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Interview with Grace Barbey*

Conducted by John Charnow

in New York on 8 January 1984

CF/RAI/USAA/OB01/HS/1996-0075

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INTERVIEW WITH GRACE BARBEY

CONDUCTED BY JOHN CHARNOW

NEW YORK 8 JANUARY 1984

Charnow: Grace, how did you get started with UNICEF?

Barbey: It is an interesting story Jack, because as you know, I knew Mr. Pate before I was his Director of Chapter Relations for the "next of kin" in the Prisoner of War Section of the American Red Cross. When my first husband passed away Mr. Pate called in Chicago, where I was and asked me what I was going to do with my life. I told him that I thought I would go back to the University of Chicago and finish getting my Masters and get my doctor's degree in sociology, and go back to college teaching. He asked me if I was coming East and I said yes I was, this was in April of '47. Palmer Holmes passed away April 30 of '47 and it was probably the first day of June when he called me. So then he asked me when I was coming and I told him July. I had a very good visit with Maurice in July and he again said what would I do about my life, and I explained and he said, "well you know the other day I was talking to Mr. Hoover and he said why don't you ask that Iowa girl to help you." I was the Iowa girl because my father had known of Mr. Hoover's family and I had met Mr. Hoover a number of times during the period of the war.

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Maurice asked me if I had enough time, and then I had nothing to go back to Chicago for except to finish Palmer's estate. So he asked me if I would consider going to New York, where he was starting this Organization in the U.N. that had been voted on December 11th of '46.

The beginning of the Organization was the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund and would I consider going to New York and seeing what it was like to be at the United Nations. Well he sent me up and I stayed in a little flea bitten hotel on West Fifty-fourth Street and went every single day on the Subway to Lake Success and that was one of the most interesting experiences I have ever had.

Charnow: Did he tell you what kind of job he had in mind for you?

Barbey. No, he had nothing at all. He knew that he was going to have get somebody to be a liaison officer between the United Nations Appeal for Children and UNICEF. But he had no idea what he would have me do but he was very impressed with the fact that I would go and stay the whole week. He asked me when I came back later on what I had gleaned from that experience. The most major attitude that I received was the fact that most of the refugees from the War who had come to work at the UN, filled their plates so full of food in the cafeteria that they couldn't possibly have eaten at all. When

I asked one of them why they did it, they said to me we don't know whether we are going to have anymore food. I understood quite well what it meant then to be in a prison of war camp.

Charnow: Having worked with Maurice before UNICEF, and having worked with him for quite a while in UNICEF, what was your feeling about him?

Barbey: Well I met him in rather a strange way because my husband lived next door to him at the Allies Inn in Washington. Palmer kept saying to me, what a fine man he was and in the little cafeteria line we had at the Allies Inn I remember two or three times Palmer pointing out this man with a beautiful white shock of hair, very tall, a kindly face and he said someday I must introduce you to him when I am not so busy. Palmer was in Special Services Division of the Army and was constantly on the go and I said alright let's do it! Palmer said, you know he has one of the longest operations I have ever seen because I saw him in the shower the other day. So a day or two after that I met Mr. Pate and I said to him, oh Mr. Pate, Palmer tells me you have the longest operation he has ever seen! I never saw a man turn red so quickly. It was too embarrassing for him, I shouldn't have done it but I say what I think and after that it was very amusing.

I must tell you, in all honesty, I think that was one of the reasons why I got the job later on. He called me when I was

teaching out at Monticello College in Alton, Illinois, and he asked if I was coming to Washington D.C. any time and if I was, would I consider coming with the Red Cross. And, I remember saying to him, "Oh, Mr. Pate, I think that's very kind of you but you see the war is going to be over in a year and Colonel Holmes will be back and there will be no problems then. He said, "But if it isn't over in a year?" and I said, "Oh, well, I wouldn't come any way because I can't stand to wear a uniform." "Oh," he said, "I think I could get you a job where you wouldn't have to wear a uniform." And that's exactly what he did.

Charnow: When you started with UNICEF you were the only professional woman?

Barbey: No, I think Betty Jacobs had already been hired. She was working part time and then they were considering Alice Schaffer too. She was in the Children's Bureau. I know there were two or three others and there were many women secretaries. But Maurice had a feeling about me because he had heard me, at the Stevens Hotel in Chicago, speak to the next of kin before an audience of 5000 people, and he thought I would be very intimidated. Well he didn't really know I was intimidated by it but I was so impressed with what next of kin were doing for prisoners that that's why I think he had some respect for the kind of work he thought I could do.

Charnow: How would you characterize Maurice? What were his strengths, what
~~were his weaknesses as Executive Director?~~

Barbey: He had many many strengths. In fact, it was very interesting for me to have conferences with Maurice because he was a man who had great confidence in people but he was also very interesting in that he was not at all petty. And, when I would go into him with some situation that I felt wasn't working out right -- now he said, "Grace, you know how to solve that problem, you don't need to come to me". And he was right. Because I had never been in that kind of business before -- I had worked for Borg-Warner and I had done a lot of public relations work, but not this kind of thing, -- I think he felt that I was staying a little too close to him. So, he said, "Now you can solve those problems yourself".

And I remember in the final analysis when he was ready to hire me for UNICEF, there was another woman who I felt was more able to do the work than I was. She was a French lady by the name of Madame Combamale. I remember her vividly and I said to Maurice, "Oh, Maurice, if you have to choose in this outfit between me and Madame Combamale, you should get her because she's more equipped to do it." He said, "I think, Grace, you're a little too modest". He said, "I think you can do the job. What you must do is to try to work out in a way that best suits you, how you can help in any way with the many people we are going to have to work with in UNICEF". And I agree with him now because I think Madame Combamale was probably much more bureaucratic than I was.

Charnow: Did you have any feeling about how Maurice felt as to whether UNICEF was going to continue or only had a short-term emergency life?

Barbey: He had no idea! Jack, it was the most interesting thing because I had a long visit one time when his mother was here and we went out to dinner together and I remember Mrs. Pate said, "Well, when Maurice gets through the job, Grace, you'll have to come to Denver and we'll have a celebration". "That will be just a year or two". "Oh, certainly by 1950 or 51, UNICEF should be over by then and all the emergency should be gone so you can come and we'll have a family reunion". I had been in and out of Denver before and Mrs. Pate thought I should come again. And I had known the family cause I knew Annie fairly well and Richard Pate, who was his brother. And the younger brother, Ted, had gone to Granell College in Iowa with some of my family, so they knew him too. So I was a little more personally involved with Maurice, but he was one of the most honest men I ever met -- but also could be easily taken advantage of by women. It was difficult for him to really see through women. I say that because there were a number of women who came to him with all kinds of wild schemes and he didn't know quite how to get rid of them so he would send them to me!

Charnow: I have always had the impression that Maurice was quite generous in doing some UNICEF financing out of his own personal pocket. Would you like to talk about that?

Barbey: He used all of his own money and even after asked me when Palmer's estate was finished, if I didn't feel I could give two or three thousand dollars toward the institution. I said, "Maurice, I would do it in a minute but you're paying me so little money. You're only giving me two-hundred and fifty dollars a month." He said, "But Grace, you'll have a pretty good income with Palmer's estate so you don't need to worry." So I said to him, "I realize that you have given a lot of your money -- but I can't. The first few weeks I really was on the staff, as of July '47, he paid all my expenses in New York. But I wasn't actually on the staff payroll until September of '47. And then I got in on lots of events that were happening. I had to go between Lake Success and Washington in the Dupont Circle Building. What was interesting about that Jack, was that the United Nations Appeal for children was robbed by Ache Ording, who was a Norwegian. He was a very interesting man but very gun-ho and he was giving UNICEF practically no credit for anything. One day he even told Mr. Pate, "You know, the lady that you sent up is sort of a thorn on our side". Because he never mentioned UNICEF he would always mention UNAC as if UNICEF didn't matter. I was really the liaison between the two organisations until 1949 -- and this was the period '47 to '49.

Charnow: In this financing, I have heard that Mr. Pate also financed the beginning of the greeting card operation because he didn't think that it would be financially successful. Have you heard that?

Barbey: I've heard that too and I wouldn't be a bit surprised because in 1949 when I was in Vienna, Mr. Burrow (?) who was an artist type on our staff in Vienna (it was terrible there because it was still the end of the war and places like the war torn Bristol Hotel were used as the offices) said, "You have..." Who was the head of the Paris office?

Charnow: Al Davidson.

Barbey: "Al said somebody has told me about a wonderful plaque or a painting of some kind with a child..." And it was Mr. Burrow who had shown me the Mayflower Pole which was quite a huge poster. "It was so clever of this little girl". They had had a contest and this little girl won the contest. Al Davidson said to bring it back to Paris which I did and then I brought it on back to the U.S. It was in the early days and Gil Redfern is the one that thought it might work, and Maurice said "It won't work at all". Gil Redfern being a Scot, _____ wouldn't give his money but I think Maurice said it should be tried. And then Gil Redfern is the one that got Mrs. Edmonds. She was the head of it for many many years. But the idea was very clever and there was another girl by the name of Helen Matousek who had a lot to do with it and was very helpful. She thought the Mayflower Pole was wonderful and it would be clever if they did a greeting card. But nobody really thought very much about it! Mrs. Edwards had done some work for a greeting card from China. It had made so much money that Mr. Pate thought this was a good idea.

Charnow: What did you feel was his relationship with Mr. Hoover?

Barbey: Oh, it was almost like a father and son. I felt that they were very close. Maurice had a sort of family relationship because Mr. Hoover had evidently expressed to Maurice at various times, that he felt that the group he had of Belgian relief men were some of the most top notch men he had ever met. And I remember vividly his saying several times that Mr. and Mrs. Hoover produced more in the way of progress for a variety of organizations than people realized. But you see, Mrs. Hoover -- I didn't know well but I had met her through Girl Scouts so, I felt there was great good there. Again, Maurice was always considered a very ardent Republican, I believe because of Hoover. I remember one time coming with a Stevenson button and he said, "Grace, you're going to have to take that off." And I said "Why?", and he said, "Just because I don't believe in politics here." And I said, "You're absolutely right. I don't either, I have nothing to do with politics".

Charnow: Was Mr. Hoover helpful in getting the U.S. Congressional support?

Barbey: I'm not sure, but I think Betty Jacobs probably had most to do with it. And then, a man by the name of Saul Bloome who was a good Congressional man. He was from the State of New York? I remember Mr. Bloome and I remember people talking to him about UNICEF. I met him at the Willard Hotel. And he asked me, "What do you have

to do with all of this?" And I remember saying to him, "Well, it's not going to go very long but I think its a simply magnificent organization and if anything can come of it, it would really help the world." And I think that Saul Bloom had as much to do with the first sixty million that we ever got as anybody -- at least in Congress.

Maurice was very unique. He had very kindly thoughts toward anybody who was having a problem -- which was rather unique in an administrator.

Charnow: Of course, you came in later in the scene after UNICEF had actually been organized -- but you know, sometimes we hear that Mr. Hoover is considered to be the father of UNICEF and sometimes we hear that Dr. Rajchman was.

Barbey: Well, Dr. Rajchman, I think, had much more to do with it than Mr. Hoover, in reality. But because I came in July, they didn't have all the staff at all. It was started in '46 but Maurice was just starting in January/February/March '47 to get a staff and he told me he didn't have nearly as many people as needed. He got Carl Borders, I remember, and he had a few others. But it was Dr. Rajchman, really, who had the idea. But it was Hoover who had had Maurice go with him on the "food survey" around the world and I think it was a combination at first. But Mr. Rajchman never gave

up. And Mr. Rajchman had seen something that none of us had ever seen -- and that was, literally, -- thousands of hungry children in Poland. And I remember visiting with him one time before a Board meeting and I knew then that Dr. Rajchman was really the Ace in the Hole, in a way, because he had such a feeling about not letting children starve again.

Charnow: Could we now turn to your reflections about how your career developed at UNICEF?

Barbey: Oh, well, my career never developed at all. Because Maurice always thought of me as having a private income, which I did - so it was beyond belief that he thought I should ever get higher than three or four hundred a month. And when I finally did, it was General Rooks a wonderful army man who knew about Colonel Holmes. He gave me an ample raise!

Barbey: It wasn't Steen. Steen liked me too; he was a Canadian. It was General Rooks who went to Mr. Pate and said, "I have just learned through the grapevine that Mrs. Holmes has a chance to go with Lever Brothers and I would feel very badly if Mrs. Holmes left. Because now in the UN I'm even impressed with the fact that when Mrs. Roosevelt can't speak there, Mrs. Holmes is asked to speak. " So Maurice said, "You'd better find out about that." I think it's the only reason I ever got a raise, I really do. Maurice

never thought of me in any way except as, partly a friend, and partly, to help children because I had such a humanitarian heart. It was really very interesting. Oh, my dear, if I had had anybody else, I would've easily been a P-5 or D-1 by the time I left, I had great ambition. But the ambition I had, interestingly enough Jack, was the ambition I had at twelve years old. I wanted to see the world, and because of UNICEF, I saw the world.

Barbey: Yes, because I had great responsibility after the UNAC campaign was over. Because I had to help organize...

Charnow: Before we go on to that, and we're still on UNAC, let me ask you - do you think that UNAC was stopped prematurely, or that it was time to wind it down?

Barbey: No, I think it was time to wind it down, I really do. And I say that because I felt that there would be difficulty later on with UNAC, partly because of the bureaucracy, partly because of Mr. Ordning, and partly because we were quite separated. UNICEF was in Washington still, Ache Ordning was out at Lake Success and the General Assembly was in Flushing. So the whole combination of talent that was active at that time was almost entirely Mr. Ordning and in the whole campaign issue... But, what fascinated me as the American part was winding down, and there were all kinds of people involved in that -- all of the agencies in this country got in on

it, and others overseas. I felt there was a need to unify more what UNICEF could do and I was not one at all to continue UNAC. I thought, if UNICEF wanted to do something similar, that would be fine, but then it would be under one roof.

Charnow: Well, now continue.

Barbey: After the UNAC campaign folded up, Maurice asked me in one day and said that he felt there should be an advisory group of NGO's for UNAC". And I had told him earlier that I thought it was wrong that UNICEF didn't have their own advisory group. So, finally, after UNAC folded up this advisory group became interested in the UN as such, and UNICEF and children. There was a man by the name of Thelin and Mary Dingman, Evelyn Fox and a whole group of them that said, "Well, why don't we have an advisory group for UNICEF?" And so, in the summer of 1949, Charles Egger and I started the original meeting that was to become the NGO Committee on UNICEF. But originally it was just an advisory group and it didn't become the NGO Committee on UNICEF with consultancy status until 1952. My responsibility was to be the liaison officer between groups that were not governments, and UNICEF. As I look back on it now, because I was such a non-bureaucrat and had a difficult time taking directions from anybody who had lesser ideas than my own! This is not at all ego on my part, it wasn't that. It's just that I felt that I knew what should be done a little bit better than people who

were not involved. And I remember, early, somebody saying -- "Oh, well she should be in the Public Information Division". Well, I never was, actually and I remember his saying to one of the heads of Public Information, "You know, they were saying that they were having a problem with Mrs. So-and-so". Mr. Pate finally said, "Well, you're just going to have let Mrs. Holmes alone because she only reports to God, she doesn't report to me either.

Charnow: That's interesting. And next to God, did you not report to Dick Heyward?

Barbey: Never. It was interesting. I went in to see Mr. Heyward occasionally but his desk bothered me so that I remember saying to him, "Dick, how in hell do you know where to find anything?" And in one minute he pulled out exactly what I asked for. So you see, I felt then I was completely defeated. I never had a desk like that. So, I never asked him major questions. I just always had great respect for his efficiency and his mind. He operated very much as I did. I don't think he was a great writer but he had very good ideas and he had a sharp mind. One of the interesting things about it, and I'm sure he would say this to you himself. When I went to Hobart in Tasmania I addressed the high school assembly. I told of the great respect I had for Mr. Heyward and his family, who were apple growers in Tasmania -- and I said, "The only thing I'm amazed about is he is on the list as cum laude and not summa cum

laude here in your high school". And they all started to laugh. And then I realized that he probably was very shy and so perhaps that would be the reason. Also, I felt, a man from Tasmania being put into the sophisticated London School of Economics was probably one of the most difficult situations any man could be put into because that school, at the time Mr. Heyward went there, was by far the epitome of intelligence. And I remember the Principal of the High School said to me (when I said that about Mr. Heyward), "Oh, but he went to the London School of Economics." So, I realized then that I must not think of Dick as anything but just a brilliant mind.

Charnow: Grace, you know that during your whole career with the NGOs, that I was very sympathetic with your work.

Barbey: More than anybody else on the staff, I think - except Maurice.

Charnow: Yet at the same time I felt that you were a loner organisationally as well as in your own personality -- and there were advantages in that -- but I also felt that there were disadvantages because I had a feeling that everybody said, "Well, Grace takes care of the NGO ladies and we don't pay any attention." Now, in retrospect, what is your feeling?

Barbey: I think it would've been far better had I been able to get closer to a person like Sam Keeny, and perhaps Mr. Heyward, but you see, they wouldn't listen to me because I felt that all along if we had started allowing some of the key NGOs to have just a small place in programming, then we would have had NGOs supporting us a 100 per cent quicker. And, as it has turned out, UNICEF could not have existed without the NGOs. I'm talking about the volunteers all over the world, the work they've done! I saw this early but I was never given any credit for thinking that way at all because I even remember Sam Keeny saying to me, "Grace, I understand exactly what you're after but you'll never get it".

Charnow: I had an impression that there were also problems in working with the NGOs -- and most of them in those days thought of UNICEF as some sort of milk from which they could get a refrigerator or a jeep or something like that, and that we were just a source of funds and not a source of working together and this of course created problems for our folks in the field. Am I correct?

Barbey: Exactly. You're correct, and I blame myself for that. Because I never proved to them that the women in development around the world were the ones who did the work. And if you would get women organized in a local community, and I did, many places, you would have much more the atmosphere you have today than you did then. Because they were the key to many of the things that happened. And

if they didn't happen, even the chief in the village, would often go to his wife about something that would have happened much more quickly. The NGOs, in many places, had bad entree - not as good, certainly, as the government. But the government, I think, would have listened more carefully. I don't blame at all the UNICEF staff except that I think they thought of me in many ways as more Mr. Pate's friend, than an employee -- which was too bad.

Charnow: Yes, then also, wasn't Adelaide somewhat set off against them because the International Union of Child Welfare saw us in a competitive light?

Barbey: Oh, always problems with them and problems with other groups too. Adelaide and Dick were both very great thorns in the NGO side. They both liked me personally but they didn't like the NGOs. I tell you what, Jack, they didn't want to bother with them -- it was that kind of problem. See, I must tell you in all honesty, what really got me into UNICEF was my heart and not my mind. And I think there is a difference where people go in for their soul and what they can do and on gaining something. I never had any interest in gaining anything within the bureaucracy because I only wanted to gain more (I suppose I was a little prejudiced) for the NGOs.

And as result, I didn't tell you about that - the way the NGOs felt

when I left -- they felt they didn't have a friend in court. Except, you. They really felt you did. And I think they didn't know about Elena because Elena was the next one. But they always knew you did. And you see, Jack, I will always feel, when this Administration (as fond as I am of Mr. Grant) I will always feel that this Administration missed the boat when they didn't allow the NGOs to remain under the Board instead of going in to the Division of Tarzi Vittachi. Because they do have a public information purpose. That's very true. But they have more than that. They are the conscience of the consumer out in the world. They are the conscience of the child that drinks the milk, of the child that is weighed everyday, of the mother who goes to the little clinic. The NGOs, you can say all you want to, have something -- and I'm not just speaking of the Committee. I'm speaking of people who give more than they should so a child can have food. And this I see never really creeps in to UNICEF. Now when Karl Borders was there in some of the early days and in the early days for you, it did. But later on it became as it now is. And it was during the Labouisse administration when it became an absolute bureaucracy. And I saw that, because I often got around the world. Sometimes on my own but often with the help of NGOs and Maurice too, being paid to do this and do that and this was true when I went to the meeting in Alma Ata in Kazachastan, and this is true of a variety of meetings. I attended many many meetings of NGOs; their international meetings, with the help of both UNICEF and the NGOs ~~they would split it up -- so that I had a feeling that many of~~ the staff never felt the way I did.

Charnow: Well, I know that the individual NGO representatives and the NGO Committee on UNICEF, have always felt UNICEF was tops among the UN agencies, and that was because they had such a friend in you. On the other hand, I have often speculated as to the number of the people, the representatives here, who really had very little relationship to their organizations. And I had reservations about the amount of time that was devoted to the Committee itself which seemed to result in a lot of spinning of wheels. It was something I had hoped that we could move away from. Am I correct in this?

Barbey: Up to a point. But the great mistake was, when you left and they gave up that NGO newsletter, that was the most tragic thing that could've happened. It was the best thing that was done in the whole of the UN to make the people understand what the NGO's wanted to do, what they could do, and what they were doing. And when that happened, it became just public information. I saw very clearly that it ended in a way I hadn't anticipated and I still feel that way. I thought it was a grave mistake. This thing that they have in the Geneva office now, is a flop. Nobody reads it. You can say all you want to about new Ideas Forum. I ask all over and no one reads it, wherever I go. I put in the new Arizona chapter for the Society for International Development at Arizona State University. As soon as I got the "New Ideas Pamphlets", gee, I thought, this is a marvelous thing for SID. I'll just see that all of them get to see it. And so I was going to have them stencil it and give it

around to every member... (laughter)... they looked at me rather sadly and said, "Mrs. Barbey, they'll never read it." And they're right, they never would.

Charnow: During your days with the NGOs, who would you pick out among the NGOs, as important personalities and important organizations with which we work?

Barbey: Well, I think the International Union of Child Welfare had a lot to do with it, but mostly when Louise Kaufmann was there. Louise Kaufmann, in my book, was one of the most intelligent women. She was a representative here at Headquarters. She lived in Buffalo, her husband was a faculty member at the University, she came down often. It was more toward the '50s and '60s because originally it was Mary Dingman and then Mr. Thelan. Now, I realize they all had their place, but they made some very expert judgement that UNICEF picked up in a variety of ways. The other groups: I think the YWCA had something to do, I'm trying to think of the organizations. There were a number of them... like the pediatrics Early Childhood Education. Many came later. But in the early days there were about 13 rather important NGOs that made a contribution. Now, I think they do a little spinning of wheels as they had done in the League of Nations. But the spinning was more constructive than the spinning has been recently - and I agree with you. In fact, the other day I had a meeting in Geneva, I was

representing SID in the new IIO building. (Alba Sazamia was the Chairman and the faces were, many of them, the same.) I said to myself "What in heavens' name am I doing here? This is where I came in." Because I didn't feel that there was anything but bickering. I didn't feel that those people had any idea of helping the people get themselves together at the economic level all over the world. "Just spinning wheels!" That's a good expression Jack.

Charnow: Now, talking about the position of the NGOs in UNICEF during your period, while everybody knew where to find you or where you were, nobody could ever find you on an organisation chart. There was a period when there seemed to be a feeling that something more needed to be done for recognition of NGO's and Dave Haxton came in to the picture. Do you want to talk about that?

Barbey: Mr. Pate had said to me, "Now, Grace, I know you're going to get married and I realized that you are going to try to find somebody who will be good in your place and I said yes, I would be delighted. Well about that time I had two or three people in mind in the UN itself and I had been asked at that time, earlier, much earlier as a matter of fact in 1959 I was asked by the Secretary-General, it wasn't anything I did myself but somebody asked if would take the N.G.O. job at the UN, that was the same job that Virginia Saurwein now has and I said how could I ever leave UNICEF. Then somebody said yes, you have very great UNICEF

devotion. I think I even discussed it with Maurice over dinner or something. Anyway I remembered vividly, I said I would get somebody. About that time David Haxton was the head of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, which was an organization, which contributed quite a little bit in a variety ways. UNICEF had been at their national convention, we had speakers, they had done a variety of things and they sold a lot of greeting cards. So poor Dave Haxton needed a new job, it was evident he did and I think he must have called me at least once a week for I can't tell for how long. I really got fed up to the teeth with this boy and finally thought well maybe he would be a good one and I am really gullible about people in spots like that so I said, "Why not?" I'll get him to come and have an interview with Maurice and Dick. So I did and Dick, as a matter of fact, rather took a fancy to him because he was so opposite to Dick. Just as I was, because we were absolutely extroverts and Dick is as far from an extrovert as a snail. Anyway it was very interesting for me to see maybe this boy could bring something. It made no difference to me, but I know he was brought in originally on a lower level, I said no, he would never take it. Later he got the same grade as I did!

I said to Dave when he finally got the job, we must work together until I go and I was to go at the end of 1964 but I was still on the payroll. I had meetings all over through a part of '65. I remember I had to go to Girl Scouts and I had two or three meetings

in Europe. I remember Dave coming along with me and we were trying to work out so that our Division should include the National Committees as well as the NGOs. I never did think that was a good idea because their attitudes about UNICEF were too divergent. Anyway we went through a Board together in Geneva. I felt that he was doing alright but when I left UNICEF, or even before, I thought it wouldn't work out at all. He ran all over the place yelling but he did not accomplish too much. But he had a desire to help and the more he talked (it's like this day and age) the more he confused people. And that is against Dave because he is not that kind of person, he gets people to do odd jobs and he works hard for it, but he also spends a lot of time flogging the air. I felt that I had really chosen wrong and I went to Maurice and said I know that I made a mistake but I don't know how to get out of it. Maybe there is some place for him, I know he is dying to get into the programme Division. I think that Dick thought maybe he might at least be a thorn in the side of other programme people, so it was a good idea. I also knew that Elena Mederas was keen for the job. I had known Elena in Havana and had great respect for her. She was a wonderful person, so I did an outline for her before she came in of what had happened in the NGO Committee, I also told her that there would have been no NGO Committee if it hadn't had such a good base. When anything has that good a foundation, it is bound to go up as a good building or as a good project no matter what. I saw very clearly that in a way the idea of the NGOs section is better

than it has been. That doesn't mean that it hasn't accomplished a great deal, it has and all of them including ten, or fifteen people, made outstanding contributions. One woman who never gives up on UNICEF in meetings all over the world is Esther Hymer and I suppose because she has gone on so since the League of Nations. The same is true of Roz Harris, Alba Zizzania, etc. And I still maintain Louise Kauffmann gave a great deal because she was such a smart person. I still see her often when I go to Europe. She lives in Zurich, we often talk about the early days. Jack I would say in all honesty that if it hadn't been for you, and certainly Maurice and one or two other people I think the NGO section would have been more difficult because all of you understood perfectly the attitude we had about NGOs and not very many people since then have. And certainly Sheila Barry as good as she is does not have it!

Charnow: Now let me ask you about Elena was she your idea. Wasn't she a close friend of Maurice's?

Barbey: She was and Maurice had seen her too but it was a combination because I had gone down there and done a lot with Louise Smith. Louise Smith was a key person down there and I had known Elena through Louise Smith but Maurice also knew her because she had helped Alice in a variety of ways. So Alice Shaffer and Elena both knew Maurice.

Charnow: If you were going to offer some advice or some hope for UNICEF relations with NGOs in the future, what are the main points?

Barbey: Oh, I don't think I need to offer anything with Jim Grant and Jolly and all of those... My dear, the other day when I saw the Rose Bowl Parade and saw dear Danny Kaye - poor boy, he couldn't stand up. But anyway, he was the Grand Marshall. And I said, "I'm sure that this has something to do with UNICEF". I think indirectly it did because I'm sure Mr. Sheffield probably had something to do with it. But it was very well publicized all over the West Coast, all over California, all over Arizona. I even had an amusing experience with Mr. Goldwater who I saw the other day at O'Malley's. I was buying a little buzz saw... he said, "Are you going to use that saw yourself?" And, I said, "Yes, it's an electric saw, I can use it." He said, "Well, you look to me as if you'd be a pretty strong woman to use that saw". And I said, "Aren't you Mr. Goldwater?" He said, "Yes." And I said, "Oh, my dear, you won't like me at all, I'm from the United Nations in New York." "Oh", he said, "on the contrary, I will like you very much cause I'm very fond of Mrs. Fitzpatrick". (laughter) Anybody who calls Mrs. Kirkpatrick, Fitzpatrick, I think doesn't know very much about the U.N. or her. I was so amused. He's really considered a great man in Phoenix, and he was the Grand Marshall the big Fiesta Bowl Parade on New Year's Day '84, out in Phoenix. So they like him very much. But it is true Jack, that whole area -- not

California -- California understands UNICEF very well and we have many heavy contributors. But UNICEF in Phoenix has only come up, I would say, within the last few years because they have had a couple of excellent managers of the little "UNICEF Shop" and they simply made a extra money this year. It's called "UNICEF Two" and they sell things from all over the world and many of them are craft objects that the people do at the local level in Timbuktu and every place else.

Charnow: You had observed UNICEF relations with the US Committee but also other committees. There has been, over the years, something of a problem, I think, because of the Committees wanting their autonomy, and feeling, "Well, we know what we're doing, we know our public, we know our audience", on the one hand, and UNICEF on the hand, saying, "Well, you're using the UNICEF name. People don't really distinguish between the two. We have to watch what you're doing and we have to know where the money is going", and so on... Do you want to comment on this issue?

Barbey: Well, I think it's perfectly legitimate that UNICEF should have some guideline. It's imperative. Otherwise, it could get all out of hand. But it seems to me, in some respects, they have allowed the national committees - and even in some respects, the NGOs - to call more shots than they deserve to call. I say this because in the early days of the US Committee for UNICEF it was still a little different. ~~There were two remarkable women by the name of~~ Katherine Lenroot and Martha Elliott, in the early days, who were

US representatives who had very clear vision. Well, Jack, you would know that because you knew them well. They had a very clear vision of where the US Committee was going. And I'll never forget it as long as I live -- going to the White House when the US Committee was originated by Katherine Lenroot and she asking me if later on I wouldn't consider being the Executive Director of the US Committee. But you see, I saw myself in just Washington, and that wasn't the world. So, I wasn't interested in that at all but I always remained a very good friend of Katherine Lenroot and had such respect for her concept of the US Committee for UNICEF. It was the biggest and best committee in the early days - I think she felt that there should be a U.S. spokesman, but not a part of UNICEF itself. And I think that's where the organization became a little out of kilter - when the U.S. Committee thought of themselves as a direct part of UNICEF. And, I don't think there's anything wrong in that except I do feel that these Committees and the NGOs themselves, have much more to give in the way of understanding about what we were doing than to get something out of us for their own sake. And, in some respects many national committees were after feathering their own nest and not necessarily the children's nest of the world. And I think this is wrong!

Charnow: Is that what you mean by saying that we have allowed them to go too far in this?

~~Barbey: Yes, I think that UNICEF didn't know how to curb them. I think we~~
were intimidated by some of the very great pushers on the part

of National Committees. There isn't anything wrong in that because I suppose they really have made great contributions but you notice that the Scandinavian countries want to do their own programmes and this group wants to do their own programme. It's all a UNICEF programme and UNICEF really is the organ at the international level that deals directly with the problems of children. I feel this is even true of UNICEF itself. UNICEF's reputation now, Jack, is really better than UNICEF itself actually is. Now that sounds strange but I do not think they're doing as much as their reputation says they're doing. I was simply thrilled when Ethel Grant gave me, the other day, the two editorials: one from the Washington Post and one from the New York Times. I hadn't seen them although there were good editorials on the West Coast, I heard too. But, you see, this Oral Rehydration -- I can't tell you how long I've known about that. It's an old fashioned country remedy and why somebody hadn't started it years ago, I'll never understand. And so now, I'm thrilled that they have something like this because I realize they're using the modern methods of communication and that's what we have to do. I realize that but it isn't telling the whole story. And you know, I believe the world is ready for a little more heart and a little more soul and a little more kindness to their neighbor than you'd ever guess from the publicity -- it's all "hoopla."

Charnow: Are you in a sense commenting not only on the state of the world
~~but the differences in style of our three executive directors?~~

Barbey: Oh, completely...

Charnow: Do you want to compare their styles in terms of the periods in which they live?

Barbey: Well, no, I'm not one really to compare because you see, I'm biased in favour of Mr. Pate because Mr. Pate's group, and you were one of them, Jack, -- all of us were people of great heart and some soul. And whenever any problem came up, we all worked like a family together. It never occurred to me that there would be any problem. I had my problems with the Director of Public Information because she was such a phony but that doesn't mean that there aren't things that come up like that all the time. But it never occurred to me that if somebody needed a help, we shouldn't give it. I remember Stanley Sroka coming to me one day and saying, "Listen, Grace, you've got to check on the amount of money you're bringing in because we're getting checks all the time and we don't know where they're from. And I said, "What difference does it make?" "It doesn't make any difference at all", he said, "but NGOs should be credited with that money that comes in from your speeches and things". And I said, "That isn't necessary for the little children. You don't have to categorize things like that". And he said, "You'll never be a bureaucrat". And I said, "No, I never will". Al Katzin was one of the first that saw bureaucracy was not the way to go because he was willing to take great risks. Well,

later on, after Mr. Pate passed away, and with all due respect to Mr. Labouisse -- he was an Ambassador, he was not a director of a big international institution -- it took business acumen. I will always think, really, that Dick did most of the work. This is perhaps wrong to say but you can leave that out if you want. But my feeling is that great bureaucracy and the people not doing what they should, came more in that regime. And now, the present regime is exactly like the world is. It's just full of phony communication. And there isn't anything wrong with it because they're having to deal with the thousands of new children that come everyday all over the world and I realize you have to use this method. But, as a result, Mr. Grant is sort of like a flying carpet. He's every place trying to get people to see. But I must tell you in all honesty, he has for the first time, a missionary zeal. He's sort of like a martyred missionary, in a way. But my feeling is that there are way too many people doing too much of the same thing. At the field level, I feel they must, many of them, be "living the life of Riley." You have to get out and dig in the dirt when you're in the field, and a lot of them don't.

Charnow: To get back to Maurice Pate, I think that there is a feeling of many people who worked with him that even though he was an American and, therefore, could have been suspect in an international organization where Americans were not always looked at with the greatest favour, that Maurice developed an enormous reputation for integrity as an international civil servant.

Barbey: Oh, I agree. Not only do I agree one thousand percent but who could have gone into Hungary but Maurice Pate?

Charnow: Do you know that story?

Barbey: Well, I couldn't tell it very well but I just know that the Hungarians let him in. And, Willy Meyer was with him - and - Willy Meyer didn't expect that they would go through that line to get into Hungary for the little children. And, I know this, Jack, you could go any place in the world really if you have the heart to help little children. I have seen it. I was in Burma when they told me you should never go to the Shan area because they'll kill you. And so, P.K. Gosh was the head of it and I said, "I'm going into the Shan area because there's a very good clinic there and I want to see it. And I went into the Shan area and saw the clinic and I had no problem at all. But the only joke that I want to tell you that's the best I ever heard is, when I asked the nurse how many women came -- and I had gotten there at 6 o'clock in the morning and only four women came -- and she said, "We average sixty". And I said, "What do you mean sixty?" "Well", she said, "you'll see it back on the records". And so, I didn't go on with the conversation very much then but I went back to Rangoon and when I got back I said to the head of that section, "I don't understand, I was there at 6 o'clock and I stayed till almost noon". The man came about 11 o'clock to pick me up to take me on to another place

-- and I said, "there were only four women and there were supposed to have been on the average of sixty women". "Oh," but the lady said at the headquarters of the office in Rangoon, "oh, but we do that purposely because you love big numbers in New York. We always give you big numbers." There weren't "sixty" that came to that clinic. You see it had only been open for less than a year and only about six of ten women came. But she put down 60.

Then Sam Keeny and all the rest of them would get up in the Board meeting and give big numbers and say, "We've done this, we've done that...", and I knew damn well they hadn't done it. I love that nurse, she was marvelous.

Charnow: Well, Grace, I think we've covered an enormous amount of material. Let me ask you, perhaps, a general question which is kind of a catch-all, which you've already in part answered, and may give you a chance to sort of wrap up some of your views. What do you think, are the good things about UNICEF that we must try to nurture, the trends that we must try to encourage, and what are the things that we have to guard ourselves against.

Barbey: Well, I think one of the things we have to do, Jack, is to bring back more and more, into the line of fire of the whole business of children, -- we've got bring back that fact that we are an organization that is there to do everything we can and we have no

right to sit at a desk and twiddle away if we're not thinking of that little child in need somewhere, God-knows-where -- because there are millions of them all over. And we have no right, it seems to me, to carry on in any way that wouldn't match some of the problems that go on every day even now in Beirut, in El Salvador, in Nicaragua, wherever there are problems of little children, not understanding at all why people have to kill each other. I realize, I am primarily an idealist. But, my feeling is I see very little of the humanitarian coming out of any kind of big business or big operation or big agency of the U.N. I see very little of the original idea that was set up, certainly, at the meeting in San Francisco when the U.N. started. And, although I am an idealist, I have a feeling that they make inches in the world where the flamboyant make, perhaps miles, because they have all the facility to do it -- the computers and the advertising and the satellites and all that. And we're now beginning in UNICEF to have that kind of atmosphere. I do not question that if it does (at the local level) what that mother needs and what that child needs. But this is where I feel we have gone down the wrong path, because it looks to me as if the whole world is going down the wrong path compared to what was the origin of the UN. And, I suppose I feel this way about everything that takes place. I realize the individual has to say, "Well I either have a job or don't have a job and, if I don't then I must scrub floors or do whatever I can do". And that was my original Iowa teaching. My father was Polish and my mother was

Swedish and I'm sure that's another reason I got the job. Because Mr. Pate had a "thing" about Poles, as everybody knows. He would hire a Pole at the drop of hat, and he did the same thing in Red Cross. Partly because he lived in Poland, and also, he felt there was a certain something that all of us had in the early days of UNICEF that would carry on. And he was right because he could give us a task and it wouldn't occur to us not to do that task for the sake of task, not for our sake or not for his sake or not even for UNICEF -- it was the task that was important -- and with it we would accomplish what we all were setting out to do. This, I feel, is gone because it's gone from the world and whether it will come back, whether there will be some sort of holocaust that will bring it back, I don't know. But I, as an individual, will never change my original feeling about UNICEF. In all honesty, Jack, I always felt that fate put me in that job -- not Mr. Pate. Because I had a very great feeling when Colonel Holmes and I were in the throgs of adopting two little children, because I hadn't any children at that time, I'd had miscarriages ... and so, I will always feel that instead of those two little boys who were taken away the day he died, I always felt that fate wanted me to have children. Well, this was the way I had them. So, it never occurred to me that whatever I was asked to do or however difficult it was, or whatever hours of night I had to get up to catch a plane or do this or do that, it never occurred to me that I shouldn't do it. That is Fate. The other day I went through a UNICEF office and saw a girl

fixing her nails at her desk and I was in such shock that I said to her, "What are you doing?", and she said, "I'm fixing my nails". And I said, "My dear, I would never have thought of doing such a thing in my time", and went on my way. And the moment I left, a friend of mine who was nearby said the girl looked up and said, "Who in heavens was that?" And I realized then that I was the kind who would never be able to fix my nails at a desk.

Charnow: Well, Grace, maybe that's a good way to end our interview. Thank you very much indeed.