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Memoirs of Paul B. Edwards
Conducted on 3 January 1983
in Pacific Palisades, California
with Pauline Bessell

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Biography

Sinclair

One of my great antagonists and protagonists, Mrs. Adelaide Sinclair, just died. Adelaide and I have gone round and round over many things, in Bangkok, at conferences, and Philippino visits, and at headquarters but she was a woman whom I loved dearly, and in the main I think we ended up with great respect for each other.

Heyward

I used to drive Dick Heyward crazy because I was not a scholar and made no pretensions of scholastic skills and that sort of thing. One of the things I said, which infuriated him I think, was 'I don't want to do a nutritional survey in the midst of a famine - let's deal with the famine and we'll do the nutritional survey afterwards!'. I was pretty much of a pragmatist. Most of the experience that prepared me for UNICEF came out of my work in UNRRA, the first United Nations Agency, where we dealt with great masses of people who were war-stricken and powerless and where we had no book to go by, no procedures - we had to work out of contemporary experience, intuition and the best evidence.

Keeny

Sam Keeny, like myself, came out of UNRRA as did many other of the early employees, and I suspect, given UNICEF's mandate, and again the lack of formulas and policies, we in our time served a good purpose. I don't know that we would be totally in accord or responsive or effective in today's world. Many of us I suppose would be charged with a certain level of imperialist techniques - we worked from presumed, sometimes assumed knowledge, but in the main I would say, for example, it has been my contention that most of the public health programmes in Asia exist because of the imagination and the colourful language and the skills of Sam Keeny, who gave us imaginative, tolerant, creative, tough leadership. He expected you to be in the field 50% of the time and if you weren't you couldn't kid him any more about that any more than you could about the mileage on the jeep. I revelled in his leadership and friendship, as I think almost anyone who worked in that area did.

Jones

Brian Jones was his faithful deputy and later regional director - a hard-working, conscientious fellow.

Pate

They were just a lot of wonderful people and in no way has any other experience compared in my feelings and emotions with my UNICEF associates and friends and when I start talking like this I have to revert to the top of the mark - Maurice Pate. I suppose Maurice and I were as far apart in some respects as two men could get. I always wondered at his acceptance of me and his tolerance for me. He was a quiet, educated, conservative man.

Maurice visited me in the Philippines and we went to see the President. And of course Maurice looked like God on a white horse

- he stood about 6 feet 4, had a shock of white hair and pink skin and just enough of a stammer to make him charming and endearing and he was a wonderful guy. I got along with him very well, though our styles were vastly different and our origins and development came from opposite sides of the political and economic spectrum. I think he was monumental in the work he did for UNICEF and the fact that he was a conservative served us well in battling the forces of right-wing nonsense - the Birchers and the others - so I have a deep and lasting admiration for him.

One of the things I always wondered about was 'what in the hell did Maurice Pate do in the elections of 1964 when Goldwater ran against Johnson?'. Goldwater was the only man and candidate in either party who had never endorsed UNICEF publicly, and Maurice wanted his endorsement worse than anything in the world so that he could be consistent - I don't think he ever voted anything but Republican all his life.

Hoover

Pate finally arranged with Herbert Hoover to meet with Goldwater in Hoover's suite in the Waldorf Astoria where he lived, and they went there and Hoover asked him to endorse UNICEF and Goldwater equivocated and, in fact, he never did. I became Director of Information that year, and the campaign was on and I was speaking on the West Coast when Herbert Hoover died, shortly after Maurice had been to see him. I was on the highway in California and I heard this over the radio and I thought 'how the hell do we capitalize on this?'. Because basically Herbert Hoover was the founder of UNICEF. Most people don't realize this. It was after a trip around the world at the request of Harry Truman that Hoover came back and made a recommendation that the residual funds of UNRRA be used to establish a child and mother-oriented programme of assistance in the war-torn areas, and out of that came UNICEF, with a very temporary mandate.

So at this time we were under attack by the right-wingers, the John Birchers and the rest of them, something fierce...and I was driving up the road in California when I heard this flash of Herbert Hoover's death and I thought 'how can I turn this and how can I get this information out?'. So I pulled off the road and went into a telephone booth and phoned the Los Angeles Times and asked for the City Desk and got the City Editor on the line and I said 'Yes, this is Paul Edwards, what is it you wanted?'. He said 'Paul Edwards, who is Paul Edwards?'. And I said 'Well, I'm the UNICEF Director of Information and I suppose you were calling with regard to Mr. Hoover's founding of UNICEF?'. He said 'Wait a minute!'. And got a reporter on the line and I proceeded to tell them of Herbert Hoover's role in founding UNICEF, and all about Hoover's relationship with Maurice Pate, and how he had been such a supporter of and the creator of all this. The next morning, on page 2, at the top, running about six inches deep, was the total story - clear