to the importance of the "healthy development of the child"

MME: For some reason, this item was objected to, by some of the U.S. delegation, [this clause in the preamble had been contributed by the delegate from Canada, Dr. Brock Chisholm, a psychiatrist, to the discussions of the preparatory committee in Paris. Dr. Chisholm was a very persuasive speaker and had managed to keep this clause in the draft constitution presented at the International Health Conference].

JC: You say some of the U.S. delegates objected to this clause?

MME: Yes, the United States didn't like it. I don't know whether this goes back to the basic problem between the Children's Bureau and the Public Health Service, or not, but I suspect it did.

JC: Because Dr. Parran was at that time chairman of the U.S. delegation? Did you tell me that it also included a number of other members from the Public Health Service.

MME: Yes, but I was vice-chairman. So here you had the Public Health Service and the Children's Bureau represented. In our delegation discussions (which we held every day) took place to decide how we would vote on the various items. Objections were expressed to the section on the development of children--the healthy development of children; the Public Health Service, whose interests had historically been centered in communicable disease and the environment in which they grew, felt that this statement in the preamble was too broad, I think, and they also objected to the focus being on children as such.

I don't have a copy of the actual wording of that draft statement. What I do have is, of course, the final wording, but I have a copy of the speech made by Brock Chisholm in the International Health Conference, pressing the adoption of this clause in the preamble on the healthy development of the child.

JC: Now I think at the end of that he actually suggested some wording, didn't he?

MME: Yes, he did. And that wording, though not the final wording, was essentially the same. I should add parenthetically that he made the speech at my urging. I was not able to speak to this subject. My difficulty was that a majority of the delegation from the United States had agreed, in its planning sessions, to vote against this clause, to recommend its deletion. [I suppose I was a minority of one on this question though I seem to remember that I had one or two supporters.]

JC: And Brock Chisholm was Canadian.

MME: He was Canadian and was quite willing to make a speech to support the inclusion of this clause. At the end of that speech he said, "I would suggest that Article VI of the Preamble be changed to read, 'the ability to live harmoniously in a changing total environment is essential to the healthy development of the child.'"

JC: So he has that phrase in there, "healthy development of the child."

MME: Yes, that was there and still is. In the transcript of his speech, which is in my papers in the Schlesinger Library, he says: "May I read this again?" And emphasized it to the plenary session of the conference. He finally wound up saying, "Because I believe this matter to be of the most vital importance to the future of the World Health Organization, and even to the survival of the human race, I would move that a vote be taken on this motion by roll call."

JC: I see. Put people on record.

MME: Put people on record. My memory of the action taken by the United States delegation was that it abstained. That's only a memory. I have no record.

JC: Yes.

MME: The minutes, of course, of the meeting--the verbatim minutes--would show.

JC: Yes.

MME: So, I accomplished through Dr. Chisholm what I wanted!

JC: Yes.

MME: He was able also to insist then that the statement of functions of the organization (which was Article 2 of Chapter II of the Constitution) should include reference to maternal and child health as Item (you see it's fairly well down the line) of the statement of functions. As finally adopted, the Constitution says that one of the list of WHO's functions would be (now I quote), "To promote maternal and child health and welfare." I'd like to point out here that it was I who put in "and welfare."

JC: It was! "Child health and welfare."

MME: "...and welfare." Because I knew that many countries thought of child welfare as including health.

JC: Yes.

MME: Other countries, like the United States, separated them in the administrative line of services. So the item read, "To promote maternal and child health and welfare, and to foster the ability to live harmoniously in a changing total environment." So this concept of the importance of the health development of the child in the development of world peace and harmony was introduced into the WHO Constitution. And, of course, I believe it is a very important element in it. The first Article...not Article, the first item in the list of functions, has a bearing on this, too, and a bearing on what I shall be saying after a while about the relationships between WHO and UNICEF.

JC: Yes.

MME: Because it says that the World Health Organization (and I quote) "should act as the directing and coordinating authority on international health work."

JC: I see. So this would embrace UNICEF's task.

MME: This would embrace UNICEF's functions in the health field.

JC: Yes.

MME: Both maternal and child health. But, you see, it says "directing and coordinating authority."

JC: Yes.

MME: It doesn't say it would be the only UN authority that would have functions in this field.

JC: No. In fact, the very word "coordinate" would suggest that others were doing things.

MME: That's exactly it.

JC: Yes.

MME: This document--the report of this International Health Conference--was adopted, finally after amendments. There were small amendments all the way through. And the delegations signed it then and there at the conference. By the way you may be interested to know that I was the only woman delegate at this conference to sign this report

And I was the only woman signing the Constitution of the World Health Organization which was part of the overall report. The Constitution was signed separately.

JC: That is very interesting.

MME: The United States delegation had only three..full delegates authorized by the State Department to take action for the United States. All the rest of the delegation were advisors to the delegates.

JC: I see.

MME: The delegation included Dr. Thomas Parran, chairman, me as vice-chairman, and then Dr. Frank Boudreau was the third delegate. Dr. Boudreau had been the executive secretary of the Health Organization of the League of Nations. [Dr. Boudreau was, I am sure you know, an American. Though the United States was not a member of the League of Nations, citizens of the United States could, of course, be employed for staff positions, such as this.] So it was very appropriate that he be...a member of the delegation helping to set up the World Health Organization.

JC: Yes.



- MME: It was Mrs. Boudreau who went to Dr. Parran, and urged that both I and Dr. Boudreau should sign the constitution with him.
- JC: I see! Well, that's interesting.
- MME: It was. She wanted at least one woman's name in the list of signers, and she realized that if she hadn't pressed for her husband's name to appear...
- JC: Yes. That yours wouldn't have.
- MME: That mine wouldn't have either. It would have been signed by Dr. Parran only, I'm sure.
- JC: Very interesting.
- MME: The other documents adopted by this conference were also signed by all three members of the U.S. delegation. This meant also signing the proposal for the Interim Commission to initiate a program leading up to the full operating of WHO and what it would do. This was signed by the three of us from the United States.
- JC: Now would the other delegations have followed suit and had all their official members sign?
- MME: No. I think most of the delegations were either one-man or two-man teams. Sometimes only one signed. But where there were two, they both signed. For instance, the chief delegate, who signed for Canada was Brook Claxton, but the documents were also signed by Dr. Brock Chisholm, who was the second delegate from Canada.
- JC: I see.
- MME: And so on. This was an important and extremely interesting conference. It led, obviously, to many other things. One of its major functions was to outline a way through which the old International Office of Hygiene in Paris could be dissolved and merged into the new World Health Organization.
- JC: I suppose in every instance where the machinery of the old League was involved...there had to be place found for it..to be absorbed so that the continuity of work would somehow go on.
- MME: That's right. And the documents of the League, I believe, are all filed at the United Nations.
- JC: Yes. And in Geneva, I suspect.
- MME: Also the World Health Organization was able to inherit staff.
- JC: Yes. Which must have helped.
- MME: Which really did help.

JC: Yes.

MME: When I get around to WHO, I'll speak about the way in which the budget was developed for this new organization.

JC: Good.

MME: Now this conference was in June and July of '46.

JC: Yes.

MME: UNRRA was in existence at this time...had been, I suppose, ever since 1945.

JC: Yes.

MME: Or, at least, early '46, but I think soon after the San Francisco meeting.

JC: Yes.

MME: UNRRA worked for a year or so and then reached the point where the General Assembly members thought they should arrange for its dissolution. The Assembly realized that UNRRA had been established as a temporary organization for relief and rehabilitation of the war-torn countries [to pick up the activities of OFRA which was a United States program previously set up for the same purpose.]

JC: Yes.

MME: The Assembly appointed a committee for liquidation of the organization. On this committee was Dr. Rajchman representing Poland where the destruction of cities and rural areas was without doubt the most severe. It was Dr. Rajchman who presented to this committee a proposal that a children's fund be established to succeed UNRRA and start its work with the money that UNRRA had left over and it was Dr. Rajchman's idea that the UNRRA money, all of it (I think) would be turned over to this new children's fund.

JC: I see.

MME: Dr. Rajchman had had earlier contact with The Rockefeller Foundation. I suppose that there had been Rockefeller Foundation projects in Poland.

JC: Yes.

MME: At all events, Dr. Rajchman knew how The Rockefeller Foundation was organized and he was anxious that this new children's fund should operate very much the way The Rockefeller Foundation operates.

JC: I see.

MME: With Rockefeller Foundation funds the staff of the Foundation, stationed in Paris or in other major countries in different parts of

MME: the world, would work out projects with countries or localities within a country and those projects would be developed with guidance from The Rockefeller Foundation staff.

JC: I see.

MME: Dr. Rajchman thought that the United Nations children's fund, which at that time was called the International Children's Emergency Fund, should be set up as an emergency organization, and not as a permanent, continuing one. It was established at that time, December 1946, to continue to help countries with the funds that were left over by UNRRA.

JC: Yes.

MME: But Dr. Rajchman was forward-looking. He did not want the money at the disposal of UNICEF to be collected on a formula from all the countries, the way the WHO money is collected.

JC: I see.

MME: That for the other specialized agencies, also. He wanted it to be an open-ended fund established within the UN organization and contributed by governments in amounts which the governments determined by voluntary organizations in various countries. [In some countries the total contribution came from voluntary organizations, in others from the governments only, in others still from both.]

JC: That's awfully interesting. In a sense, he's taking it outside the UN budget, isn't he? It isn't being confined by a decision at the center on the UN budget itself.

MME: That's right.

JC: He's getting contributions from outside the UN.

MME: That's right. And even though this new fund was to be an administrative part of the United Nations organization itself, and not an independent "specialized" agency, nevertheless the contributions to it--the money that it would have at its disposal--was to come from governments as they saw fit to make a contribution, or from groups of people...in countries, or from voluntary organizations.

JC: How creative this proved later on.

MME: That's right. It certainly did. On December 11, 1946, in the General Assembly of the United Nations, a resolution was adopted setting up UNICEF. It went through quite a process. UNRRA's committee on dissolution of itself recommended to the executive authorities of UNRRA that such a resolution should be adopted by UNRRA, and that UNRRA should refer this to the General Assembly. This is just exactly what happened. Finally the General Assembly did adopt it, so that on December 11, UNICEF came into existence. Early in 1947 the UNICEF Executive board, which was made up (I think) of

MME: representatives from 26 nations, began to work, began its operations. They had, of course, to examine the terms for their existence. Now one of the articles in their basic operating document, the General Assembly Resolution Number 57, provided that UNICEF would, among other things, concern itself with "child health, generally." Now it is easy to see that this came into conflict with the WHO function of maternal and child health...which is in its constitution.

JC: I see.

MME: The WHO constitution adopted in July of '46 overlapped, or rather, I think we should put it the other way, the UNICEF resolution provided for a function that overlapped with the WHO function.

JC: Yes.

MME: In '47 the two organizations were both starting their work. WHO started in the fall of '46 and began to do things in different countries. UNICEF wanted to operate on the basis of current information about the situation in the countries of Europe. I haven't spoken of the set-up of UNICEF, but in this executive board of which the chairman was Dr. Rajchman they had adopted an administrative organization plan. Mr. Maurice Pate, who had worked in Poland earlier...

JC: Had he been an UNRRA man?

MME: No. I think it was before UNRRA. I'm not quite sure under whose auspices he did his work in Poland, but, at all events, Dr. Rajchman knew him, and got the board to accept him as the executive director for UNICEF. The board instructed their executive director to proceed with an investigation of the needs of children in the war-devastated countries of Europe.

JC: Yes.

MME: It is at this point that I came into the picture very actively. [This was in late March or early April 1947.]

JC: Yes.

MME: Mr. Pate asked me whether I would make this study of the needs of children in the war-torn countries.

JC: Oh, did he?

MME: And he interviewed me for this job. It was the first time I had ever been "interviewed" in my life...for any new job that I was to have.

JC: Yes.

MME: That in itself interested me and amused me very much.

JC: Yes!

MME: I can see it now in an F Street house where UNICEF was having headquarters--two or three rooms, that was all. Well, apparently, what I knew about the countries of Europe, as a result of that earlier trip I had made in 1936 and my experiences in England in January 1941, interested Mr. Pate. He also knew that at the time I was Associate Chief of the Children's Bureau, and that I knew the kind of work that was done in the United States for children, both voluntary and governmental.

JC: Yes.

MME: So Mr. Pate decided he would offer me this job and I decided to accept it.

JC: Yes!

MME: It was a wonderful opportunity for me to have a chance again to see the difference in what was happening to children after the war and in that early set of visits I made in 1936 about which I've already been interviewed.

JC: Yes. Now did this mean giving up your post at the Children's Bureau?

MME: Oh, no.

JC: It was just a leave of absence.

MME: That's right. That's all it was. And UNICEF paid me quite well for this job.

JC: Yes.

MME: I said I would need an assistant, somebody who could work with me, take notes of every interview I had, be an active assistant. I asked him if he could find somebody who could speak French, at least.

JC: Yes.

MME: Because I didn't speak French.

JC: Yes.

MME: I didn't speak any foreign language. We found (I don't remember how) a young woman who not only could speak French, but had had some education in Czech, could speak a little of the Czech language. In other words, she knew Slav roots, and so on. She was Miss Susannah Mirick. She came from Massachusetts also. This combination worked very well. She was a highly intelligent young woman.

JC: She probably enjoyed it.

MME: Oh, she enjoyed it enormously! And she was extremely good in keeping notes and helping me keep my appointments because I had so many that it was not easy.

JC: Now how long a time did you spend in Europe on this study?

MME: I left the United States about April 28 of 1947 with Dr. Rajchman.

JC: Yes.

MME: Dr. Rajchman and I went first to Paris.

JC: Yes.

MME: There I saw a number of people some of whom had been involved in war-time activities and in health services for children, and so on. Then Dr. Rajchman and I and Sue, together, went by train first to Warsaw.

JC: Did you?

MME: I think I have told you, but not on the record, that Dr. Schmidt went with us also.

JC: Oh, did he go with you?

MME: Dr. Schmidt was working in Paris at this time...for the JDC.

JC: I see. That was the Joint Distribution Committee.

MME: That's the Joint Distribution Committee and he was helping to arrange for the Jewish people in Germany who wanted to go to Israel to get there.

JC: Yes.

MME: That was his function.

JC: Yes.

MME: He wanted to do something in Poland. He had been there once before, but he wanted to go again and he thought this would be an interesting way to get more insight into what was happening in Poland. In Poland Dr. Rajchman, of course, coming from that country knew exactly what he wanted me to do.

JC: Yes. Of course.

MME: We went to Warsaw first and there I saw and was shocked beyond belief by the destruction in the city.

JC: It must have been terrible.

MME: It was terrible.

MME: They took me to the area where the ghetto had been.

It was completely wiped out. Before leaving Warsaw, every building that was standing in the ghetto region was blown up by the Germans. It was just one mass of rubble. However, by May of 1947, rebuilding had started.

JC: Had it?

MME: It was extraordinary how much energy and zeal the Polish people were putting into the rebuilding of their own capital.

JC: Yes.

MME: They did it along more modern lines, but many of the old traditions of architecture were held onto and built into the new structures.

We went also to--I can't pronounce it--Wroclaw, the old city...in German it was Breslau...to see what had happened there. We wanted to visit the university, to get in touch with some of the intellectual Polish people who were anxious to see rehabilitation of children and families brought about. There I met Dr. Hirschfeld who was a scientist at the university. He was the scientist who first developed blood grouping. A well-known person.

JC: Yes.

MME: Dr. Rajchman's plan was that his wife, who was a pediatrician, might accompany me and so on our trip through the Eastern European countries that we were to visit, Dr. Hanna Hirschfeld did go with us.

Dr. Rajchman said to me, "You know she has not been out of Poland since before the war. I think it would be a wonderful thing for her and for her morale and her spirit to make this trip. So I recommend that UNICEF take her on and have her go with you as an interpreter [she spoke seven languages]."

JC: Oh, my.

MME: This was arranged. Dr. Hanna Hirschfeld was a remarkable person. She told me in detail about the life of the Hirschfeld family in the ghetto of Warsaw and how they managed to get out before the end of the war.

JC: Yes.

MME: She and her husband and their daughter were there. And they arranged for the daughter to go first. The daughter went out in a workmen's lumber team, lay under the lumber.

JC: Did she?

MME: And went through the border this way and escaped. They had planned where she would go, and somehow through their underground they had

MME: arranged with friends to take her in. I don't know how it was done. That was never revealed.

JC: No.

MME: A little later the mother went out in workmen's clothes with a gang of workmen. Dr. Hirschfeld told me how he watched the group going and wondered whether she would make it. But she did. She got over the border with the group of workmen who had come in for the day, and went out at night. How they got the workmen's clothes for her, I don't know. He himself later went out the same way. So that they had all met finally at some rendezvous in Poland.

JC: They were the exceptions, weren't they? Because almost everybody else was destroyed.

MME: Oh, yes. That's right. They and a few others who managed to get out the same way, you know, were the exceptions.

JC: Yes.

MME: Dr. Hirschfeld (and I'm speaking now of Mrs. Hirschfeld) was very free in talking with me about all this.

JC: Was she?

MME: And it was extraordinarily interesting.

JC: She must have been helpful as a translator, too.

MME: Oh, she was tremendously helpful. We first went to Czechoslovakia where she knew all the languages, and was able to interpret everything. At this time the Masaryks were not there.

JC: No.

MME: Dr. Masaryk, I think, had died.

JC: The father...but Jan was in England, was he not?

MME: Alice Masaryk had come out, somehow, and had been in Chicago.

JC: Yes. Benès, of course, went to Chicago, too.

MME: Who?

JC: Benès. He went to Chicago, and he taught at the University of Chicago for a period.

MME: That's right.

JC: Yes. Chicago was quite a Czech refugee center, refugee intellectuals

MME: I see. Well, I saw Miss Masaryk there briefly later on. I've already spoken of the fact that I saw her in my 1936 trip.



JC: Yes. This was, of course, a year before the Russians took over. They took over in '48.

MME: They did.

JC: I think Jan Masaryk came back from London to be Prime Minister, didn't he? And then, of course, the incident that's been so much debated, about his death, came in '48.

MME: Yes. Whether he was pushed...

JC: ...or committed suicide.

MME: ...Whether he committed suicide or was pushed out the window. That was in '48, wasn't it?

JC: That was '48.

MME: Yes. From Czechoslovakia we went to Vienna. Dr. Hirschfeld said to me, "Don't ask me to interpret for you here. I cannot do it."

JC: Did she really?

MME: Yes, she said, "I really can't take it. To talk with the authorities here." Some of them were in the picture back in the wartime.

JC: You mean they collaborated with the Nazis.

MME: Yes. So I said, "All right. We'll get on." With the French that Sue Mirick was able to produce and with the fact that a good many people spoke English, we managed all right.

JC: Yes.

MME: Dr. Hirschfeld went to stay with friends. They took care of her for the few days we were there.

JC: Yes.

MME: From there we went to Yugoslavia and of course, once again, she was free to help us in every way.

JC: Yes.

MME: I should talk a little about what it was I was trying to do.

JC: Yes, I think you should.

MME: There is a document which I have which is the report I made to the executive board of UNICEF in June of '47 which describes the way in which I went at my interviews with people and the ground I tried to cover. Of course, I was exploring what the needs of children were. I wanted to see how those needs were being met by the countries themselves, and I wanted to know what the country thought UNICEF could

MME: provide that would be most useful for them in their struggles to take care of the children.

JC: Yes.

MME: Of course, the children were frightfully malnourished. It was an extraordinary thing for me to see children on the street who were so thin and poorly nourished. When I went into the hospitals, as I did in each place, I found many children with tuberculosis. I'd never seen so much, rows of infants and young children in hospital wards, emaciated, dull, lifeless. I'd never seen so much tuberculous meningitis. The children just couldn't withstand the massive doses of tuberculo bacilli organisms to which they were exposed by adults with advanced tuberculosis of the lungs. It invaded their whole bodies.

JC: Yes.

MME: So that many died of what was known as miliary tuberculosis, that is scattered like seed throughout the body. And many died of meningitis. There was also much venereal disease.

JC: You mean evidence in the children.

MME: Some in the children, but the mothers--the pregnant and nursing mothers...

JC: Oh, yes.

MME: Many were infected. I not only inquired about children, but I inquired about the pregnant and nursing mothers because it was obvious that they were the most critical members of the family, if the family was to be preserved and held together. My investigations and explorations took me not only to hospitals but to feeding stations and to many of the institutions where orphaned children were kept...those who had been orphaned by the war. I saw thousands of children who were in great need of food, medicines, and especially immunization against tuberculosis, and treatment for venereal disease.

JC: Yes. Was there at that time immunization against tuberculosis? Had it...been developed by then?

MME: Yes. It had already been developed. In Denmark there was a National Institute for the study of tuberculosis. Research and the production of tuberculin were in process. Tuberculin is the substance used to test a child for tuberculosis, and to immunize against tuberculosis. Here also the various methods of treatment known at that time were available. (Since then, of course, much more has been learned, especially with respect to treatment.)

At the time of my visits to these war-devastated countries the Danish people had already begun to organize groups of technical workers--physicians, nurses, and others to go to the war-devastated countries and set up tuberculosis clinics.

MME: So I visited one or two of these and found that not only the Danes, but the other Scandanavian countries would like to contribute their services to UNICEF as part of their contribution to the organization.

JC: How nice!

MME: So this became one of the proposals that I put together for my recommendations to the board in June 1947.

JC: Yes. Now this trip lasted about two months.

MME: Besides going to France, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, I went on this first trip to Yugoslavia, Montenegro and Italy. In Italy we were joined by Dr. Aujaleur, from Paris, whom Dr. Debré had made available to us to go with us visiting institutions in Italy and in Greece. Dr. Hirschfeld went back from Italy to Poland, but Dr. Aujaleur went with me to Greece. I was able then to return through Geneva and Paris to the United States in time for the executive board meeting of UNICEF toward the end of June.

JC: I see. And it was to them that you submitted this first report?

MME: It was to the board that I submitted the report on this first trip.

JC: Yes.

MME: In Yugoslavia I came up against the first real problem that I had. One of the principles that had been laid down by the Executive Board and by Mr. Pate as the responsible administrative person was that when UNICEF made a gift of food--large quantities of food--to a country, a delegation should go to the country when the supplies and equipment arrived to keep track of the supplies [and make sure the food would go to children and pregnant mothers. No objection to this was raised in Poland, Czechoslovakia or Austria. These people came from various countries and as I observed the way it worked out I thought it was a reasonable safeguard.] They worked with the governments on distribution [and did not leave the control of the supplies just to the powers that be. Without this international group watching over the supplies it would have been easy to add the food from UNICEF to the military or workmen's supplies.]

JC: I see.

MME: What UNICEF wanted was that it should go to the children.

JC: The children. Yes.

MME: In Yugoslavia I encountered problems and objection to the acceptance of an international delegation to oversee the distribution of the food. [The Executive Board of UNICEF had decided that a small group of persons from countries other than the recipient country should be selected by UNICEF and assigned to the recipient country to take charge of supplies and equipment when delivered and oversee distribution to make sure that they reached children.]

JC: Yes. What kinds of supplies did the countries want most?

MME: The countries all expressed the need for milk and fats. This is what they wanted principally. In Yugoslavia we worked out what they might expect in the line of milk from UNICEF, but I could make no written agreement with them, because they were quite unwilling to receive even one international worker. This position was taken, if I remember correctly, because of UNRRA's experience in losing supplies.

JC: That's interesting.

MME: So, I left without having closed the deal, and came back to the United States. But with the determination that I would go back there [and find a way out of the dilemma.]

JC: Yes.

MME: I was clear in my own mind that when I returned to Europe for the trip I was to make to Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia and Austria again, for a second time, that I would go back to Yugoslavia.

JC: You thought you could persuade them.

MME: I thought I could persuade the Yugoslavs. In the meantime I had made more contact with Dr. Stampar in Zagreb on my way to Italy. Dr. Stampar was a well-known professor of Public Health in Zagreb, the head of the School of Public Health, and had been on the preparatory committee and the interim commission of WHO. He knew the whole picture.

JC: Yes.

MME: By the time I went back in July of '47, I had met Dr. Stampar again in Geneva or New York. [He told me that on my next trip to Yugoslavia, planned for July '47, he would meet me in Belgrade and help work it out. He had ready access to Marshall Tito whereas I had been able to see Dr. Mates, one of Tito's top staff. Dr. Mates had told me that when I came back in July that he would work out a plan. So Dr. Stampar carried out the plan when I met him in Belgrade in July. Dr. Stampar was known as the "bear of the Balkans." He was a great big man, kindly, gentle, greatly respected in all international circles.]

JC: The bear of the Balkans?

MME: The bear of the Balkans.

JC: Wonderful!

MME: Yes, he was a wonderful person! I got to know him very well and his wife who was a physician also. I enjoyed my experiences with him in Yugoslavia very much. [We did work out a plan in July and Yugoslavia received a large quantity of dried skim milk and lard!]

Schlesinger-Rockefeller Oral History Project

MARTHA MAY ELIOT, M.D.

Session XI

Jeannette Cheek: Now, let me see. I think we're starting our eleventh recording today, Dr. Eliot, and we're in the middle of your experience with UNICEF.

Dr. Eliot: Yes. I think we left off just at the point where I had returned from the first part of my trip, to some of the war-torn countries in Europe--a trip I was making for UNICEF to help the board of UNICEF reach decisions as to how it should spend its money and what would be most useful to children and their families in that period, which was not immediately after the war ended, but very soon after.

My trip started in April...the end of April, 1947. And I returned for the meeting of the executive board toward the end of June of '47 so that I had been traveling for two months.

JC: Yes. This would have been in New York City...or at Lake Success on Long Island, would it?

MME: I suppose. I'm not quite sure where that meeting was.

JC: Yes. But it was here. It was in America.

MME: Oh, it was in the United States because I had to come back here in order to report to the board.

JC: Yes.

MME: I have a copy of the report that I made and it outlines many interesting things that I did and it starts, fortunately, outlining the purpose of this trip. To me as I look at it now, 25 years later, this report is most interesting. The purpose was: first - to discuss with the governments of these war-torn countries and with voluntary agencies that were making great efforts to do things for children what the need of children were; second - what the war had done to individual children; third - what programs for children had existed prior to the war, and the condition of the children at the war's end; fourth - we tried to assess whether the kind of help that UNRRA had been giving, and was very soon to stop, was the type of help that they wanted continued; or fifth - were there other things that they needed. UNRRA had supplied food and supplies and equipment of various sorts, but mostly, I think, food for the people.

JC: Was the handling of goods under UNRRA in the hands of the receiving country? Did they alone handle it? There were no UNRRA personnel...

MME: Oh, UNRRA had its own personnel out there in the countries it was helping. And the countries readily accepted the personnel.

JC: They did?

MME: I think at our last interview I referred to the fact that I, in my first visit to Yugoslavia, had had a problem because the government people with whom I worked did not want UNICEF to place any international persons in Yugoslavia to keep track of the supplies and to observe how they were used.

JC: Yes.

MME: I believe that this probably had been a result of incidents that had taken place in the UNRRA period.

JC: Oh, yes. I see.

MME: But I'm not sure. This never was said, in so many words, but they were very clear that they didn't want UNICEF to send anybody. They would and could handle the goods and keep track of the goods and equipment themselves. Furthermore, the government was not able, they said, to pay the shipping costs. UNICEF had tried to get the countries that were to receive supplies to pay shipping costs and many of the countries did. In fact, most of them. I think Yugoslavia was the only one that really objected. But before we got through, Yugoslavia had come around and felt that they could contribute toward shipping costs, as well.

JC: Did they?

MME: They did not pay all of the costs as I remember it.

JC: But you got them to accept UNICEF personnel.

MME: Yes, not UNICEF's own staff, but one international representative who was from Czechoslovakia if my memory serves me aright.

Dr. Stampar, to whom I have referred before, was the Professor of Public Health at the University at Zagreb and had been the President of the First International Health Conference. I had got to know him quite well there in New York in 1946.

JC: Yes.

ME: [At our last interview I explained that I stopped in Zagreb on my way out from my visit to Belgrade in June to talk with Dr. Stampar about the problem I had had in working out a plan for UNICEF to make an allotment of food and supplies to Yugoslavia. I made it clear to him that the Yugoslav government was refusing to accept from UNICEF a small delegation of international personnel to keep track of the supplies and their distribution to children. When I told Dr. Stampar that my plan was to return to Yugoslavia in July to try again, he immediately agreed to join me in Belgrade in July and discuss the proposals with government people and, if necessary, with Marshall Tito. To make a long story short, I did go back to Belgrade in July and Dr. Stampar was as good as his word. He did see Marshall Tito and introduced me to Dr. Mates, one of Tito's inner staff. The plan was worked out and signed.]

MME: It was Dr. Stampar who made it possible for me put across the program there. At the end of our last interview I had already spoken of Stampar. I was to know him much better in my tour of duty with WHO.

JC: Yes.

MME: In addition to finding out the needs of children, which obviously would be many, I tried to learn what the planned program of UNICEF was to distribute food and equipment and supplies, how the country would see this kind of assistance, and did this fit into their own program of help to their own children. Because all these countries were working on the task of providing care for the children.

JC: They all were.

MME: Oh, yes. They were all working at it the best they could. Their resources were extremely limited because so much equipment had been taken away. They were left with nothing. Their hospitals were pretty well cleaned out.

JC: Now, would this have been by the Russians?

MME: In the war situation, yes. In some of these countries, it was Russians, of course. And in others, like Poland and Czechoslovakia, it was Germans.

JC: Yes.

MME: But the effects of war had been disastrous. For instance, when I got to Greece, I found that up in the northern parts of Greece the Italians had been in and in Yugoslavia...the Germans and the Italians had occupied them. In Yugoslavia they had taken away a great many supplies and equipment of all sorts. The result was that all these war-torn countries were handicapped by a lack of equipment, as well as food.

I had to make it clear to these countries that the UNICEF program was not an enormous supply, it didn't have as much money as UNRRA, not nearly, at that time. (In fact, it never did.) The help that UNICEF would give them would have to be supplemental to their own effort. This was made clear to them.

JC: Yes.

MME: This was true in the medical supplies, for instance. UNICEF determined on certain items of medical supplies like...providing BCG, the vaccine for the inoculation of children against tuberculosis.

JC: Oh, yes.

MME: And so on. It was a limited number of things that UNICEF could do. The countries, of course, would have liked UNICEF to provide them with everything.



JC: Yes!

MME: This became clear.

Another thing I did in each country as I visited was to work out a plan of operation as to how they would use the supplies.

The UNICEF board insisted: (1) that such a plan of operation be developed, be signed by the country--the responsible departments of the governments and voluntary agencies, but especially the government authorities, and (2) that these plans of operation would come to the board of UNICEF and be approved in the board before they were put into operation.

JC: I see. They held a fairly tight rein then, didn't they?

MME: They held a tight rein. And this was necessary because of the limitation in the amount of money contributed to UNICEF by the helping countries.

JC: Yes.

MME: At some point in these interviews I want to speak about the financial resources of UNICEF. I don't think I have said anything about this up to now.

JC: No, I don't think you have.

MME: But before I do that, I would just like to wind up what I would like to report on these trips.

JC: Yes! Yes.

MME: My report made it clear what I told the board about at this meeting. After describing in some detail what I had seen in the countries, the condition of the children, the environmental situation, the condition of the housing and the hospitals, and many other things, I made specific recommendations for the use of the initial funds that UNICEF had. These were very limited funds.

JC: Now would this vary from country to country? Did your recommendations vary from country to country depending on the need?

MME: Yes, the recommendations were developed on the basis of what I learned in each country. And I gave specific reports to the staff of UNICEF on each country.

JC: Yes. How good that you were a doctor! I would have thought it would have been much more difficult to do this task had you not been a medical doctor.

MME: Well, if the worker for UNICEF had not been, it would have been a very different kind of a report, and the programs in the countries would

MME: no doubt have been different. For instance a social worker or an educator would have needed a lot of help from a medical assistant.

JC: Of course.

MME: As it was I dug into all the medical and the health situations. At the same time, my interest and experience in social welfare work had been sufficient for me to look pretty closely at the social welfare needs also.

JC: Yes.

MME: And the needs with respect to housing, construction of hospitals, health centers--all this sort of thing I looked at. What I told the board was that the first thing they should do was to buy milk, some whole milk, some dried milk...some skimmed milk--all of this would be dried milk.

JC: Yes.

MME: And fats. This is what was needed principally. Fats of different kinds, according to the customs in the countries. For instance, after my visits in some of the countries I found that they wanted lard instead of butter--I think maybe I spoke of that before.

JC: No, I don't think we did.

MME: Well, they were accustomed to spreading lard on black bread.

JC: Rather than butter?

MME: Oh, yes. They didn't have butter.

JC: Of course, lard was much cheaper.

MME: Lard was cheaper, they had plenty of it...

JC: Yes.

MME: Of course, lard had no vitamins in it the way butter has. So when I recommended lard to the UNICEF board, I said it should be supplemented with vitamin A and we should supply vitamins in other forms. Also, because lard is not as nearly a complete food as butter and milk are. The same thing was true about skimmed milk. Skimmed milk carried all the calcium from milk which was needed, but it didn't have the fats, and therefore the vitamin A which ordinarily comes in milk was limited. And they needed to provide some whole milk. I found in one of the reports a list of what the country wanted and I thought it might be interesting to just read it into the text of our interview.

JC: All right, let's do that.

MME: This was when I finally got to Rumania. What they wanted for their children (and they told me they had 195,000 children who were in need of supplemental feeding).... They wanted dried whole milk and we reasoned that they needed 117 tons of whole milk.

JC: Oh, my!

MME: They wanted also skimmed dried milk because I told them that this is what we would have in supply. And for skimmed milk, they wanted 351 tons of milk...of dried milk. This was spray-dried milk.

JC: Spray-dried?

MME: Spray-dried milk. The milk is sprayed on hot rollers and dried, and the quality of the product varied a little...between the sprayed form of milk and other ways of drying milk.

JC: I see.

MME: Then for fats, Rumania wanted lard. And they wanted 38 tons of lard.

JC: It's hard to conceive of these quantities!

MME: It certainly is. But we figured this all out and, of course, it was merely a guide to UNICEF. UNICEF couldn't send...all of this.

JC: No.

MME: Margarine was another form of fats and I emphasized to UNICEF that margarine didn't have as much vitamin A as butter.

JC: No.

MME: And so there should be a supply of vitamins. The countries all wanted this, and we worked out the plans as to how the vitamins would be provided in cod liver oil. Cod liver oil became a staple article for UNICEF to send.

JC: In some countries I suppose the use of cod liver oil would have been entirely new.

MME: I suppose. It might have been. You see, the Scandanavian countries all had it. And all of the Western European countries knew cod liver oil, but Rumania...I don't remember whether this was a new idea to them or not.

The Rumanians told me that what they wanted to supply for their children was an additional 190 to 250 calories a day. It wasn't just calories that children needed for energy, but they needed the quality of the food supplies in addition to the total calories, including minerals like iron and vitamins of all kinds. That's why I urged milk and it's why I recommended to the board that they concentrate on milk supplemented by lard for energy and cod liver oil for

MME: vitamins A and D, and different kinds of fats. This, of course, was just a beginning in their distribution of supplies. All of the countries wanted equipment for hospitals and before long UNICEF got into that.

JC: and they?

MME: UNICEF was able to help with a variety of kinds of equipment for schools, hospitals, and health centers. One of the needs of the countries was to set up milk processing plants so that they could dry their own milk. It was necessary also for these Eastern European countries to increase and enlarge the herds of cattle. Many herds of cattle had been driven from Poland during the war into the Russian-dominated areas. It was essential that they plan to handle their own milk supply, to rapidly increase and distribute it. Poland was in great need of milk processing plants. UNICEF sent a specialist to Poland to help them plan for and establish milk processing plants.

JC: I see. The available distribution systems just wouldn't have been adequate.

MME: No. And in the end the countries should, you see, do it themselves.

JC: Yes.

MME: As I have just said...the number of cattle, had been greatly reduced in all these countries I went to, because the cattle had either been killed for food by the "enemy" (in quotes), or had been driven into neighboring countries where the milk of the cattle was also wanted and needed. So all of these countries along the Russian border needed cattle. This was one of the things that the Polish people talked about particularly, but I found it true almost everywhere.

JC: UNICEF, of course, never supplied cattle.

MME: No, I think not. But they had a specialist who helped the countries in developing plans for increasing the number of cows in different ways. Much advice on all these aspects of increasing milk supply was given to the countries, but UNICEF didn't provide the cattle themselves.

JC: No.

MME: I think I'm right in saying that but I am not quite sure. Well, this brings us to the middle of the summer of 1947. The second part of my trip in July and August included a second visit--a brief one--to Yugoslavia during which we developed the plan of operation in some detail. UNICEF already had a worker placed there.

JC: I see.

MME: Mr. Niblay. From Czechoslovakia where we stopped first for a day or two, to arrange for the transfer of a UNICEF worker to Yugoslavia, we went to Austria. From Austria we went again to Yugoslavia. Dr. Stampar met me in Belgrade. He had a talk with Tito and as a result, we were able to work out with Mr. Mates, a member of Tito's own staff, a plan of operation. My notes on that visit are interesting. Mr. Mates at one point said, "Yugoslavia, of course, is willing to have a representative from UNICEF be here, but we think that one person might handle it." And I said, "What's going to happen if that person gets sick, or has to leave the country for a while? You need two people. I will settle for two people, but I won't settle for one." And I was very firm about this and Mr. Mates gave in.

JC: Yes.

MME: And so we, in very good humor, worked out the Yugoslavs' plan. In Bulgaria, Rumania, and Hungary I found conditions of life--ordinary conditions of life for them--very different from what I had seen in the Western part of Europe.

JC: Yes.

MME: It was almost a different world. And it was of enormous interest to me to see all this.

JC: Of course.

MME: I well remember my great feeling of excitement when I saw the Danube.

JC: Yes!

MME: And that great river, flowing by the border of Bulgaria and Rumania.

JC: And Yugoslavia, at one point.

MME: And Yugoslavia.

JC: Oh, I know what you mean about the Danube, having lived on it!

MME: You lived on it?

JC: For a year.

MME: Yes. In Bulgaria an interesting thing happened. The various agencies with which I worked there (government and non-government) wanted to be sure that I met the Prime Minister. The latter was in his residence out in the country. So they took me out to see him.

JC: I see.

MME: Just an interesting bit that added to my own personal interest in making these visits. In Bulgaria I got a great deal of help from the Jewish Distribution Committee staff who were there.

JC: Yes.

MME: I had some travel problems in these countries. Before I started out on the second trip, I stopped in Paris for few days to see the representatives of these countries who were stationed there.

JC: Oh, yes.

MME: And each of them, in turn, let their countries know that I would be coming from UNICEF and told them the purpose of my visit, so that the countries knew. The foreign departments of the countries knew that I was coming, and the health departments.

JC: Yes.

MME: When I was in Yugoslavia for this second visit, trying to make arrangements to get to Bulgaria, I found that we might be held up at the Bulgarian border. My plan was to spend six days in Yugoslavia and then on the night of the sixth day to take the train to Sofia, but the Russian authorities in Yugoslavia on the day of my planned departure said that I would have to have a military pass from Russia to get across the border and that train would cross the border at night, and what was I going to do--I might be put off at the border if I didn't have the proper papers.

JC: Yes.

MME: I said, "Well, how do I get these papers?" At about four o'clock in the afternoon of the Monday...the day I was to leave, papers were produced. Or rather the papers themselves weren't produced, but I was told by the authorities that there would be papers on the border... and that the Russians would let us through.

JC: What do you suppose that was all about? They just wanted to assert their authority?

MME: I suppose so. The Russian government had the overall control of these countries, just as the United States and Great Britain and others had control of their sections of Germany.

JC: Yes.

MME: The Russians were in control of these Balkan countries. So the pass had to come from the Russians.

JC: Of course, this was really the beginning of the Cold War period, too, wasn't it?

MME: It was! Exactly. In the Cold War period.

JC: In 1947 they were having a hard time of it. Yes.

MME: And this was at the time when the United States (I think really by accident not by intent) had sent a plane flying over Yugoslavia

MME: and the Yugoslav people were frightfully upset by this. This was just when I was going into Yugoslavia the second time.

JC: This didn't help to smooth your way.

MME: It didn't interfere however. I made my contacts with our embassy and with the Yugoslav foreign office. The fact that I was there representing an international organization and one that had food to provide for children smoothed our path all along the line.

JC: I could believe it did. You mean that as a representative of an international organization, you were less suspect than you would have been as just an American citizen.

MME: Yes. The fact that I was traveling on an American passport, of course, made them suspicious.

JC: But you had to have some passport.

MME: I had to have some passport and the only one I had at that time was my own.

JC: The United Nations didn't provide any.

MME: They hadn't yet provided them. They hadn't come through with their red passports.

JC: No.

MME: In Bulgaria I found exactly the same problem: How was I going to get to Rumania? How would I get across the border? Would the Rumanians meet me at the station where I would get off, which was, I found, to be inside the country?

JC: Yes.

MME: We would be dumped in a station that was in the country. And how would all this be worked out? So I had telephone calls back and forth to the Rumanian authorities and it was arranged, but we left Bulgaria--as we had left Yugoslavia--without knowing what would happen when we reached the border. But we went on just the same... leaving at night, traveling on a night train.

JC: Yes.

MME: And getting off in the early morning at a small country station. It was all very interesting and quite exciting.

JC: Yes.

MME: So we arrived in Rumania and were met by the authorities from the foreign office down at this station, and were driven into Bucharest where we were to see the government people. Everybody knew we were coming. Word had been spread about.

JC: Yes.

MME: I went to our U.S. embassy or legation (I forget which--embassy, I suppose) and there I learned that Dr. Bagdazar (a woman), who was the Minister of Health, hoped that I would come to see her first.

JC: I see!

MME: Our embassy thought this was a very wise way to start the visit there.

JC: This was a matter of protocol, was it?

MME: Partly protocol, and partly...

JC: Tact!

MME: Tact. And partly they thought I would get a certain amount of inside information I wouldn't get any other way.

JC: Oh, yes.

MME: Because she turned out to be a very...oh, a very well-trained, highly intelligent Minister of Health. She was the chief health officer. She told me that she had received a degree of master of Public Health at the Harvard School of Public Health!

JC: Had she really?

MME: Yes. So this is why they thought it would be helpful if I saw her first. And that proved to be true because she gave me much guidance in how I should go about getting the information that I wanted. She was very helpful. She took me out into the country to see the villages and we spent one night away from Bucharest. I forget where, but the Rockefeller Foundation had helped them establish a public health project there in years gone by. The project had its own building housing a health center. There were various institutions and other developments that Mme. Bagdazar wanted me to see.

JC: Yes.

MME: So she went with me and arranged all these various things.

The foreign department seemed to be responsible to a woman, also, Ana Pauker.

JC: Oh, yes. I've heard of her.

MME: Ana Pauker was a person well-known as the contact person in Rumania for Russia...

JC: I see.

MME: For the Communist regime in Russia. She was a Communist. A very interesting woman. I had talks with her. She was able to tell me



MME: a great deal that was of interest. She had a luncheon arranged for me and all the top ministers of the government were invited to this luncheon. It was, again, a delightful and extraordinarily interesting occasion.

JC: Did you talk to them about UNICEF?

MME: I talked to them about UNICEF, what I was doing, and they wanted to know about me. Who was I? What did I do in Washington? And I told them about the Children's Bureau. I remember this clearly. I was in the Labor Department then.

JC: Yes.

MME: Someone in the group, I imagine it was Mme. Pauker, had known about our Labor Department and the fact that a woman was the Secretary.

JC: Oh, of course. Yes.

MME: This was at the time when Miss Perkins had written a book about Franklin Roosevelt, and they were frightfully interested in that. They wanted a copy. How could I get a copy of this to them?

JC: Yes!

MME: Would I? And I said, "Oh, yes, I would." How could I be sure they got it? And I said, "Maybe somebody will be coming I can give it to, who will bring it to you."

JC: Yes.

MME: And this is the way I got it to them.

JC: I see. You mean it might not have been permitted in the mail?

MME: It might have gotten lost in the mail.

JC: Yes.

MME: I found that Dr. Henry Helmholtz, of Minneapolis and the Mayo Clinic, was doing some work for UNICEF in Europe, and that he planned to visit Rumania. I gave him a copy of this book and I said, "Will you deliver this by hand to so-and-so?" And so he did. He also carried a letter from me to Dr. Bagdazar.

JC: It's interesting that they should have wanted this book. Was it because of their interest in Roosevelt or because of their interest in Frances Perkins having written it, or both?

MME: Both. Ana Pauker, of course, was interested in the fact that it was written by a woman, that the Secretary of Labor was a woman...

JC: Yes.

MME: They were also interested in Mrs. Roosevelt.

JC: Yes. Let's see. Frances Perkins called her book--The Roosevelt I Knew, didn't she?

MME: Something like that. I've got it, or did have it, among my books here. It may have gone over with my books to the Schiesinger Librarian

JC: Perhaps it did. The Library does have a copy.

MME: From Rumania I went to Hungary. And again the same kind of thing was repeated. I was shown everything I asked to see and much more. The whole experience was what some people would call, "out of this world." It really was. It was a rare opportunity.

JC: Yes. It certainly was out of the reach of the Western world at that time!

MME: It was.

JC: Now this took about two months?

MME: This was two months more. I came back to the United States at the end of August or early September, of 1947. I have no written report of that second half of the trip. I suppose I made one, but I did not have to present it to the board. So I may not have written it out as well as I did the first.

JC: Yes.

MME: At all events, the program of UNICEF went forward in all these countries from that point on. Now this was in the spring or summer of 1947. May I remind you that UNICEF came into existence in December '46 so this was almost a year after UNICEF came into existence. Meanwhile WHO had also come into existence in July of '46. And the Interim Commission had been at work from about September or October of '46 into '47 and all the way through '47.

JC: So they just paralleled each other.

MME: They paralleled each other and each of these organizations wanted to carry out their own mandates in the field of health.

JC: Yes. How difficult!

MME: This began to create small...really, in the end...unimportant difficulties. But the fact that UNICEF had in the statement of its functions adopted by the General Assembly of the UN that it was to undertake child health work generally--to help child health generally, annoyed the WHO people because they had in their constitution, of course, maternal and child health as one of their initial and important functions. Their board had voted when the Interim Commission met to put their efforts into malaria control, tuberculosis control, venereal disease control, and maternal and child

MME: health--those four functions, which seemed to be uppermost in the minds of the WHO people. So when they undertook to develop some child health work here or there, they found that UNICEF was also doing something in this field, maybe in the same country.

JC: That must have caused some difficulty.

MME: Well, there were some difficulties. And some members of the two staffs were beginning to be irritated by each other, I found. This was going on in '47. WHO had established its headquarters in New York, but it had a larger number of its staff in its Geneva office in the Palais des Nations.

JC: Yes.

MME: It had begun to occupy space there in the main building. [The Director-General of the Interim Commission had his office there. The staff required to initiate and develop the WHO projects for the control of malaria, tuberculosis and venereal disease and the promotion of maternal and child health were stationed there. The Commission had also initiated a program for the training and education of public health personnel to help countries raise the standards of their existing staffs and new personnel for WHO projects.]

JC: Yes.

MME: I think when I visited the WHO office in Geneva in June 1947, something like a hundred or more members of its staff were in Geneva and another thirty, forty, fifty in New York.

JC: Yes.

MME: This was the period of the operation of the WHO Interim Commission. I would like, at this point, to break off and go back to this question of where the money came from to support UNICEF and WHO and how it was used and allocated.

JC: Good!

MME: To make it possible for these two organizations to operate.

JC: Yes.

MME: UNICEF got its first grant of money from the United States in the spring of 1947. [It had been obvious to the board of UNICEF, when they decided to ask me to go on a trip for them to look into the needs of children in the war-devastated countries that they had to get an initial grant of money from somewhere. So Maurice Pate, the Executive Director of UNICEF went to the Congress of the United States and asked them to put up 40 million dollars for UNICEF on which to start work. He knew the United States had been giving large sums to UNRRA.]

JC: Yes.

- MME: Maurice Pate thought \$40 million was an appropriate figure to ask for but the Congress began to think otherwise! They wondered where this international effort in behalf of people in Europe and other countries was going and of course they really didn't know. The Bureau of the Budget of the United States--a part of the Executive Office of the government--also began to raise questions. What, they asked themselves, are we to recommend to the Congress?
- JC: Yes.
- MME: I found in April just before I left for my trip that the Bureau of the Budget was really making trouble about any kind of appropriation. I knew we had to have it. So the first task I took on for UNICEF was getting the money for them from Congress.
- JC: Of course, you were an old hand at that by this time!
- MME: I had had experience with these Budget people.
- JC: Yes!
- MME: I remember one day...a warm day in April in Washington...sitting on a bench somewhere outside the State Department, which was housed in the Executive Office Building, and talking with two men from the Bureau of the Budget, both of whom I knew. One of them was Geoffrey May, who had been a member of the team sent by the War Department to England in 1941. Geoffrey May, in 1947, was working in the Bureau of the Budget; with him was another member of the staff of the Budget Bureau whose name I forget. They were arguing with me about this appropriation. I told them what I was going to do for UNICEF on this trip to Europe, and that we needed money.
- JC: Yes.
- MME: That we'd have to have some money to start programs. I told them the United States really had to put some money up--that was all there was to it! And how much would they go for. We finally agreed that if UNICEF would reduce its request to \$15 million, unmatched, they would go along. I persuaded them that they should not include in this appropriation request a provision that this first grant of \$15 million would not be paid out until matched by other countries as had been usual in other appropriations for UN activities.
- JC: I see.
- MME: Which was what they wanted.
- JC: Yes.
- MME: I said, "How am I going to operate? Let us suppose that initially other countries put up only 250 dollars. Is that all that I'm going to get out of the United States?" And so on. Finally they agreed that the first \$15 million would be granted to UNICEF without any

- MME: conditions whatsoever. But thereafter for any additional monies UNICEF would have to show that a certain ratio had been contributed by other countries. That ratio, I was able to persuade them, might be quite small. The United States might give three-quarters and the other countries one quarter, for example. Of course, this ratio could be modified in due course.
- JC: Yes.
- MME: But the first 15 million dollars unmatched was assured before I started out on my travels.
- JC: Yes. Very good! Now this, of course...your travels didn't amount to \$15 million, but I suppose it meant that the central UNICEF staff could get going and...
- MME: Yes. That's it. Well, by this time, there were also negotiations between UNICEF and UNRRA with regard to whether and how much of UNRRA's funds UNICEF would get. It had been my impression that UNICEF was to receive all of the UNRRA funds, but that was not correct. I learned just the other day from a member of the staff of UNICEF who has been there from the very beginning that UNICEF was very troubled because they got their money from UNRRA in "dribbles and drabbles", as he said.
- JC: I see.
- MME: Little bits came, and they had to struggle continually to get from UNRRA what they felt was their right according to the arrangements for the creation of UNICEF. But UNRRA was also giving money to WHO. WHO had no money of its own during the period of the Interim Commission.
- JC: No.
- MME: None at all.
- JC: I see!
- MME: And how was it to operate? And undertake to do the technical work that they wanted to do and had planned under the Interim Commission. So WHO went to the United Nations and the United Nations itself gave to...loaned to WHO a million dollars to start with.
- JC: I see.
- MME: Then a little later UNRRA gave them a million two hundred thousand, I think it was, or a million five hundred thousand and then the United Nations loaned WHO another million, so that WHO, little by little, was able really to get to work. This was in 1947.
- JC: I see. And in this period the only funds that UNICEF would have had was that \$15 million of U.S. money.

MME: Yes, at the moment when I started my work with UNICEF, \$15 million. Very soon however UNICEF began to get money from UNRRA.

JC: I see.

MME: This began to flow because Maurice Pate went right after it, as soon as he was appointed by the board. This was true also because of the continuing influence of Dr. Rajchman in the UNRRA Board. Dr. Rajchman had been the father of UNICEF in the UNRRA committee.

JC: As you look at this now, do you think there would have been any way this duplication of work in child health by WHO and UNICEF could have been avoided?

MME: Well, if the language in the two constitutions, let's call them, had been more specific or if there had been an explanation of the fact that...each of these organizations was to be enabled to do child health, but that they should work it out together... We should remind ourselves that the overlap in the field of child health was not extensive or serious. So it was a matter of finding a way to solve this problem.

JC: Yes.

MME: I want to put in at this point a word as to how the WHO Interim Commission operated. [The Interim Commission decided that with this money that they received from UN or UNRRA they would ask the various countries anywhere in the world, but especially the 18 countries that were represented on their Commission board, together with others that these 18 representatives knew, to prepare and send to the Commission requests for WHO's help--technical or advisory help. The staff of WHO then worked out with quite a number of countries the details of a health activity which they called a "project". WHO then assigned personnel to that project as a "mission". In 1947-1948 WHO had several such missions designated as "a mission to China," "a mission to India," "a mission to..." other places. This was the way WHO started its work as special projects designed and operated as WHO programs under WHO's direction. The people on these missions were employed by WHO as its own staff members and placed in the country to operate the project. They were, of course, expected to draw into the projects' staff competent professional and technical people then working in various national or local health programs already in action in these selected countries.]

JC: Yes.

MME: I speak of this because this plan for WHO's work with countries was changed rather radically when WHO became one of the "specialized agencies" under the U.N.

JC: Was it?

MME: I will explain that later. But these missions varied in size from one WHO staff member in a country to as many as 14 or 15 in a single

- MME: project in China. China had the largest mission of WHO personnel at that time. It was an early, if not the first of the Interim Commission's projects. Right away, early, WHO was working in China.
- JC: Yes.
- MME: This was their method of operation. And this was the way they spent their UNRRA money and their UN money in 1947-1948.
- JC: So it was, in pattern, different from UNICEF.
- MME: Yes. These were strictly public health and medical care projects that WHO was developing. It was not a question of feeding...of food supplies.
- JC: No.
- MME: UNICEF was much more on the level of meeting the immediate needs of children. WHO was starting to develop its longer range program of health work with the countries.
- JC: So it was not entirely overlapping.
- MME: No. But in 1947, some conflicts arose when the Scandinavian countries offered to staff and supply, in a number of the countries of war-torn Europe, projects under UNICEF for the vaccination of children against tuberculosis. This was started by Denmark, but soon it was supported by Sweden and Norway, I think--all three. When they did this, they were employing technical persons--doctors and others from Scandinavia who were experts in the field of tuberculosis immunization.
- JC: Yes.
- MME: The WHO people had this same kind of health activity in their original mandate. They were to work in the field of tuberculosis control, malaria control, and control of venereal disease.
- JC: Yes.
- MME: Pretty soon a number of countries in Europe were asking UNICEF for money to establish V.D. clinics--venereal disease clinics. WHO also had projects in Europe and it too was being asked to help with the development of venereal disease control programs, as well as tuberculosis.
- JC: Oh, my.
- MME: So the staffs began occasionally to find themselves in conflict.
- JC: Yes.
- MME: But only in conflict because they were getting in each other's way, so to speak.

JC: Yes.

MME: The content of their programs was about the same; at least, what each would like to do was about the same.

JC: Yes.

MME: But by the end of '47 and early '48 this sense of working sometimes at cross-purposes had begun to increase somewhat. By April 1948 the World Health Interim Commission has finally arranged with 26 or 27 countries to accept officially the constitution of WHO as their basic reference document for health activities. So, in April 1948 the World Health Organization was able to come into being as a full-fledged specialized agency.

On the third of April 1948, 25 countries had signed up with WHO and on the sixth of April, another one signed up so that WHO could then proceed to organize its first World Health Assembly.

JC: I see.

MME: The planning for this, of course, had been going on for some time. The executive board of the WHO Interim Commission had worked out an agenda for the first World Health Assembly and in April of that year the Assembly was called to meet on the 19th of June, 1948.

JC: Yes.

MME: At this point, I came into direct contact with the WHO activities. Throughout '47 I had had no personal relationship with any of the WHO activities. I had only been connected with the UNICEF development.

JC: Were you on the board of UNICEF?

MME: No, Miss Lenroot was on the board.

JC: I see.

MME: In April 1947 when I made the European trip I was given a title by UNICEF. I became UNICEF "Chief Health Consultant".

JC: I see!

MME: All of which was very important to them.

JC: Yes.

MME: Now here were two organizations both working in the field of child health, and by June of 1948 they had to find a way of working together.

After the Assembly of WHO was over about the middle of July 1948--the 11th to be exact, WHO held a meeting of its executive board. It was the first meeting of the full-fledged WHO executive board. At the



MME: same time fortunately, the UNICEF executive board was meeting in Geneva. So here were these two international organizations, the executive boards of which were both in operation at the same time in the same city.

JC: Yes.

MME: And it was a good time for the two organizations to find out how they could work together. They were both in Geneva. I was not on the delegation to the UNICEF board. Miss Lenroot was there in Geneva representing the United States on that board. I, of course, was not on the WHO board. I was there because I had been a member of the United States delegation to the World Health Assembly which had met in June and July 1948 in Geneva.

JC: Oh, yes.

MME: I was Vice-Chairman of the U.S. delegation, there were 32 members of the delegation, an unwieldy group.

JC: Yes.

MME: When the Assembly was about to start, Dr. Parran who was the chairman of the United States delegation, was still on a trip to the Far East where he got held up and did not arrive in Geneva for four or five days after he was expected. So I, as Vice-Chairman, had to take on the job of handling the delegation.

JC: Oh, my!

MME: It was a most difficult task! These 32 people came from every variety of health interest; some were there to represent the interest of the public in health. There were women in the group representing the General Federation of Women's Clubs, for instance, and other women's activities in the health field. Then there were medical experts of several kinds and sanitary engineers and public health nurses and various other people. Here I was, as Vice-Chairman, expected to plan with 32 people of diverse interests how we would operate as a delegation in the World Health Assembly.

JC: Oh, heavens!

MME: Fortunately, I had a strong right arm in Dr. VanZile Hyde who came from the Public Health Service in Washington and who had been at the Interim Commission meetings with Dr. Parran and was at the International Health Conference. I had known him well in that respect and also in Washington. He was a member of the delegation and I soon found I could rely on him to help me organize this huge group of delegates.

JC: Yes.

MME: And to move out among the members of other delegations and find out what they were thinking about.

JC: Yes.

MME: Dr. Hyde would bring back to us information that he had gathered in talking with both the WHO people and the delegates from other countries. He discovered that the Russian delegation was very annoyed with the United States because the United States Congress had made a reservation in its acceptance of the constitution of WHO. When the United States declared that it wished to be a member of WHO and would accept the constitution, it said in that document that it reserved the right to withdraw after giving a year's notice. The Russian delegation was furious at this: Why should the United States have a reservation and why should they want to withdraw anyway?

JC: That's an interesting question, isn't it? My memory is that, of course, under the old League this was true. That was an operative rule under the League of Nations and it proved disastrous in the '30s when Italy withdrew under Mussolini and when Japan and Germany later withdrew.

MME: Oh, yes.

JC: When the draft of UN was being discussed, this was one of the things they wanted to eliminate. This is my memory of it, at least.