

Chron Ref: CF/RAI/USAA/DB01/HS/2001-00037

File Sub: CF/HST/INT/PAN-004/M

Helenka Pantaleoni

Interview No. 4  
by Richard Polsky  
April 21, 1977

Oral History Research Office  
Columbia University  
1977



UNICEF Alternate Inventory Label



Item # **CF/RAD/USAA/DB01/2001-00133**

ExR/Code: **CF/HST/INT/PAN-004/M**

Interview Helenka Pantaleoni by Richard Polsky: Herbert H:  
Date Label Printed 4/23/2001

Cover + 27 pp + 1 b

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Interview with Mrs. Guido Pantaleoni  
in New York, New York

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Q: This is the 21st of April, 1977, and it's the fourth conversation between Mrs. Pantaleoni and Richard Polsky.

Mrs. Pantaleoni, last time you mentioned some of the issues that you thought confronted UNICEF, and one of them was the fact or the possibility that - or the speculation - that the United Nations Development Programme may have some interest in absorbing UNICEF, and you were a bit concerned about that and I would just like to ask you what the U.N. Development Programme does, first of all, and why they feel that maybe UNICEF is something that should fit under their wing?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Sure I will. It's a huge programme. Of course, it's on a much bigger scale than UNICEF. It's a pre-investment programme to help governments assess their resources before they actually put their energies and funds into development. It's also a training research programme. The U. S. Government, I believe, gives something around the neighborhood of a hundred million dollars a year, as contrasted with twenty million to UNICEF. As always, in these intergovernmental organizations, there's a risk of there being duplication. The delegations of the United Nations are always bringing up co-ordination, not only for economic reasons, but for clarity in organizational structure.

In the early days of UNICEF - there were constant innuendoes that the World Health Organization, WHO, wanted to absorb UNICEF, that it belonged there and naturally, looking at it from a purely logistic point of view, such a merger might simplify things for governments. But the trouble was at that time, and the trouble is now and always will be - is the fact that UNICEF, the Children's Fund, might lose its identity. One of the main strengths of UNICEF is the fact that it is concentrated on children and their mothers, and this places it in a special category. We think - most of us who are seriously interested in the perpetuation of UNICEF - that it would be a grave mistake to

incorporate it in another organization; we thought so in the days of the World Health relationship, and we think so now. And it's disturbing to hear, as I have recently heard from some wise and alert people in Washington, that there was the feeling a little bit that the UNDP, aided and abetted by some of the developed countries like the U.S., think it would be a better organizational pattern to have UNICEF directly under UNDP.

Q: UNDP is the United Nations Development Programme?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. That was the organization, as you may recall, that was developed so brilliantly by Paul Hoffman, who was with it for many years. Then there was another Director who left, and now there is Bradford Morse. I think there were two others. Bradford Morse is a former Congressman from Massachusetts. He is a warm, friendly man, whom incidentally, some of our people wanted to succeed Mr. Labouisse, when and if Mr. Labouisse left the organization. He is very human, and he's popular. He gets on very well with the other delegates, and he's very much of a go-getter. He's very active and he's continually in Washington, and the thing that disturbs some people who are purists about international organizations lobbying in Washington, is not only that Mr. Morse is down there so much, but that he posted two of his people in Washington. They had office space in the United Nations Information Center in Washington, are very closely following the interests of the UNDP and are seen very often on the Hill talking to Congressmen. That's -

Q: Trying to get more money?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes, exactly. That's the scuttlebutt. And inevitably the extra-budgeted organs are in competition with each other, because I think I mentioned, there's an international package which is small -

Q: For aid?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: For aid. And anything that UNICEF gets more of, somebody else gets less of, so there it is. You can't avoid it. But in our situation, Mr. Labouisse leans over backwards not to be accused of lobbying or letting any of the international organizations breathe down the necks of the

national ministries. So he goes only occasionally to Washington. We don't have any kind of a UNICEF official representation down there, with the exception of the Citizens Committee, which is the lobby group for which we privately raise money.

Q: Do you feel that Mr. Labouisse's attitude, while very nice in a theoretical framework, is a bit unrealistic, considering how hard all other groups are down there -?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Well, I think probably it could be described that way. He's a sensitive person and - of course, you know he's done brilliantly in securing, in raising financial resources for UNICEF in his own quiet way. For instance, when he established a goal of a hundred million dollars by 1975, most people never dreamed that he'd achieve it, whereas he already has. Everything he does is low key, but persuasive. So he never outwears his welcome. And it's touch and go. I think it's essential - I'm one of those who thinks it's essential for him to go from time to time. I would think that you would have to achieve a compromise between constantly pushing and a very low key performance.

Perhaps I could bring up at this point the early days of UNICEF, because Maurice Pate used to go down very often. But you see, the situation was different then. You had to sell UNICEF to our Government. It was just getting started.

In connection with that, I would like to mention a woman, a very dynamic member of his staff, who used to be continually on the Hill. Her name was Mrs. Philip Jacob. Betty Jacob. She was quite a character. She was attractive and young, mother of several children. She was a Quaker: I remember once saying to some Quaker friends of mine that she was a Quaker and they sort of shook their heads and said, "well, I've never met a Quaker like her before". She was not reticent about bearding the Congressmen in Washington. She was always down there. In fact, she made herself quite indispensable to certain Senators and Congressmen. She was extremely useful really in the beginning, and some of the Congressmen would come around - Senator Douglas, for instance, and others whom she captured. She was very bright and really cared deeply, and she was terribly - dynamic, I guess, is the word.

I'll have to refer to her several times, because she was quite a power. Yes, she was quite a power in the early days of UNICEF. She believed in Trick or Treat, for instance, the Halloween thing. She was the one who persuaded Maurice Pate to give some money to have that article published of Clyde Alison's, you know, whom we called the father of UNICEF Trick or Treat? She persuaded him and she kept rushing down to Philadelphia. She and two other staff members started the Trick or Treat and got it going. Maurice Pate wrote her a letter once, calling her "the mother of the Trick or Treat Halloween idea". Of course, the U.S. Committee didn't take it over officially until 1953.

But Betty was very influential along some fronts. Where she sort of overdrew her bow was with the governments.. I'm told, I don't know how accurately - I imagine pretty accurately, because it was told to me by members of the governments of Europe - that at one time, she'd go to the Foreign Minister of Norway and say that Sweden had promised her a big increase in the UNICEF contribution, when it hadn't. Then she'd go to Sweden and say that Norway had promised her a big contribution! The two of them would get in touch with each other and expose the exaggeration. This sort of thing would produce an awkward situation. There were other incidents which produced gossip.

In fact, in those early days - I think it was in 1950, 1949 or 1950 - when the Executive Board met in Europe, they talked about the UNICEF brain, the soul, and the body. The brain was Dr. Rajchman, who was its intelligence and mastermind. The soul was Maurice Pate. The body was Betty Jacob. They had this little trilogy.

Q: Oh, that's terrific. That's good. We've mentioned -

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Excuse me, before we leave Betty Jacob, I would like to say that she was one of the ones who believed, during those crucial days, when we thought UNICEF was over, when they were trying to wrap up the Children's Fund, she was one of the ones that terribly believed in its continuation. I remember when I said my piece about believing so much in the Fund's

continuation, Maurice Pate said, oh, that's just exactly what Betty Jacob also believes in. She stayed a few years on the staff. I can't remember when she left - it was around the early fifties, she took up other social causes - among them integrated housing. Now she's in Hawaii. Her husband, I think, teaches in the University, so she's still interested in-

Q: She was a real powerhouse.

Mrs. Pantaleoni: That's the word. Powerhouse.

Q: She really was. Could we talk a little bit about - I know this is jumping around, but we were talking about Betty Jacob, and we've mentioned several times - the name of Danny Kaye has come up, and I think it would be important to trace, if you know, Danny Kaye's involvement in UNICEF, how he first got interested, why he has been such a - a person so identified with the UNICEF cause?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes, that's quite an exciting and dramatic story, because the first time he ever met Maurice Pate was on a flight from either London or Paris. They didn't know each other, but one of the engines, I believe, caught fire, and there was a terrible moment. Maurice told me that he saw Danny Kaye and he asked him to sing. I don't think Danny sang, but those were sort of the first words that Maurice -

Q: You mean, when the engine was on fire?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: When the engine was on fire, yes.

Q: ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: No, they didn't. They landed in silence, but they did land in, I think, Ireland, and Maurice Pate having picked up Danny, started talking about UNICEF. Maurice never left a stone unturned when he felt it was useful to UNICEF. He started telling Danny about the Children's Fund, and he made it so appealing and so persuasive, Danny became interested and said he'd like to help. That was the very beginning, on that flight.

Q: How long ago was that?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Oh, that must have been 1952 or 1953, along there, I think. But afterwards, Maurice got his Public Information Director, Pat Hartwell, to go to California to interest Danny, and shortly after was when this film was made, "Assignment, Children", which is one of those -

Q: UNICEF film?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. UNICEF film, that Paramount made with Danny. It's still considered one of our best films, if not the best, on children. He is touched with genius, you know, Danny is, and he was just irresistible. He was a sort of Pan-like figure. Everywhere he went, the children followed him. Extremely effective.

The first time we ever showed this film, "Assignment Children" was in the Plenary Hall of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and my job was sort of Mistress of Ceremonies. I had to introduce Hammarskjold, the Secretary General and Balachandra Rajan, the Chairman of the Executive Board of UNICEF - a very brilliant Indian gentleman. Dag Hammarskjold spoke, and the President of Paramount, which had put in the cash for this film. Danny was in California. We had a two-way radio connection. So after the film I introduced Danny, and Danny spoke very appealingly from California. I had never met him then. But it was an outstanding occasion. People remembered - everybody who went was deeply moved. The whole atmosphere was so right, Danny was appealing and the film was beautiful.

After that, of course, he did more and more for us, meaning UNICEF, and is very much identified with it. He's traveled all over the world.

Q: He feels it, feels very genuinely?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Oh, yes. He deeply cares. He's wonderful with children. He has just a special language with them, and they respond to him. He's extraordinary. I remember taking the President of the General Assembly, who was the Norwegian, Hambro, and his wife to a Broadway play in which Danny was appearing, and Mrs. Hambro afterwards wrote me. She said, "oh, that Danny Kaye, he's somehow touched with genius". And that's exactly it - he is. He has electricity. Like all geniuses, you can't define it. He just has that quality. And also he's very intelligent. Very knowledgeable. He's interested in lots of things, as you know. Chinese cooking, medicine and everything.

He's not the easiest person to work with. He's very - well, his colleagues call him extremely egocentric. He won't tolerate anybody around him. And he's unpredictable. You never know whether he's going to show up or not. I felt terribly sorry for our Executive Director, Lloyd Bailey, who had to organize his flights all over the country, when he went to sixty-five cities in five days, because everything eventually falls on Lloyd's shoulders. If anything goes wrong, he is blamed for it.

But he had so much to give and he's so identified with UNICEF that we just put up with his temperament. Well, just as an example. There was a volunteer programme, sort of a salute to volunteers. I think it was in Seattle, Washington. This happened last month, I believe. And Carroll O'Connor was appearing on it, and Danny Kaye - I forget if he was to be master of ceremonies - anyhow, he promised to be there. We asked Danny's manager whether he'd have any objection to Carroll O'Connor, who was our last UNICEF Day Chairman being there, and they said no, there'd be no problem at all. But when it came to the actuality, Danny never showed up. They had been counting on him.

Q: And you didn't know up to that moment that he wouldn't be there?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: No. Certainly, I didn't, and I don't think anybody did.

Q: You never heard from him, saying - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Oh, no. No. I don't know what ever happened. This is one of the risks of these geniuses. You just have to take them as they are, sort of warts and all.

Q:k So that doesn't mean that the next time you try and get him involved, he may show up perfectly and -

Mrs. Pantaleoni: We had another experience with him in Washington. This was more serious because we were then not as secure with UNICEF as we are now. I was offered the Cosmos Club, for a reception for Senators and Congressmen. This was at the conclusion of the mid-Century Conference - The White House Conference on Children and Youth. I think it must have been 19-

Q: That was under President Johnson?



Mrs. Pantaleoni: I was there twice, once in 1950, again in 1960. This was the 1960 one. And we needed the support of Senators and Congressmen. I remember we gave a reception - we served, I think "CSM" (corn, soya and milk, whatever they had) - those special UNICEF foods, you know, so that the Congressmen could taste the kind of things that we were sending all over the world. But the magnet was supposed to be Danny Kaye, and Danny was in Washington. He was at the White House Conference and spoke at it. But he wouldn't give us an answer. He said, "well, if I don't have to go back to the West Coast, I'll be there, but I can't tell". He never gave us a definite answer. And then word came that he couldn't make it. I saw Zena Harman, the Israeli whom I mentioned, at a dinner that night. I said to her afterwards, "Danny apparently had to go back to the West Coast and couldn't come to this Cosmos performance". She looked at me and said, "West Coast? My husband saw him at five o'clock at the time of your meeting. He was sitting with his feet up on the desk, waiting for my husband." - (who was then the Ambassador from Israel to Washington). He was sitting waiting there, doing nothing. So, you see, there's the problem. He just didn't want to come. Whether he didn't think it was important enough, whether there weren't going to be enough Senators, I don't know what the reason was.

Q: But he doesn't come right out and say -?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: No, no. No. No, and even on the occasion of this particular play that I mentioned, with the Hambros. That was another crisis. At the last performance a bunch of children from the United Nations Internatioal School were supposed to present him with something, and he was to receive it from them and speak to them. There was a whole publicity built up around it. Well, they couldn't get an answer out of him. He didn't want to see the children. He wouldn't say yes, he wouldn't say no. Finally, he said no, he couldn't do it. By that time it was too late. It was something like the day before the performance. I called him on the telephone at the Pierre Hotel, and he couldn't have been more charming. He said, "Well, darling, what's all the fuss about? Sure, I'll do it. What's the matter? What's going on?" And I had to tell him that I was taking the Hambro's. It would be almost an international scandal if he didn't do it by that time. It ended by his doing it perfectly charmingly. He was most appealing. The children came on the stage, and there was a kind of a sunny lovely radiance about him - but you see what I mean. It's just that everybody nearly has a nervous breakdown.

Q: Did you get the feeling that he knew that they were trying to make this presentation?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Oh, sure. I don't know, I hate to accuse him of being a king-worshipper, but I think perhaps he just wondered if an occasion is worth his while, you know, whether it's worth his expenditure of energy, because he never misses an appointment with the President in Washington or Queen Elizabeth in London. He's a king's - he's a sort of a favorite of kings and queens! They love him. He's amusing. He gives them a good time. For instance, we set up an appointment with the First Lady, Betty Ford, who was our Honorary Chairman of UNICEF Day, and Danny went. The President had said he was too busy to see him. But by jinks, when Danny went to the White House, the President managed to come out and see him. You see, he gets this kind of people. So that's his main value. But it's the dickens to work with. And he generally delivers, if the occasion is big enough.

Q: So it's a mixed bag really? When he comes through, it's very worthwhile, but -

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Very worthwhile.

Q: But you're always on pins and needles.

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Always. Yes. Each time - like, for instance, take our Executive Staff. I say each time, "well, Lloyd, it's not worth your health and the amount of time the staff puts in on this. We just won't do it again". Then, of course, we do do it again. There's an incident coming off next Tuesday. He's to receive some little kind of a statuette from the Secretary General. We have a lunch meeting planned. He'll turn up for that.

Q: Because that's - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: The Secretary General. Sure.

Q: Okay. Could we talk a little bit about Adelaide Sinclair. We touched on a few personalities and maybe we could just talk about a few more here that you felt were significant? Adelaide Sinclair, you said had been involved with UNICEF almost from the beginning?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Almost from the very beginning, yes. In fact, she was the speaker at, curiously enough, the first meeting of the United States Committee, this Committee for UNICEF was organized by Katherine Lenroot and my predecessor, Mrs. Lord, and they had either a lunch or a tea or some kind of meeting at the White House, and the speaker was Adelaide Sinclair. I was not there, because I was not then a member of the Committee that first year. I was with Women United as liaison. Apparently, Adelaide impressed people so much that they still remember her speech. She's a - well, you could call her the opposite of our temperamental prima donnas. She is highly intelligent, steady, with tremendous integrity. Very remarkable woman. She had been a Captain in the WRENS, which is the counterpart of our WAVES, you know, during the war, and has held all sorts of administrative posts. She was in the Canadian Government after her husband died, in the social welfare department.

She served as the Delegate from Canada on the UNICEF Executive Board, so that she spoke in her official capacity. After that, she became Chairman of the Board. She was the first woman chairman and one of the few women chairmen of any organ of the U. N. As Chairman of the Executive Board she performed, of course, most efficiently and skillfully. In 1957, Maurice Pate took her on the staff of UNICEF. She was one of the two highest-ranking women in the whole U. N. Secretariat. She became Deputy Director to Maurice - her title was Deputy Director in Charge of Programmes. The entire Programme Division of UNICEF was in her portfolio, and that job she had for ten years. So she knows every angle of UNICEF, the government angle, the Executive Board angle, the international staff angle, and the voluntary angle. She's now helping the Canadian National Committee, which is our counterpart in Canada.

She wielded great influence. In fact, I remember when we fought for the continuation of UNICEF, she was in a difficult position, because she was an official Canadian governmental delegate. She couldn't go against the policy of the Canadian Government, but she could use her influence to try to get the Canadian Government to keep UNICEF going. And I remember the incident in the powder room - we were combing our hair (I think this was just before that awful incident when our woman delegate was going to vote against the continuation of UNICEF, I told you, in the General Assembly). We were getting ready, putting our hats on to go over to Flushing to the General Assembly. I remember looking in the mirror and seeing her face, and mine, both pale with anxiety, and I said to her, "Well really, Adelaide, aren't you disappointed that UNICEF may fold its wings and die?" And she said - she was very low key,

understated, which is the way of most Canadians - she said, "Yes". I said, "Why?" She said, "I was hoping we could do quite a lot under the umbrella of the children". We all were "hoping". Children are magic! That was one of those little crisis times that stands out in my mind very much. Again, she was in a difficult position during the greeting card issue, because I think she would have loved to have had the Canadian Government backing the greeting card programme. But as the Canadian Representative, she sat on the Administrative Committee on the Budget, and had to be negative. I remember we tossed this thing around for days. There was absolute lack of unanimity. I wasn't there, because not being a government representative, I wasn't allowed into those closed meetings. but I know that most of the governments were not in favor. The ones that counted. I mean, who put a lot of money into UNICEF, like the U. S., Canada, and the U. K. They were absolutely opposed. They didn't think that greeting cards, things like that, belonged, that the U. N. shouldn't stoop to peddling things like that!

Q: This is before it ever got started, when they were talking about -?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: This is before it was taken on officially by UNICEF. Yes. It must have been around 1950, 1951, around there. And I remember Adelaide coming out all flushed, because she was talking against herself, as the Canadian Representative. Probably she had to say, it doesn't belong in UNICEF, but I'm sure that basically she was intelligent enough and imaginative enough to think it would be a very good thing to have.

There was an Englishman there - Martin - I can't remember his last name - he was one of the ones - he was a Roman Catholic. I don't know why I remember that except that the Catholics were a little bit isolationist about various things to do with UNICEF, but he was terribly interested in the greeting card programme and he was very helpful. We worked together on that.

Q: What country was he from?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: England. United Kingdom. He was a U. K. delegate. He's now since died, but he was a very imaginative, intelligent - and he had that, well, that courage to try to push it through against his own government, because U. K. is always negative about all those things. Just don't want to be bothered with it, you know. It's just another nuisance to the Foreign Office.

But I remember telling him, well, yes, of course, if you used logic, you could advance no end of reasons why there should be no greeting card programme. I said, actually you could advance a lot of reasons why UNICEF shouldn't exist. And he said, "oh, my dear, you could advance a thousand reasons why UNICEF shouldn't exist, or you and I". He said, "what good is logic"? He went on that way. Well, he had that inner conviction, you know, and he was one of the helpful ones in getting the greeting card programme started.

Q: A couple things came up that I wanted to ask you about as you were discussing the greeting card and Mrs. Sinclair. One question I wanted to ask was when the Executive Committee meets and the National representatives thrash out the policy, is it one man, one vote, no matter how much a country has put into UNICEF?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Just one vote. Just one vote, but of course some countries have a good deal of influence. If the U. S. feels very strongly about something, the other countries usually try to accommodate.

Q: Why do they try to accommodate? Because they're afraid that the United States will not - if it gets angry, will not make as large a contribution the next time around?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. Yes. They sometimes get sarcastic about it, but they usually pretty much go along, except in things they feel very strongly about, like the Vietnamese situation. It doesn't matter what they put in. Or Cuba. When Cuba came up. That was a very difficult political situation.

Generally, for instance, when it comes to allocating the funds, the resources, I don't remember any instances where there was any closed voting. It goes through, just by acclaim usually. They've hammered it all out in the Programme Committee, and when it comes to the Executive Board for a final vote, it just goes through very quickly.

Q: I see. Well now, how much freedom do the national representatives have, representatives to UNICEF?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: You mean that represent the governments?

Q: That represent the nations. Do some country's representatives have to go back to get a decision on every single question?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Indeed, yes. Ours is one of them. Everything. And I think I described to you, the position papers, there's one position after another, and the delegate doesn't know till the last minute, if then, what - sometimes, when they talk about what the contribution is going to be, they'll protect themselves by saying, "This has to be confirmed by Congress" or "by the Executive Branch" or whatever. Oh, yes, everything has to be cleared.

Q: With every nation, or do some nations - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Some are very, very flexible and have a good deal of authority. Especially the little ones, that cover the waterfront, you know. They have to cover all the economic and social and sometimes even the political matters. They haven't got the funds to send big delegations. So they use their own judgement pretty much. But they're the ones that don't put in much money either. The majority decides - that's the way the UNICEF continuation was voted, by the countries in whose interest UNICEF was created.

Q: Well now, how - let's say, the American representative. How does that person make his individual personality and character apparent, if he has to go back and get an official position?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: It's a very delicate position for the U. S. delegate. I remember when a friend of mine was Under-Secretary in Washington and wanted to get me appointed as delegate, I told him I didn't think I'd have the patience. I think I'd be resigning the very next day, because so often your own convictions are against what your government's position is.

Now, if you get a good tough delegate - for instance, I was thinking of Martha Eliot, Dr. Eliot. She was quite a tough New Englander, and she did have to speak the U. S. position, but on occasion she made it clear that it wasn't her own conviction. She would say that. And she worked behind the scenes, she worked very hard.

Q: Trying to get the official position to coincide with hers?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. Exactly. She was one of those - she believed in UNICEF. I remember when I went to see some high muckiemuck in Washington, and in those days, the early days, when we had to see Congressmen, because there wasn't any Citizens Committee - I remember coming and telling her that one of these dignitaries, one of these Senators, had said to me, "Well, isn't this the sort of thing that the World Health Organization could be doing?" I said, "Yes, but they're not doing it". And I aided, "Well, what's wrong with that? It has to be done. What's wrong with helping WHO by UNICEF taking some of the financial strain off them?"

Martha Eliot said, "What did he say to that, because there's no answer to that, is there?" And I replied, "He didn't say anything.

But that's what it really amounts to. Somebody else isn't doing it. Same with our U.S. Committee. We're doing educational work that somebody else - our government should be doing it, or the school should be doing it. But they're not. It has to be done. So that doesn't offend my conscience at all.

Q: The schools are doing many of the jobs in society that the family perhaps should be doing, but they're not doing.

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Precisely. But they're not doing it, so somebody has to do it. The important thing is the child. In our case, the child in need. And if the governments haven't got the wherewithal or the technique or the ability or the supplies to take care of it, we have to. Somebody has to. And I think this is a very easy answer.

Q: Well, is there any situation roughly similar to a jury room, where the delegates sit down and try to change each other's opinions?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Oh, sure, in the U. N.. That's what the Delegates' Lounge is for, because they all have lunch together, and if it's very top secret, they go outside the building. You can see who's lunching with who. They lunch, for instance, during the Executive Board sessions, they lunch with each other every single day, and they hammer it out. Mostly, the important work is done outside of the meeting room. By the time they get to the meeting room, the positions are already pretty much solidified.

Q: So, if a nation had a very persuasive representative, that person might be able to swing the official position of other governments around to his - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Right. Our position is very sensitive, because we are big and rich, and not popular. I know that we are accused of twisting arms a good deal. I remember a classical case - my friend, Cabot Lodge, went up to the Canadian Ambassador who had his arm in a sling. He had broken his arm skiing or something, and Cabot said, "Oh, Mr. Ambassador, I'm so sorry. I hope your arm is mending." And the Canadian Ambassador said, "Yes, Mr. Ambassador, but please don't twist it any more." This is what we're always accused of doing, you see, when we dangle the dollars, and we're not too sensitive about doing it. I used to see, in the U. N. meetings, all these sort of tall, thin sort of deputies rushing around with attaché cases, going and whispering to various delegations, and they did it quite flagrantly. They're always all over the place, trying to change votes and change opinions. But it's difficult. We have to do it, I suppose. We try to get them to understand the U. S. Government's position, and it is very much as in all things human - it depends on the approach. Some delegates are very popular and friendly and not accused of being rich old Uncle Sam.

While we're on the subject of Cabot Lodge, there is another incident I should recount, because it is illustrative of the "trading" that goes on, on the diplomatic front. This particular incident involves me. During the fifties, middle or late fifties - at any rate, during the Eisenhower reign - I was attending a UNICEF regional conference in California - Los Angeles or Pasadena. At one of the plenary sessions, we were shown a number of new films on children, produced by UNICEF and other agencies. I recall that the sound was way up, so that it was impossible to hear anything that was said in the hall. All at once one of the volunteers, who was serving as "usher", approached and practically shouted that I had a long-distance phone call. I asked that the volunteer convey the message that I was at a meeting, which I couldn't leave and that I would call back. The volunteer responded that she had already tried to field the call, but that this was "extremely urgent", and that it was Ambassador Lodge who was calling.

Naturally, I was most astonished, thinking at first it was some sort of sorry practical joke but I took the call anyway. It was indeed Cabot, whom I had great trouble hearing over the clamor of the films. He told me that the U. S. Delegation to the UN was having trouble with the passage of some political resolution they had introduced, and they needed my help. Cabot had heard I had very good relations with the Canadian Delegation, and that I knew their Representative on the Fifth (Budgetary) Committee. To summarize this



strange conversation, he wanted me to telephone this Delegate - a highly intelligent professional, as are most of the Canadian delegates - and to inform him that "we" (the U.S.) would vote for some social resolution favored by Canada if "they" would vote for this resolution favored by the U. S. Cabot further intimated that of course, the "social" resolution must be of concern to me, because it affected UNICEF, or some such line. I told my old Boston friend that all I could do was to pass along the gist of the conversation, but that I certainly would not "urge" - nor was I in a position to try to be persuasive - a technique, anyway, that could only have the opposite effect of what our people hoped for.

The next morning, about seven am, I called my Canadian acquaintance and repeated the conversation to him. He too must have been thunder-struck because I heard later it had gone on the Canadian air-waves as a "strange" request from the U. S. and that I was described as "a close friend of Adelaide Sinclair's"! Sometimes I wonder if I didn't dream the whole episode.

This little episode points up our national diplomatic habit of using every conceivable means to accomplish our end.

Q: Well, is there someone in the state - you've mentioned several times that when the question of the American annual appropriation to UNICEF comes up, that it usually begins in the State Department?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes.

Q: Is there some - you said it's not important enough for the President to really get too deeply involved in it because it's too small an amount of money?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Absolutely. Small potatoes.

Q: But is there somebody through the years, one individual, who sort of has taken UNICEF as his special - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: You mean on the higher echelon, in a higher position?

Q: Well, in the State Department. Has there been one individual?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. Yes, we had - well, we've had several who came to

scoff but remained to pray. They became persuaded. The trouble is with that, by the time they get sort of educated to the possibilities of UNICEF and what's involved and what a good organization it basically is, they get moved, you see. So then you get a new unknown number. This happens every few years.

Q: You have to start all over again educating?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Start all over again. We had a series of them, one after another. Some better than others and some more outstanding than others, and believe you me, they have to be pretty courageous and pretty forceful characters. They don't survive long if they try to throw their weight around too much at this level.

Q: Start looking - ? Yes. Something else I wanted to ask about that came up when we were talking about Mrs. Sinclair. Could you talk about the women's role in UNICEF and in the United Nations in general? Is it - as far as the - I don't mean that UNICEF is concerned with children and their mothers. I don't mean in that respect. I mean as far as the staff of UNICEF, or the representatives from the various countries. Has the role of women changed?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: It's a very touchy point. It's a very touchy subject right this minute, with the Secretary General of the U. N., as you perhaps have heard. No, they're way under-represented, and they're on the verge of revolution in the U. N. Secretariat. UNICEF itself is beginning to pay some attention to it. There are very few women - of course, on the secretarial level there are plenty. They're mostly women, in fact. But Adelaide Sinclair was the outstanding one on the professional level.

There's also Mrs. Memet, who is in Social Services - Family Planning, all that comes under her. She's Indonesian. Very fine person. In the early days, in addition to Betty Jacob, there were several. There was Helen Matushek, a Czech, who was very dynamic, too, and very able. She was a refugee, from Hitler, and she had tragic experiences in Czechoslovakia. But then she ran into trouble - early in those days, when everybody was so suspicious, you know, and she left the staff.

Then there was Grace Barbey, Grace Holmes, I'd like to mention. She was - Grace Holmes Barbey. When she was Mrs. Holmes, Maurice Pate had her working with him. She was a widow who wanted to do something for the war effort, and

she worked for Maurice Pate in the prisoners-of-war thing in Washington. She's another very warm human - very different in temperament from Betty Jacob, but with that same passionate caring about UNICEF. And he brought her on afterwards on his staff, very early in the game. She was here for years, as head of the NGO section, so a lot of these international NGO's, as we called them, were in her docket. She was extremely popular, with thousands of friends. She's the world's greatest extrovert and very frank and very, very full of warmth and radiance.

And there are other women, several who were extremely able, who ran into this cloud of the McCarthy thing. As far as I can tell, very unjustly. Their departures were made easy, simply I think because of the insistence of the United States Government. All these executive people in the U. N., and in organizations like UNICEF, were in a terribly hard position, because they didn't want anything to reflect on the integrity of their organization. But it was those murky lines, you know, you didn't know how much they were involved in controversial things. Difficult period.

Q: So that women really, in the United Nations in general, are as you see it clearly underrepresented as far as - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Oh, very definitely underrepresented. Very definitely. They're beginning to make their voices heard though, I think you will see a difference. There's a new one just been put on the staff on a director level, D-1, that's a high post, and that's Aida Gindy. She's Egyptian, and she's in Africa as Regional Director. Very able person. She's a friend of mine. For years she was with the Bureau of Social Affairs in the U. N., and she's now with UNICEF. She's the highest-ranking woman now, one of the highest-ranking, certainly in UNICEF and in the U. N. itself.

Q: Do you get any feeling about President Carter's attitude towards the United Nations at all? I would guess-

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Very positively. Yes. Oh, very, very much so. I don't know whether we mentioned the fact that the Republicans are always such practical people and good backer of UNICEF? Both parties, you know, are genuinely interested in something like UNICEF, but it takes time to secure participation -

Q: Who are we speaking about?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: The Democrats. Yes. This year, again, we asked the First Lady of the land to be Honorary Chairman, Chairwoman, on UNICEF Day. We had had Betty Ford. With great alacrity, she had agreed. Well now, Mrs. Rosalynn Carter cannot do it, or will not do it. For understandable reasons. She says she doesn't want to be involved in anything for which she isn't working, so she won't be honorary anything, except in those organizations in which she participates. Mental health is her particular interest. The Republicans have always been supportive of UNICEF.

It may be that just - UNICEF is a practical programme. I think that's why it appealed to Herbert Hoover, former President Hoover. And it appealed to people like Bob Taft, Alexander Smith in New Jersey, and Alexander Wiley of Wisconsin. They were all very conservative Republicans. And Maurice Pate himself, who used to call himself a "black Republican".

Q: Well, when the government makes its decision to allocate X amount of dollars to UNICEF, does the work then begin for the next year right away?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: It's a very complicated procedure. There are several steps, yes. Usually, when they commit funds, it's over a period of several years, because it's impossible in a huge organization like this to do it any other way. So there's a step of a commitment of funds, then of allocation of funds after that, and then expenditure comes after the end of the year. It's all a very intricate sort of financial picture.

Q: So it takes several years?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: It takes several years, yes. They'll commit much more funds than are actually spent in that year. I think something like a hundred and forty million dollars will be committed, and expenses for one year will be under a hundred million, that kind of thing.

Q: So It's a never-ending - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Never-ending. And on a big scale.

Q: Right. Can we talk about Gus Lindt a little bit? He's a name that you - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes, he's another early force. He was very forceful. Switzerland has always been a great backer of UNICEF. Switzerland is marverious in that. And he was an early Chairman. Very imaginative, very intelligent, and a very good chairman. The present Representative from Switzerland on the Executive Board, Hans Conzett, also is devoted to UNICEF.

Q: Chairman of what?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Chairman of the Executive Board of UNICEF. Maurice Pate made great personal friends - he had a very personal relationship with anybody who was helpful to UNICEF, so that Gus Lindt, like Adelaide Sinclair and like Rajchman - they all became close personal friends of his. He always entertained them, had them staying with him on the Cape, that kind of thing. Actually, Gus Lindt, used to call Maurice Pate "Dr. Pangloss", you know - because Maurice thought this was the best of all possible worlds! And Maurice Pate, he's an extraordinary character: extremely practical, never trivial, but, like all great administrators, he paid a good deal of attention to detail. No detail was too unimportant. He had that training under Hoover. For instance, he always said that no good executive will ever write more than a one-page memorandum. He learned that under Hoover. Hoover wouldn't read anything that was more than one page. He was economical. Maurice Pate developed the economy of language. He used to go crazy and furrow his brow when he got a great sheaf of papers. In fact, he told me once he never read a document all the way through. It was not his way - he got the essence of the message. I referred once to his shorthand, I mean, instead of going into a long thesis, an educational treatise on "formal or non-formal education for children in Africa". He just said, "children need pencils". His particular shorthand. And he was that way as an administrator. He had no patience with long philosophical harangues. He always used to wonder why I was so interested in community development, since it became a continuing process, you know -

(end of side one of tape)

Q: Community development, because it was at the grass roots level?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes, the gist of it is the villagers themselves, taking responsibility for the development of their community; they're the ones who

know what they need, they're the ones to put it into effect. We've come full circle now, because this new basic services approach of UNICEF is really community development, only it has more teeth in it because it has to do with UNICEF, with children, with supplies, and with training, so that the very thing that the U. N. has been talking about in theoretical terms so long is now, I think, becoming an actuality. I hope so. And I think the technique is right. It's giving the responsibility to the people whose children are going to be helped and who know what they want, and if the thing is to be successful, they're the ones who've got to decide what's going to be done.

Q: The local people are the ones who select the person to be trained, is that correct?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. There's been a whole technique worked out. Of course, it has to be spearheaded by the international personnel to begin with. And it's a complicated thing, because you have to trickle down from - you have to have the thing accepted by the central government, of course, and have it trickle down to the community, but then it goes up from the community. To give a very small illustration, this is the way the League of Women Voters in this country operates. It's the women in the local league who vote on what the programme of the national league is going to be. This is really what we're trying to do with UNICEF, the pressures from the community going up, instead of orders coming down from the central government about what they are to do. And it's a very healthy development. How it's going to work, goodness knows.

Q: How long ago did that get started, that switch in - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Well, a couple years ago. The World Health Organization in conjunction with UNICEF. You should see that. It's a very remarkable document. It starts this whole thing. They agreed that their approach had been wrong, that there was too much dictating, that the thing should be decentralized and get down to the grass roots, and this is now the technique that they're adopting, both the World Health Organization and UNICEF.

Q: And that is not across the boards at the United Nations, is it? There are other organizations of the United Nations who do not work that way at all?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: No, because the other technical agencies are in close rapport with UNICEF, because their experts advise the UNICEF staff. For instance, the World Health, when it comes to medical problems, they have a medical adviser here. Same thing with Food and Agriculture. There's a nutrition adviser. UNESCO has an education adviser to UNICEF. But there's no duplication. UNICEF supplies the materials and pays for the training.

Q: No, I meant this grass roots philosophy.

Mrs. Pantaleoni: They're more an advisory relationship to governments. They don't send personnel there. The people themselves do it. They don't go in for supplies very much, except for UNICEF, and the UNDP supplies. If you'd be using Maurice Pate's technique, it's all symbols. I've seen a sewing machine purchased by UNICEF, it has great significance, because it will be the thing that the village women in Africa will come to see, it's something so fascinating. They will come and sit around and once they're shown how to work it and how to make their children's clothes or whatever, the leaders have a captive audience. They can lecture them on health and sanitation and child care. And this is the magic of UNICEF. This is what they mean by a catalyst. I've seen that with my own eyes. We are going to talk about the field. You know, maybe this is a good time to do it, maybe.

May I describe a thing in the Philippines?

Q: Sure. Certainly.

Mrs. Pantaleoni: When I was there, this was the first time I went to see programs, in '58. I'd already been twelve years with UNICEF, but what I knew was all from documents. Finally, there was a welfare conference in Tokyo, and I went with Kay Ottinger, who was our U.S. Representative on the Executive Board. She was Chief of the Children's Bureau in Washington. And Adelaide Sinclair, who was then on the UNICEF staff, Deputy Director in Charge of Programmes.

The three of us spent over a week in the Philippines, driving the length of the country really, looking at projects. At one of these barrios (villages) in the Philippines, I detached myself from the official party because I wanted to see a community development project. There I met a very eager, nice young man. You could see, he was just wrapped up in trying to do

something for these poor people, and the poverty there is just unbelievable. He didn't know who I was and that I was attached in any way to UNICEF. And I said, how are the villagers? Are they responsive to community problems? He talked very good English, as many Filipinos do. He said, no, I had a great deal of trouble assembling them. In fact, I couldn't get them to take an interest, until one day a drum of powdered milk arrived, sent by UNICEF - and then he explained to me that UNICEF stood for the United Nations Children's Fund. I said, "oh, really"? And he said, "yes, and the word got around that this milk had arrived for the babies and the mothers. Well, they came in droves. They were very curious, and we started doling out this powdered milk. They weighed the babies, and they were very thin little things who were almost famished. A few weeks later they brought them back and they'd put on a little weight. Well, we found that we knew the language that seemed to appeal to them. So we gave them a little more milk, and they kept coming. So, you see, this organization knows what to do. They send us something in which we can interest the village mothers".

Well, to me, this is - he wasn't trying to be nice - he didn't know I had any relationship at all to UNICEF, but it was a marvelous illustration of Maurice Pate's philosophy, how well it worked. To give them something that interests them and do it on a level that they understand.

Q: Something tangible, you said earlier.

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Something tangible and something practical, yes. There are lots of instances, as with the sewing machine in Africa or a bicycle in Thailand, where you see the midwives, how proud they are. These midwives get their bicycle and their midwifery kit, which they strap onto the handlebars, and the midwifery kit will have eleven countries represented in it: soap from Norway, brushes from Australia, towels from some country, scales from the United States, you know. That little baby is born and the mother knows that about eleven countries were helpful in bringing it into the world. It's this kind of thing that I think is a perfectly extraordinary emissary for an international action.

Q: Yes, that's terrific.

Mrs. Pantaleoni: It is. It's just fascinating.



Q: So, in a way, people who are involved with UNICEF can see very clearly the real difference that the organization has made?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Absolutely. UNICEF is much better known all over the world than it is here. Of course, to tell you the honest truth, when you go to a country, no matter which country, you're not aware, you don't know UNICEF exists. You have to dig it out, and sometimes it's rather indirect, its influence. For instance, in Guatemala at that time, there were very few UNICEF projects by the time I was there, but they'd show you some supplies - a refrigerator that they needed to keep the milk cold, you know. And that would spark a whole lot of interest, and things like that that they'd show you.

There are three main impressions when you go into those countries. First, there's the abysmal poverty of the people. It just can't be described. Second is the enormous amount of energy and enthusiasm, especially among the young people, to do something for their country. I felt that in Tunisia very strongly, in the Philippines, in Thailand - well, everywhere. There were always young people who wanted to do something, but they need the tools to do it. And the third thing that you're made very aware of in those countries is the paucity of international aid. It's just a drop in the bucket. You'll see a sewing machine. UNICEF has over a thousand different things it sends, but it's awfully little, and when you stack it against everything else, it's terribly, terribly little. And of course our great problem is how do you magnify it? How do you get more in?

Now, an awful lot happens that brings results with that very little. I think what you could sum up - the principal thing that happens is the government attitude is changing in those developing countries. Whereas they didn't pay very much attention, because they were too busy or not rich enough or whatever, to their child population, they begin to think that, yes, this is something that needs attention and they reach out for help. They want to build better things for their child populations.

I saw a big difference in the government's attitude the two times I was in Thailand. This was in '58, and then again in '64. In those six years you could see already much more sophisticated planning on behalf of their child

population. So, you see, over the years you see a growth in the understanding of these programs.

Q: We talked a little bit the other day about some of the population control. Maybe that's not the right word, but the concern in some nations about keeping the population at a level that was manageable. I know in India, of course, is the most famous example of a great deal of emphasis being placed on that, and then tremendous repercussions. If a country does have an attitude that as many children as possible, and yet these children grow up in a very poor environment, not only physically poor but emotionally poor, because there just isn't that much help to go around, to help them. Do many countries have a fairly sophisticated attitude towards limiting the size of families and thereby -?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Well, it's growing. More and more countries are asking for aid. It's again, as you know, a terribly delicate situation, because I think the feeling is, especially in places like Africa, that the developed countries and the white races don't want the native populations to multiply. They're extremely suspicious, so you can't really do very much so-called propaganda. It has to be done very quietly, and it really has to come from themselves naturally. But I think the UNICEF field staff knows how to talk to the local populations, especially if they get people of their own kind to spearhead this kind of interest. Yes, I know there's more and more interest in it.

The Fund for Population Activities, that's where the governments are putting money in, so that, for instance, UNICEF doesn't use any of its own money for family planning. I think we touched on that. It comes from a different fund.

But it's slow. It wasn't helped, I'm afraid, by the Catholic Church. I think there are a great many Catholics, the more progressive ones, are extremely favorably disposed, but - when the Pope came over, you remember, in his speech he retarded the whole thing. because he - we were all terribly depressed in UNICEF at that time when he came, because he said "the tables should be groaning under food". He'd prefer to see resources going into more food for people, rather than for stopping the birth of new human beings. I don't know if you remember that speech. It was quite a long time -

Q: I don't remember that, but I do know that the Pope went to Africa.

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. He came to the U. N. and made that speech. That was a very - it threw cold water on the effort for quite a while, but since then, I think there's a growing interest. Of course, again, I think the experience in India is a good example. They thought that they were going too fast, that Indira Gandhi was being very dictatorial about dictating a family planning policy. So it's not an easy problem. You have to go -

Q: Slow?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. The trouble is there isn't much time to slow down. It's a toughie. But I know that UNICEF is very conscious of all these angles.

Q: Well, do you see the problems outstripping the resources to solve them? I don't mean only in this area. I mean as far as children -

Mrs. Pantaleoni: No. It's really in a sense, a discouraging picture, because you keep reading about the gap growing wider between the haves and the have-nots, and that seems to be so. How you overcome it, I just don't know, short of putting in billions, not millions of dollars, in aid. And then the question arises, have they got the trained personnel to utilize that aid? There are no easy answers. I think organizations like UNICEF are on the right track. They don't bite off more than they can chew. They have to be patient. Nothing is ever as good or as bad as it seems. The doomsday-sayers, the prophets of catastrophe, haven't been proved right. We don't know yet. Maybe they will be. However, I don't know what other choice we have except to go along as best we can. Certainly, conditions aren't improving fast enough to suit those of us who are impatient for progress.

Q: But you are not discouraged? You've spent many years in this -

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Certainly not. No. You see, I've seen it just like this attitude of the Thai government, that's an illustration, I think now communications are so easy between different countries all over the world that you just - it would be insanity not to take into account that it's in our interest to try to do all we can to develop a decent world.

The magic of that work - again, the children thing - is because we're involving people at every level. To take up the involvement, for instance, of

our own children at Halloween. I remember in the Philippines, in the school that I saw, describing that the American children were collecting pennies so that medicines would go to countries like the Philippines, and some Filipino lad saying, "oh, I thank UNICEF, they saved my little brother from dying. God bless UNICEF, President Eisenhower and Joe DiMaggio." That's one of our pet stories, because he was so earnest and so grateful, you know. In other words, what I'm trying to say is that it percolates even down to the child level, the children are working together. And what other children do should be made known! For instance, the Indian children sent a young elephant over to the children of Philadelphia. A lot should be made of that. A lot should be made of their sort of happiness and joy that is hard to bottle and hard to bring over. We have an awful lot to learn from this, from different countries.

Q: Okay. We can stop.

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