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Helenka Pantaleoni

Interview No. 1
by Richard Polsky
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PREFACE

This memoir is the result of a series of tape-recorded interviews conducted for the Oral History Research Office by Richard Polsky with Helenka Pantaleoni in New York City during April and June 1977.

Helenka Pantaleoni has read the transcript, and has made only minor corrections and emendations. The reader is asked to bear in mind, therefore, that he is reading a transcript of the spoken rather than the written word.

Columbia University Oral History

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

Interview 1
by Richard Polsky
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Q: Mrs. Pantaleoni, maybe we should begin with your first involvement in relief work, which I understand took place at the end of the Second World War? Is that - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. It happened after the First World War, too. That's way back. The Second World War, I offered my services to the Polish Relief Commission.

Q: Where was that?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: That was in downtown New York. The power behind the throne was that of former President Hoover, and the active president, vice-president, was Maurice Pate. That's where I first met him.. He came out of a meeting to greet me, and he was the type of person who said, yes, of course we can use you, thank you for your interest. He put me in an office, saying now do whatever you think ought to be done - without any instructions whatever.

Q: Yes. And what did that work involve?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: The Polish Relief Commission had to tread very carefully because they were negotiating with the Germans, who were then occupying Poland, and if there wasn't a great sensitivity in the approach, the Germans wouldn't let the Commission into Poland to operate. So, in other words, there couldn't be any huzzah, how dreadful the Nazis are, or "the poor victims". The Commission was purely relief, and the fund-raising section, branched off under Mrs. Vernon Kellogg, became the Paderewski Fund for Polish Relief. Under those auspices, we raised money for the Polish Relief Commission.

Q. Was the war over at that time, or was it - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: No, no. It was just beginning. In 1939, the Commission could get into Poland and then we could go all out, but when the Germans came

into Warsaw, all the avenues were clamped down. That's when we had to be very careful, and that's where I first got to know Maurice Pate.

Q: What was Maurice Pate doing at that time?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: He was running the Polish Relief Commission.

Q: He was?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. He and some other Hoover people that he'd known after the First World War, in relief.

Q: Yes. Had that been his main line of work?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: No, he was a businessman. He was a Middlewestern businessman who spent seventeen years in Poland with business. I'll have to leave this blank to fill in the exact business. But he was a man who was never really quite happy unless he was saving humanity by the millions. He went with Hoover into Belgian relief and Polish relief. I believe he was somewhat involved in the years when Hoover was bringing relief in the U.S.S.R. famine, after the Revolution, then again, history repeating itself, he organized this Polish relief under Hoover's tutelage.

Q: Yes. Now, did that Polish relief organization continue all during the war, or did it - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: It went on for a while. No, not all during the war. After a while, the Commission wasn't allowed in at all. So we had to discontinue the fund-raising.

Q: And then you worked with that relief committee as long as they were allowed to do the work?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Well into the war. Yes. Then I went on to the Red Cross.

Q: Until the conclusion of the war?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Until the conclusion of the war.

Q: And Mr. Pate, after the Germans stopped his work, did he drop out of the relief work then, too?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: He went into Prisoners of War for the Red Cross. It was his job to be in touch with the families in trying to find prisoners of war. He stayed on. His office was in Washington. He tried to help find my husband, who was missing. Actually, I think Pate had quarters in the DAR, the Daughters of the American Revolution. There's a kind of irony in that, because they're the ones that raised so much trouble for us later on in UNICEF.

Q: But Mr. Pate - was that a government organization that he worked for?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: No. It was the Red Cross. Semi, I suppose - it's sort of a government -

Q: Yes. Did you work with him on the - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Not the Red Cross, no. In 1945, I was asked by Rose Parsons to organize something called "Women United for the United Nations". That was February, 1946, and I was a sort of charter member of this "Women United for the United Nations", which is a loose assembly of women's organizations: the League of Women Voters, the Jewish women, Catholic women, church women, Business and Professional Women, University Women, and so on. Sixty or seventy of the large women's organizations had accredited observers at the U.N., and it was we, the accredited observers who met, to see how we could interpret the work of the United Nations to our respective constituencies.

Q: I see. So you then would report back to your various women's organizations?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes.

Q: How the United Nations was developing?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Exactly. And what the problems were and what was at stake for the U.S. and the U.S. policy as it affected the U.N., and my organization was the National Council of Women.

Q: And your focus at that time was not specifically on children?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: No. There weren't any children. There wasn't even a gleam in anybody's eye then. There was some talk in the spring of 1946 - I picked it up - about efforts to start an action on behalf of child victims, when UNRRA, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation organization, was expiring, which was a great blow to all of us. I was one of those who thought it ought to continue. It was an admirable concept. But when that was over, there were several persons prominent in public life who recommended that an action be started on behalf of children, who were victims of the Second World War. One of these was Mayor LaGuardia. He was quoted very early as wanting to do that, he having been head of UNRRA. And another one was President Hoover. Maurice Pate, you may have heard, toured Europe right after the Second World War to observe conditions. It was Mr. Hoover who took Pate along and both were deeply struck by the horrible conditions of European children, in Germany, too, but especially in Eastern Europe, and other countries: France, England, everywhere.

And I think it was in a speech in Toronto that Hoover actually publicly stated he hoped that an international organization on behalf of children would be formed.

Q: How did that actually develop? From the Hoover speech and from Mr. Pate's visits to Europe and his reports back?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Partly, but it resulted from efforts from various directions for a successor agency to be established as a successor to UNRRA. Yes. That takes us now to September, 1946, when the United Nations was meeting at Lake Success here. Maurice Pate was coming for supper one night, and I asked him, "Would you like to take in - have you ever been to the U.N.?" He said, no, he'd barely heard anything about it. He said he'd like to very much. So we drove out with the top down to Lake Success, and we went into the Third Committee, which was the Social, Cultural, Humanitarian, Educational Committee, where Eleanor Roosevelt was the United States delegate.

And we sat there for a little while, when all at once, Maurice Pate was fished out by one of the delegates. He said he had something very important to talk to him about. Well, the delegate happened to be Ludwig Rajchman, who was the Polish delegate, a well-known doctor in international public health, who said he had been thinking about Pate and wanting to see him, because he wanted him to organize an action, a fund for the benefit of children, war victims chiefly.

Q: Oh, Pate had gone back to business?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Back to the Midwest, yes. He used to spend a lot of time at his house in Cape Cod, too.

Q: So when Mr. Rajchman, Dr. Rajchman, pulled him out and suggested that to him, he had really not been thinking along these lines?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Absolutely not, except when he discussed it with the man he called the Chief, Mr. Hoover. I think they often touched on it, but not in any practical sense at all. So this was completely out of the blue.

Q: And what happened?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Well, he and Rajchman disappeared for a couple of hours. Afterwards, on the way home, he was thoughtful. I said, "I hoped it had been an interesting interview". Then he just said very simply, very directly, as he always did those things, "I've just been asked to organize a fund for the benefit of children". Of course, I went up into high G. It was the most marvelous thing, because it was like an answer to an unwritten prayer, you know, something where all the people could work together and join in an effort to ameliorate conditions for children. But he said he first wanted to discuss it with the chief, before he gave Rajchman an answer, and I think that day, or the next day, he right away had a talk with him, and Hoover gave his blessing to this effort.

Q: Now, did Hoover have very high prestige - I mean, when Hoover said something?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Oh, yes. Very high. He'd been used, by President Truman to develop plans to reorganize the government, you know. He was on very good terms with President Truman.

Q: And was a respected person?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Very. Not beloved by everybody; he was, of course, controversial but he had been a prominent engineer, and he was highly respected for his war work. He was idolized in Poland, for instance. His eyes would still fill with tears because the Polish children had made such a

tremendous thing over him when he went to visit Poland.

Q: So Hoover said to Mr. Pate - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: He encouraged him to do it. So then Maurice Pate talked to our government, to our people - whether it was Dean Acheson, I don't remember who - but anyway, he went ahead, being given part of an office in Washington. I think it was on Connecticut Avenue.

Q: Mr. Pate did?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. With one part-time secretary, who was also working for another organization. He recruited some of his associates from the Hoover days. Of course, they received some residual funds from UNRRA to get started on. Our Government gave a lot of leadership in those days, and has been involved all the way through. They put in the original millions to get this thing going.

Q: How did they decide exactly what they wanted to - what the dimensions of the - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Well, the dimensions were very elastic. It was just as simple as the Magna Carta; the U.N. resolved to establish an organization for the benefit of children, or something as simple as that, so you could do almost anything under that banner.

Q: And was it to be an international organization?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Absolutely.

Q: From the very beginning?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. As usual, the developed countries were skeptical. One of the Canadian delegates just told me the other day, she remembered Rajchman pushing their Delegation to the wall to get going. The developed countries took the line that the war was over, the war-torn countries would gradually get back on their own feet and that there was no emergency anymore. The United Kingdom was reluctant, the U.S. and Canada, France was much more enthusiastic from the beginning. They had a much larger point of view about

this whole concept.

Q: Could you elaborate a little bit on the sort of the spirit of the times, when the children's relief organization tried to get going? You said that there was a good deal of skepticism?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Terrible. There was a huge enthusiasm the moment the war was over to do something for the victims. People felt very frustrated because they couldn't reach these children, do something about them. But when steps were taken to organize the Children's Fund, the various private organizations, national organizations, started piling down to Washington. They wanted, from the beginning, to let the public in on the Children's Fund. In other words, to have it not only a governmental venture, but to go to the people, too, for funds. The U.N. established something called UNAC, United Nations Appeal for Children, but the situation became very confused. The hundreds of organizations in this country, the church ones for example, collecting for their beneficiaries, and other civic organizations for theirs; and these felt threatened. They were afraid that the Appeal would cut across their efforts and spoil their own fund-raising.

So they'd gone down to the State Department to see - I think it was Charles Taft, a brother of Robert Taft, Senator Taft - who was the one then charged with co-ordinating all voluntary fund-raising, and he had to deal with all these organizations. And so, eventually, after months and months, they arrived at a formula where they could raise money: their own organizations would retain some and the United Nations Children's Fund, then called ICEF, would get some. The campaign was not a success in this country. It was conducted under the aegis of "AOA-UNAC" (American Overseas Aid - United Nations Appeal for Children).

They engaged a very high-priced fund-raising firm. There were two firms involved. The first one failed and the American UNAC Committee fired them all and took another bunch. I think it took something like two million dollars to raise half a million dollars for UNICEF. World-wide, it was better, I believe. UNAC raised seven or eight or nine million dollars world-wide. In Australia, they raised quite a bit. Committees were set up in support of their own local charities and also for UNICEF.

Q: What year was this? Do you remember?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: I think it was 1947, I believe. 1947, 1948.

Q: Now, when UNICEF, or the predecessor, got started, it was - did it have any basis in American law, that America was formally, legally committed to UNICEF?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: No, because these are voluntary contributions. In the U.N., as you know, the governments are assessed for their dues, but UNICEF is purely voluntary. In the U.S., the contribution depends on the whim of the State Department and the Congress.

Q: And it's always been that way?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes, for years, always that. In the U.N., the same holds true for all the extra-budgetary bodies like the Refugee Organization, the Development Programme, and so on.

Q: Yes. So, was there any other than these private organizations that were trying to raise funds for their own particular constituency; was there any resistance from, let's say, isolationist groups, at the very beginning?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Not at the very beginning, because I don't think they took it very seriously. The trouble began when the government began giving larger sums. Then the isolationists and the crackpots, the rabid ones, started attacking UNICEF. We - when I say we, I mean the United States Committee for UNICEF, the private organization - were the ones who suffered, much more even than UNICEF later on, when we got established and started raising money.

Q: But the first year that UNICEF got started - there was one year at the beginning in which the United States Committee didn't exist. Is that - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: No, we - we were founded December 23, 1947, and it was a very different organization then. It was set up under the State Department - sort of a quasi-official relationship with the State Department. It was semi-autonomous, but under the control really of the State Department. And Mary Lord, Mrs. Oswald B. Lord, was the first chairman: a dynamic woman, with many connections, especially among Republicans.

Q: Chairman of the United States Committee?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Of the United States Committee. Maurice Pate and I discussed it from the beginning. He had approached prominent persons, like Catherine Nimitz (the wife of Admiral Chester Nimitz) and Charles Taft, to take the chairmanship of this committee, but they couldn't or wouldn't.

Q: When UNICEF got started first, it was - Maurice Pate was - what was - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Executive Director.

Q: Of UNICEF?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. Of the ICEF then, yes.

Q: Of the Children's Emergency Fund?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: The International Children's Emergency Fund.

Q: And that was the predecessor, the precursor, to UNICEF?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: It's the same thing, yes. Because it was part of the U.N., they started talking about U-N-I-C-E-F, and finally UNICEF, and the acronym stuck.

Q: Yes. So there was a point when it formally became a part of the United Nations?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: By the Resolution on December 11, 1946, it became an integral part of the U.N., but a semi-autonomous body.

Q: And that's when it became UNICEF?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: It still was ICEF - nobody seems to know when exactly it became UNICEF. It was just out of habit that we started talking about UN and ICEF, UNICEF. But the formal relationship dates to December 11, 1946.

Q: I see. Now, did this change things at all when it formally became a part of the United Nations?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: No. Same objective - absolutely.

Q: Could you just tell a little bit about how Maurice Pate was selected as the first head?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Well, I think by Rajchman. He was a very forceful personality, this Polish doctor.

Q: Now, this is who we're speaking of?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Ludwig Rajchman, yes. Very forceful. He was a persona non grata in Washington, because they questioned his political affiliations. Nobody quite knows what his political affiliations were. He worked with all governments. At one time, he was part of the China Lobby in Washington, and he worked in China for a while for World Health, before he took on this assignment. His forcefulness and his perseverance really got UNICEF going. There's no question about that.

Q: Well, when he got it going within the United Nations, how then did he decide that Maurice Pate was the one to be the first head?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: He talked to Maurice that September, 1946, before they did anything in organizing it. He was talking to governments meanwhile, and then he told them that Maurice Pate was his choice and everybody went along with him.

Q: In those days, that's the way you could do things?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes.

Q: You couldn't do that today?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Oh, heavens, no.

Q: But at that time -

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. It was new and small and nobody really cared enough, you know, to block it.

Q: I see. So that was a fortunate choice then?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. Very. Extraordinarily - Maurice was a saintly man, as Dag Hammarskjold used to call him, a saint, but a practical saint.

Q: Now, did you then go to work for Maurice Pate?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: The moment that Maurice talked about this on the way back from Lake Success, I said, this is for me, and I told him that I wanted to devote all my time, whatever there was to do, on this, and I so informed the Women United for the United Nations, who had asked me to take the chairmanship of some committee. I answered I couldn't because this thing for children was in process of formation. I think this was at an October/November meeting of Women United, and I said that I was going to work on this and be the liaison between Women United and UNICEF, as soon as there was anything to do, which was very soon, because we had to talk to the government about a contribution.

Q: So Women United then was one of the - were you the main group in the United States that was urging - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: There was this association of organizations, and yes, we had no choice but to work through these organizations to make our voice heard in Washington.

Q: Now, who else were the prominent groups in the United States at the beginning, who were plugging for an active role?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Well, the most prominent, which is still true now, is the Methodist Church, curiously enough. Most of the organizations were supportive, some to a greater degree than others. Some, of course, can't, because they have to go to their boards to get an endorsement. Like the League of Women Voters, for instance. I think of those days as "finger-in-the-dike" operation. In several instances, the contribution might not have gone through if these organizations hadn't gotten in touch with their membership in the local states, at the local level, and if their members hadn't gotten right away in touch with their chosen representatives in Washington. So they were highly important in keeping UNICEF alive even.

Q: Well, at the very beginning, UNICEF was what, a three-year - was there a three-year plan, to have it run for three years?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Well, it was undetermined. Maurice Pate, who used to go to our government with a request for funds, four years after it was organized, he told his Senator friends, as I recall, "this is the last time". It was either 1949 or 1950. He said, "this is the last time I'll come to you, because the emergency is over, these countries are getting back on their feet". They said, Mr. Pate assured us this was the last time he was going to ask for funds. Why do you still come back to us? But Maurice, with his large horizons, changed his view. He saw that it was extremely important to keep UNICEF going.

Q: At the early - in the beginning, when UNICEF actually became part of the United Nations, what sort of - actually, what did they do, when they got some allocations from the various governments?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: They had an Executive Board right away. The governments met and allocated the money. There are steps. Requests for aid must first come from governments. The Administration makes a recommendation, how the money should be spent and where. The the request goes to the programme committee of the Executive Board of UNICEF. Finally, the Executive Board votes the money. And almost invariably the Board, after some discussion, approves the Administration's recommendations.

Q: I see. Now, in making up the Board at UNICEF, every country that contributes money has a representative?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: No, the thirty member - there are thirty governments on the Executive Board, who are voted in by the Economic and Social Council of the U.N., for three-year terms. I can't remember when that three-year term was established, but after three years, they can either be re-elected or some replaced by the government from the same region: Australia and New Zealand, Middle East, Africa, Asia, the Americas and the developed countries in Europe.

Q: And then they sort of pass on -- ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: The board of thirty passes on the programme and on the allocations of the funds.

Q: Now, right after the war, when the money first started coming in, how was it decided which money went where?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Well, in consultation with the governments. I think one of the very first countries to receive assistance was Poland, which interests me, because it's my background. Also other European countries, which were terribly hard hit by the war. German children received assistance - in those days, the Fund went in for clothes - shoes, for instance. I think the materials were sent over and the Germans themselves made up the shoes, something like that. Masses of milk was sent over. Rivers of milk flowing. The United States government would send dried powdered milk, which was mixed by the recipients.

Q: Did you used to go to Europe at that time?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Not at that time, no. As a matter of fact, I didn't see my first UNICEF-aided project for ten years. I learned it all from my colleagues and from reading documents.

Q: But was it your understanding that that aid really made it - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Absolutely. Because there were plenty of witnesses for our Government. The U.S. member of the Programme Committee used to travel and check on the distribution of the aid, and the quality of the personnel. To go back to that United Nations appeal for children, when they went to the public for funds, the head of UNAC internationally was Chester Bowles, who was a close friend of mine. His wife's a member of our Committee. And he and his wife traveled that summer - 1947 or 1948 - over Eastern Europe, and so talked to all the governments and followed the distribution of the aid. So we had plenty of witnesses that the aid was going where it was intended to go, and that there were safeguards.

Q: And it was being done fairly effectively?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Exactly. Extremely effectively. In one country, I believe, way back in the beginning, Albania wouldn't let in a non-national to supervise the distribution of the aid, and I believe the aid was cut off after a while. There are very precise agreements to which countries must adhere.

Q: How were children defined then? Was it a certain age?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: The U.N. considers a child to be anybody under fifteen.

Q: And then, at the very beginning, the aid would be determined both by the Administration of UNICEF and by the representatives in the country, as to what they felt - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: The governments of the requesting countries were supposed to put in their request for aid always. This is a cardinal necessity before any aid is approved. The request comes from a certain country, and it is passed on first by the administration, then by the Executive Board of UNICEF.

Q: And has it always been that way from the beginning?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes.

Q: So that the needs might vary considerably from one - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: They do. With limited resources, of course, the Executive Board's duty is to spread the aid fairly and where it's most needed, according to its judgement.

Q: Yes. Right. Is it your feeling that from the very beginning, this is one of the -- would you say that this is one of the examples of things being done in a fairly honest way, the distribution?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Absolutely. Of course, as in every human endeavor there are small exceptions and faults, but one cannot question UNICEF's integrity in distributing the aid, and they're the first ones to jump into any situation where there's any abuse. For instance, if they hear that milk is being sold in the black market somewhere, they right away inspect and rectify. I'd say, on the whole, their record is remarkable.

Q: Okay. Well, let's talk a little more about the very beginning. So Maurice Pate was selected to head UNICEF? And what were his responsibilities?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: To administer the aid, to make the recommendations in the

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name of the administration. He'd send his trusted staff members into the different countries that wanted aid, he'd receive their reports, and the Administration would draw up recommendations.

Q: He was not out trying to get money from countries?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Indeed, he was.

Q: That was one of his - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Oh, yes. A major part of his responsibilities and his successors', too. Contributions being voluntary, you have to go and talk to governments all the time. It's just as important really as the administering of the aid. He has a Programme Division, a Supply Division, Finance, and so on - and he has the overall supervision - both of fund-raising and of everything to do with UNICEF.

Q: Could you talk a little bit about the attitude towards our country? Now, I know our country is one of the major contributors to UNICEF, but not on a per capita basis.

Mrs. Pantaleoni: No, that's right. In the beginning, it gave quite a big chunk. I think about seventy-five million dollars was the first one, although I remember Chester Bowles getting up at one of those preliminary meetings and asking for four hundred million dollars. He thought in those terms of magnitude. But our country - well, there is enormous competition for the philanthropic dollar and then there were elements in the Department of State, which frankly didn't want UNICEF to continue, who were opposed to it.

Q: What were the reasons for that?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Well, they felt the emergency in Europe was over, that those countries should get back on their own feet, that UNRRA was folding up, that there was no - they didn't see any reason to start another fund. In fact, there is one name that stands out in my memory, and that's Dallas Dort. I think I met him only once, but he was very - hostile is too strong a word, but he wanted the fund to close up right after - early in its history. And we always found the State Department more difficult to deal with in talking

about UNICEF then the Congress itself. Congress itself seems to respond more to the human angle, less technically. But there were a great many elements in the State Department who couldn't understand why the World Health Organization didn't take over UNICEF's functions. As to the World Health Organization itself - I remember there were people who said that they would very much have like to have WHO absorb all of UNICEF. UNICEF, we believed and continue to believe, should be a separate entity, apart from other inter-governmental organizations. We fought very hard to have UNICEF exist by itself, not be absorbed. And in those days, it was touch and go, whether it would continue at all.

Q: Because of the resistance from the government?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. Our government, the United Kingdom, several others.

Q: They felt the same way that the -- ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. Yes. After three or four years, they thought the emergency was over, and it was all right for UNICEF to continue as a sort of technical agency, giving advice, but not raising funds on a large scale, to furnish supplies to countries. It is my opinion that they misread the developing countries, their terrific hunger for something material, some practical benefits which they couldn't themselves offer their populations. In fact, during that crucial time, around 1950, I remember there was a resolution introduced, which the Administration helped other countries draw up - Maurice Pate's Administration - placing supplies in the Numero Uno spot followed by the offer of technical assistance, and so on. The State Department changed the order, so that the Resolution started out with technical advice. Then supplies came later on, late in the resolution. I remember Maurice Pate showing me that resolution, saying, "See what our country's doing? They just don't get the point at all".

And it was at that time - this will interest you - the Vice-Chairman of the Third Committee, the Social-Humanitarian Committee, was a Pakistani named Ahmed Bokhari. He was a passionate supporter of UNICEF world-wide. He wanted the Fund to continue and to come to the aid of children, especially children in Asia, and it was then, even though he was Acting Chairman of the Third Committee, that he said he was stepping down from his role as chairman because he wanted to speak as the Pakistani delegate. He waited until Mrs. Roosevelt

spoke to this Resolution I just mentioned: Mrs. Roosevelt's intervention proposed the dissolution of UNICEF as it was and reorienting it into a more technical body.

Without taking any notes, Bokhari took that speech and point by point - there were eight or nine points she made - he tore it to pieces, starting out saying, "I hate to differ with my most respected and admired colleague, Mrs. Roosevelt, but I feel as though I were at the funeral service of UNICEF." There was a great silence in the hall, Mrs. Roosevelt blanched, the blood ran out of her face. I think Ahmed's action was as great a factor in establishing the continuation of UNICEF as that of any single person, because immediately, when he finished this eloquent talk, brilliantly delivered - putting U.S. on the mat - all the other Asian countries and all the other developing countries started talking, each one of them in essence saying, "Well, you talk about the children's emergency being over. The European emergency may be over, but our children are in a continual state of emergency". This is what happened that famous day at Lake Success. Interesting.

Q: So the U.N. was still at Lake Success, was it?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes.

Q: How has our Government traditionally seen support for UNICEF? Have they seen it as an arm of our foreign policy?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes, they have. There was a mixture of motives, because they were of course humanitarian about wanting it to continue. But also, there was some pride of co-authorship. I remember talking to some of our Government representatives and telling them that the United States Government received an undue amount of credit for UNICEF. I remember in some Asian countries, the natives would say to me, "Oh, you're just being modest when you say other countries support UNICEF. We know it's the United States that does everything". And I'd have to assure them, no, that there are close to a hundred other governments that are contributing. But of course, when we sent the dried skimmed milk, there were big letters all over those drums saying "Gift of the United States People", so that this did make propaganda for the United States. And it's all right, I suppose, except it gave a little bit unbalanced picture of the situation.

Q: Well, at the beginning, was there a fair amount of cooperation between the various contributing governments, or had competition started?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: It varied, varied very much. The developed countries were a bit bored by the whole thing. Few of them seemed to realize the full potential of this organization. As I said, an exception was France. France had very statesmanlike delegates. One was Professor Debré, a well-known French pediatrician, an old man, an eminent and eloquent spokesman, followed by Professor Mande, who also participated most eloquently. These exerted a good deal of leadership in UNICEF and influenced other delegations.

If I may, I would like to go on about France. In 1951, I was taken over on a professional basis as consultant, because Maurice Pate, I think, was then very troubled about the way things were going. He was afraid UNICEF would be entirely buried, and he thought I could perhaps be helpful with some of the governments. The General Assembly was then meeting in Paris, so he took me over as a consultant. And I remember at the opening gun, the main speech made by the President of France - it was Auriol, at that time - he spoke thrillingly. He said, "After all, there are wars", - all this in French of course - "wars against men. But there are other wars - the war against the plague. There's a war against hunger. There's a war in favor of childhood." He practically spelled out UNICEF then in that speech. It's the first time I ever heard a Chief of State base his whole speech at the United Nations, delivered at the first plenary session of the Assembly, on this kind of approach. It fired those of us who had awaited such a message.

Q: So he was for keeping UNICEF separate?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Well, it was only the opening paragraph, so he couldn't refine it that much, but he obliquely stressed the importance of the existing programme for children.

Q: Yes. Yes. Well, which - let's see, now, who was - I guess President Truman was the President of the United States at the beginning?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes.

Q: Did decisions about American involvement in UNICEF, did it reach that level?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: No. To tell you the truth, we're really too small to receive much consideration. If you were talking about hundreds of millions of dollars, that would be different. I had an example of that, because I remember -- I don't like to use names too much -- but I saw a very prominent member of the Executive Branch - Nelson Rockefeller, who was a right-hand man of the then-President Eisenhower. He told me he'd be delighted to go to the President with a request and how much money did I want? I said Maruice Pate has suggested fifteen million dollars. He smiled, said, "I don't think I can interest the President in that size sum".

Q: It's too small, you mean?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. Interesting? Well, many of us think it should indeed be much larger, when you consider all suffering childhood all over the world, it's chickenfeed.

Q: Right. Well, then, okay, so - I'm trying to get a picture both of the American, the factors in America that determined what we did, and also - and you've explained a little bit - that it had something to do, some people were interested in finding out what it could do to enhance our national power?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Oh, sure. They were quite frank about it, and I think reacted to threats to our priority. I'm not very proud of threatening people but you use various angles to attain your objective. For instance, one year when there was danger of the government contribution being skipped, the Congress was apathetic about it, I remember going to some of the Congressmen - in those days, we used to see them, we weren't afraid of losing our tax exempt status - and I reported what had been published, that Soviet Russia was calling "the first conference for the benefit of childhood". It was called something like that. The article stated that the USSR had invited sixty governments, all of whom came, and it really looked as if they wanted to start another UNICEF.

I took that clipping. I remember going to - I can't remember who it was, Senator Wiley, some people like that in Washington - who sort of scratched their heads and said, oh my goodness. We were going to miss the boat. They promised to support a contribution.

It's not a very admirable angle to report on, but there it is. It's the way things happen, unfortunately.

Q: You mean that they weren't really too concerned with the fact that the Russians - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Not terribly concerned? Oh, yes, they were. This is when they started to bestir themselves to get that contribution through. Some of them got very worried, and I think changed from indifference about it to actively wanting to vote on the contribution from the United States. I remember that incident very clearly.

Q: Now, within UNICEF itself, the motives, you said, were mixed. There was a humanitarian motive.

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Well, in UNICEF itself, it was purely humanitarian.

Q: There's no nationalism involved?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Absolutely not. For example, UNICEF helped Cuban children, when relations between the U.S. government and Cuba were bad. There's only one criterion, and that's need, and the recipients have to guarantee that the aid would be supervised. If they don't allow this, there's no deal.

Q: Well, does the United States government then, does not put any restrictions on where its contribution can go?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes, it does. It did with Cuba. But they were overruled.

Q: Who overruled them?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: The other governments. They voted for aid to go to Cuba during the difficult times. And UNICEF did make an exception in setting up this special fund, "noting" resources for Cuba, to which the United States need not contribute, you see what I mean? In other words, used money from the other governments.

Q: You mean the American money could not be used?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Could not be used. That was a Congressional taboo.

Q: Well, now, that's very clear political -

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Sure. Sure. You bet. There were other instances.

Q: The same thing was clearly spelled out by our government?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. Viet Nam was another prominent case. Same thing. The Netherlands and some other countries contributed to a special fund which was administered by the International Red Cross. None of the U.S. Government contribution and none of the UNICEF pennies raised by Halloween children was use by UNICEF for Vietnamese children, during the hostilities. That was certainly political.

Q: So our Government is very aware, has always been, of the implications?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Sure. Sure. But they get pressures. The citizens and Congressmen breathe down their necks. They're very subject to pressures. And there are lots of pressures, you know. Lots of pressure groups become very active, and our Government's role isn't easy.

Q: How about - let's come forward a bit. How about today, or comparing the beginning of the Children's Emergency Fund to UNICEF today? Would you say that there's a growing awareness in this country about the needs of children around the world?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Not nearly enough. That's why this leads me into our U.S. Committee for UNICEF. The Committee originally, was started by Katherine Lenroot, Chief of the Children's Bureau in Washington. She felt the need for support for the U.S. Government position on UNICEF and to get the appropriation through Congress. Being a democracy, the United States, she believed, should have a group of concerned citizens express its approval, and that's how the U.S. Committee began.

It was helpful to her, but our hands were pretty well tied because having sort of a quasi-relationship to the State Department, we could't go out and raise money, for instance. That's why I think I was instrumental chiefly in getting it out of the State Department in 1952, when it was dormant, because at that time the condition of the United States contribution was so tenuous that we had to put all our energies into talking to the government. Therefore, the United States Committee, which was originally set up in 1947 to support Miss Lenroot's efforts and to interpret UNICEF to the public, was put

in mothballs, and we put all our energy into starting a lobbying group called the Citizens Committee for UNICEF, engaging as the Executive Secretary a very nice Quaker lady, Peg Stone. In those days, it was just touch and go whether UNICEF would continue at all. We used to telegraph people all over the country to have them express support for UNICEF to their Congressmen.

Q: This was in 1952?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: This was in 1951 and 1952 -- yes, 1952. Then by 1953, things were enough solidified that we could dust off the U.S. Committee again. This was when Mary Lord (Mrs. Oswald B. Lord), my predecessor, had moved over to the Human Rights Commission. She was appointed by Eisenhower to be on the Human Rights Commission and the Third Committee of the U.N., and they asked me to take over the U.S. Committee. Through Maurice, to whom I expressed the wish to find a "big name" person, we tried to get David Rockefeller and a couple of other people - Jack McCloy - people like that.

(Pause in tape)

Q: Mr. John McCloy was one of the other?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: I went over to see him in his office, yes. I asked him to take over this Committee. He was thoughtful, he said it was an interesting idea, but he said he'd let me know if he could, and he never did let me know. David Rockefeller was asked on the telephone by Maurice Pate, and David said no, he couldn't do it, he was too busy. So I took it on an interim basis, and here I still am.

Q: Yes. In 1952, when you said things got so tough, was that because of the isolationist tendencies in the Federal Government or - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. Their lack of real interest. I think their inability to see the grandeur of this concept. They just didn't think. And the Congress, too, where there were people who were completely hostile to it. There was one - I think his name was John Bell Williams, Congressman Williams from Mississippi. He pulled a fast one. The Citizens Committee, this lobbying group I described to you, with Peg Stone, and Kathy Van Slyck, who was the Chairman of the Citizens Committee, were all set for hearings of the Citizens Committee, in order to testify for UNICEF, but Williams called a

meeting at one a.m., when everybody was asleep, so that the Citizens Committee wasn't represented, and he really went to it, cutting out the UNICEF contribution completely. This is the way things happen. And it took an awful lot of fancy foot-work to rectify the situation, the U.S. made it up eventually, they did pay it back, but it took a lot of doing and pulling and filling and -- you can see that there were very hazardous times.

Q: Could we talk a little bit about both - well, let's talk a little bit about the development and the evolution of UNICEF from the very beginning. Is it quite changed today in its - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Much more sophisticated. It was really pretty much of just a food and medical supply agency in the beginning, on the old Hoover model. But now, of course, little by little over the years - the Fund is catering to the needs of the whole child. It is interested in nutrition and in helping countries develop their own nutrition programmes, applied nutrition, in health services, setting up maternal and child health centers all over the developing world - thousands and thousands of them; the training of midwives, training auxiliary personnel. Training is getting a lot more attention than it did in the very beginning.

And then UNICEF went gradually into education and into social welfare and into pre-vocational training for young people. I think the Executive Board very wisely decided that it was scarcely helpful to save a child from starvation if he wasn't going to be able to take care of himself later in life. So gradually the whole child became the focus of attention.

That took a great deal of doing, including in our country. The U.S. was skeptical. The United Kingdom was death on education. They didn't think that UNICEF should have any part of it, that UNESCO was set up to do that kind of thing. Same way they said the World Health Organization was there to take care of the health programmes. But UNICEF's relationship with those specialized agencies is good because they provide technical training and technical personnel in advisory capacity to UNICEF. And UNICEF furnishes supplies and pays stipends for training.

Q: What was the argument in favor of branching out into education? That was part of the - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: It was through the eloquence of some of the people on the

Executive Board. Maurice Pate played a strong part. He was not an eloquent speaker in the accepted sense, but he had sort of his own verbal short hand which was very interesting. For instance, he came back in the fifties from a trip to Africa, and I remember his saying to me, "Helenka, I saw those children sitting there getting cups of milk, but they couldn't read, they couldn't write. What they needed in their hands was pencils. I think I'll go to the Executive Board and ask for pencils."

Well, some of the sophisticated colleagues of his used to kind of smile in a patronizing way, but they didn't see that this man was really seeing education as an essential tool for children - he didn't articulate it that way, he didn't go in for bureaucratese, the usual sort of lingo, you know, that's used by technical agencies. But in the important sense, he was progressive - he backed every progressive move, whether it was nutrition or health or education in UNICEF, all the way up, even though he primarily was a food man. He was experienced in mass feeding people and children, but he had the horizons to see the necessity of ministering to the whole child.

Q: Do variations in social structure - do they play any kind of inhibiting factor in the kinds of programmes that might be introduced into a particular country or, you know, the way the society is structured?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: In those countries, you mean?

Q: In the countries - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. There's a tremendous amount of preliminary work that goes on. Very often, I think, UNICEF has to spearhead the request for aid, Those countries are just not aware that it's there, or they haven't got time to speculate. You know, they're poor as anything, and after all, their children are pretty low down on the "social" echelon - often soldiers, men, women take precedence. So it very often takes a very skillful, tactful approach on the part of international personnel to talk to, say, the Minister of Health in those countries, and say, "look here, have you assessed what the needs of your children are? If you could tell us what you want, perhaps we could furnish it. Then you could match the aid by contributing your domestic personnel, on the matching principle." You know the aid is very over-matched. That's the way it's done.

Q: So some of these countries are at such a -

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Elementary.

Q: Elementary level, that they really may not even know that help is available to them?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Oh, heavens, yes. They have too many problems, too few resources. I don't think anybody until they've been there can take in the very rugged conditions in which they live. We take so much for granted, you know, here, that just doesn't exist. The populations hardly knew the U.N. existed, let alone UNICEF. Now UNICEF is getting better known, than the U.N. itself.

Q: Now, there are certain countries, such as the United States, in which the poorest segment of the population is at a much higher level than in the undeveloped countries.

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes, although I think it's a close draw in some parts of the United States.

Q: No UNICEF projects take place in this country?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: No, because a government has to ask for aid before aid is considered, and in a country like ours, which is so rich, it would be really laughable. In small ways, the U.S. has profited by various discoveries, for instance, by the B.C.G., the Bacillus Calmette-Guerin, the tuberculin test, I understand that in Buffalo, I think, some nurses were testing it out to see how it worked in this country, so indirectly they benefited from UNICEF aid. And there is a tremendous lesson to be learned by all of us, traveling in the developing world and seeing the close family relationships. We have an awful lot to learn, and I think we can't afford to be patronizing, because they can teach us almost as much about bringing up children properly as we can teach them in the material and technical sense.

Q: Well, has one of the big problems for the -- let's talk a little bit about the United States Committee for UNICEF. You had to put it in mothballs for a little while there, when there was a danger that America's commitment might be withdrawn?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes, the contribution, yes.

Q: Then, when that was reinstated, the United States Committee was able to go about its primary responsibility, and you said that primary responsibility was to -

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Educate, really.

Q: Americans?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. Americans. At that time, I think one could say that - let me tell you how I arrived at a feeling of the importance of the U.S. Committee. I remember, after that Paris Assembly, Maurice Pate asked me if I'd like to stay on as consultant, or did I want to go back to the U.S. Committee, and I thought about it hard and arrived at what seemed to me a very simple formula. UNICEF was very dependent on the United States government contribution. The United States government contribution in a democracy was very dependent on the response of the people. If the people don't respond, the Congress won't respond. If the contribution was in danger, then there would be no UNICEF. It was as simple as that. So I thought it was extremely important to build a solid situation for UNICEF in the United States among our citizens, and that's when I decided to go ahead full speed with the U.S. Committee and develop that. We started with, as I think Lloyd told you, with just three volunteers, right over here in the U.N. Building, and little by little, in 1953, when we came out of mothballs, we started taking on activities. For example, the UNICEF Public Information Department gave us the Halloween project, which they'd been handling for a couple of years. But it wasn't a thing that UNICEF was equipped to undertake.

Q: Now, who started that Halloween project?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: The Halloween project? We had contributions ever since 1948 coming in from collections at various places, but actually, the man we call the father of the project is the Reverend Clyde Allison, former pastor of a church near Philadelphia.

Q: He came up with the idea?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: He came up with it. In 1948, 1949, his church had been raising funds through Halloween collections for various charities in European countries that had suffered from the war. Back in 1950, his wife was walking

the Philadelphia streets when she saw a cow walking along Broadway in Philadelphia! She was so intrigued with what that cow was doing in a big city that she followed it right over to Wanamaker's store, and there she saw that Gertrude Ely, who was one of the founders of the U.S. Committee, had arranged a booth with UNICEF posters and was saying what a wonderful thing UNICEF was, and here was Elsie, the Cow collecting for UNICEF, for milk for children.

Well, Mrs. Allison was so fascinated by that, she reported it to her Reverend husband that night, and they talked it over and they said why shouldn't we, through our Sunday School, collect for this UNICEF? Well, he just flew with the idea. He was inspired by it, and he did a remarkable job having his Sunday school classes collect, then writing an article which was published in various church magazines. We record this as the official start of the Trick or Treat.

Q: Of the Halloween - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Of the Halloween, yes. A dynamic member of UNICEF, of Maurice Pate's staff, was a lady named Betty Jacob. She was full of pep. She was a Quaker, but a very, very animated Quaker, and she latched on to this idea and wanted Maurice Pate to give UNICEF funds so that this article of Reverend Clyde Allison's could be published around. Well, he couldn't see his way to get any money out of the Administration of UNICEF, so he did what he often did. He put his hand in his own pocket and gave her the money, which she passed on to Clyde Allison to publish this article. So she was very instrumental in advancing the project.

Also, a lady named Helen Matushek, who was on the UNICEF staff, was handling it in the beginning. She believed in it, she was very dynamic and added it to her information duties.

And another one enjoyed a - let me fill in the blanks - Joyce -

Q: All right. Sure. So then the Halloween collecting for UNICEF at Halloween gradually grew through the years?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. But Clyde Allison - really, we give him the full credit. There was a myth that grew up, which I helped spread unfortunately, that it was a Sunday School class in Philadelphia, in Bridesburg, Pennsylvania, that brought the first collection. They didn't. It was that

magazine article that spearheaded the whole thing. That was in 1951, when I was in Paris, so I wasn't very close to the thing, how the misunderstanding originated, I forget, somebody told me that it was the Sunday School class that should get the credit for it, and we spread it all over the country, and Reverend Allison modestly hung back. After twenty years, he wrote and said, after all, it was he and his wife, assisted by three of Maurice's staff, who got it going.

Q: Well, then this became a project of the United States Committee?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: The Public Information Division gave it to us: Jean Poletti, one of the three of us that was working then, one of the unpaid workers of the U.S. Committee. I remember her sitting in the U.N. Building, typing away. She and the typewriter were always being pushed into some other corner. She would even answer the letters by hand and we were awfully casual in those days. Anybody who wanted to collect, we'd let them collect, without looking into their credentials. As you know, too, we were already helping distribute the greeting cards.

Q: Now, the greeting cards, that came out of UNICEF?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Do you want to hear the start of that? That began in about 1949. A lady named Nora Edmunds, who was with HOUSE & GARDEN, brought the idea to Maurice Pate. She thought it would be nice to have a card for the benefit of UNICEF, done by a well-known artist. He took the idea to Gilbert Redfern, who was the first director of public information of UNICEF. Gilbert Redfern took it to Mary Lord, the Chairman then of the U.S. Committee. She didn't have the staff to handle it, so then Gil Redfern took it to Kay Bryan, who was running an Information Centre for the United Nations. We, Women United for the United Nations, were in charge of this Information Centre, disseminating information about the United Nations, and I remember then I came into the picture. I thought it was a wonderful idea, so we organized a lunch at Mrs. Thomas Lamont's house. Mrs. Lamont, Mrs. Lloyd Garrison, Mrs. Oscar Reubhausen, and myself. Zelia Reubhausen represented the League of Women Voters. She was a woman of great intelligence and a very practical approach. She believed so much in this project that she accepted my offer to launch it that summer using the addressograph facilities of the various women's

organizations and spreading this project about the greeting cards, getting orders. That was really the beginning.

Q: So it began in this country?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: It began in the U.N. In this country, yes. The original card was sold just among the UNICEF personnel. That was the one made by Dzitka, a seven year old girl from Czechoslovakia, who designed it out of gratitude to UNICEF for saving children's lives.

Q: In other words, originally it was just within the United Nations building?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Within the United Nations building, then using volunteers and using the facilities of women's organizations.

Q: And now, does each country that has a committee for UNICEF, does each country have a separate - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: They sell cards, yes. It's the major activity of most of them.

Q: And the cards, you have a committee that determines which - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: There's an international committee, a selection committee.

Q: Yes. And you mentioned the other day that the snow scenes are the more - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: They're very popular. The religious ones, fairly popular. And the sophisticated ones, the Miros and the Picassos, not at all popular, and bought chiefly only by the cognoscenti.

Q: Right. And the money, the artist gives his design free to UNICEF?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. And of course, he gets great publicity out of it.

Q: And then the money that's collected for the cards, after the printing costs are deducted - ?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Which are tremendous. They're getting more and more expensive. The net result, it's in the millions of dollars, you know, five or six millions. Clear.

Q: You mean world-wide?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: World-wide, yes. Bizarre things happened which are hard to believe. The fate of a project, like the fate of an organization sometimes hangs on a particle. As it was touch and go with UNICEF, so it was touch and go with the cards.

Some very conservative friend of Maurice Pate's called him up and asked why the cards were imprinted in red, when red was a Communist color? Well, Maurice Pate was so -- he cared so about the integrity of the cause that he used to worry. He worried about any criticism. And I remember he stopped the presses for a while, wondering whether we should continue the cards. Like all great people, he had little foibles, and one of his foibles was, he'd rather almost scrap the whole thing than run the risk of having it considered a Communist organization.

I remember the tears and screams that went on from Nora Edmunds who started this project - she was a very emotional woman. She said, "Oh, they're going to ruin this whole thing". And our volunteers were almost crazed, too, because they were told to stop the addressographs! We finally had to say, "well, Maurice, Santa Claus' suit is red!" Absolutely bizarre.

Q: That's amazing.

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes, it is. But there was a procession of things like that, you know. Queer things.

Q: So the Christmas cards and Halloween are now both sort of administered by the U.S. Committee?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: By the U.S. Committee. Since 1959, the greeting cards are fully distributed in this country by the U.S. Committee. Up to that time, the UNICEF itself used to distribute them, and we promoted them.

Q: Yes. But you do that job now?

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Yes. We've got the entire distribution in the United States.

Q: Which is a tremendous --

Mrs. Pantaleoni: Oh, terrific, and very expensive. In fact, so costly that we sometimes ask ourselves how long we can continue. The profits are so small, comparatively speaking. It would be a shame to give it up, because it also has educational value. Many people are tripped into interest, you know, just by getting the card. They will say, "What is this organization? What does it do?" Often, in a roundabout way, they become ardent fans of UNICEF just by getting the card.

Q: Let me just --

(End of tape)

