

Chapter 9

In a Popular Cause

Those who knew Unicef intimately in its early years often describe it as a family, with the benevolent patriarch, Maurice Pate, at its head. Throughout the 1950s, the numbers of its staff slowly increased along with the growth in income and programmes, but although its institutional form began to crystallize, its character did not radically change.

At a very early stage, Maurice Pate had obtained from the UN Secretary-General a certain amount of discretion in applying within Unicef the administrative rules and regulations of the UN system. These had been designed for a static Secretariat, chiefly servicing conferences and committees. Pate, in contrast, was building an organization whose thrust was operational, and most of whose staff were based elsewhere. In addition, his personal dislike for bureaucratic nicety was intense; he belonged to the school of thought which holds that anything worth saying can be contained in a one-page memorandum. He relied a great deal on developing personal contacts, and he gave his senior staff considerable discretion in the exercise of their responsibilities. As a result of Pate's influence and organizational necessity, therefore, Unicef adopted a free-wheeling, decentralized type of organizational structure rather different from many other UN bodies whose locus of power rested absolutely in their headquarters.

By 1960, the number of staff on Unicef's payroll had risen to 426 from 275 at the beginning of the decade. Approximately half of them worked in twenty-nine field offices in Asia, Africa, eastern Mediterranean and Latin America, and most of the rest in either New York or Paris. Unicef's income had grown over the same period from \$11.5 million to \$26.5 million. The main government contributors were still the US, Canada and Australia; only \$5 million altogether came from the European governments.

This was a lean organization with very modest resources to deploy on behalf of the millions of children of the developing world. Consciousness of the contrast between needs and funds available, coupled with the strong motivation of many of the first generation of Unicef employees, had established a tradition of frugal housekeeping. Pate spent freely from his own pocket in entertaining Board members and others who would be useful to the cause.

In the early days, before pay scales were systematically established and

when Pate drew on his own network of friends and contacts to help him out, many people worked for a pittance, or on precarious short-term contracts with no guarantees of security. They were supposed to be buoyed by spirit and commitment—and they usually were. In the field, representatives expected staff to work six days a week, eschewed the pomp and circumstance UN status could have conferred, and kept their premises modest. The sense of mission was palpable, and it was the envy of other organizations within the UN system.

The zeal rubbed off. The most well-known recruit to Unicef's cause was the actor and comedian Danny Kaye. During a flight from London to New York, an airplane caught fire in mid-Atlantic and, in the hours while the plane limped back to the safety of Ireland, Maurice Pate took the opportunity to tell his fellow-passenger Danny Kaye all about Unicef. Something struck a chord with Kaye, whose gift for enthralling children both in person and on film had won him a worldwide reputation.

Some months after this chance encounter, a proposal was put to Danny that he take time out of an Asian holiday to visit some health and nutrition projects. He was entertained to lunch by UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, President of the UN General Assembly, Mrs Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, and Maurice Pate. The idea emerged that he should take along a camera and a crew and film his encounters with the children of Asia. Paramount Pictures offered to underwrite the expense, release the result commercially, and donate the picture's profits to Unicef.

On the spring day in 1954 that Danny left on the first leg of his travels, Maurice Pate handed him a scroll at a crowded UN press conference, and appointed him Unicef's 'Ambassador at Large'. It was the first diplomatic mission of its kind. In later years two other entertainment personalities likewise became Unicef's 'ambassadors': Peter Ustinov and Liv Ullmann. Danny Kaye was the first, and the energy he threw into the role established the tradition.

The first film that Danny Kaye made for Unicef was called 'Assignment Children'. The project turned out to be one of those extraordinarily blessed ideas which confers delight on everyone. It set Danny en route to becoming 'Mr Unicef', the single most important personality in popularizing Unicef's name and endearing its cause to millions of people all over the world. His first port of call was New Delhi, where he was welcomed on home territory by Mrs Pandit, and attended a BCG vaccination session in a nearby village. From there he went to Burma, and joined DDT spray teams in a malaria control drive among the rice paddies. Then in Thailand he made friends with a small boy whose body was covered with the raspberry blotches of yaws. The tour wound up in Japan, where he spent an afternoon with 200 children from orphanages and nurseries who were regular Unicef milk drinkers.

The genius of the film was that the children—the stars, as Danny

insisted, with himself in only a supporting role—were always laughing. Those who had asked what a comedian could contribute to the sad cause of endemic hunger and sickness among children in poor societies were given an answer: moments of sheer delight. His film showed that the appeal of children, however distant their home and however remote their predicament, was universal. Not only did it convey the parameters of Unicef's programme co-operation, but it did so with the charm and humour for which Danny Kaye was already so well-loved. He came back from the trip inspired to do much more. The Ambassador at Large put his talent to entertain at the disposal of the world's children through Unicef, and went on doing so for over thirty years.

During the course of the next two years, Danny appeared at gala launches for 'Assignment Children' in cities all over the world. The film was translated into eighteen languages, including Arabic, Danish, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Mandarin, Persian and Tagalog. In 1954, at the prompting of the International Union of Child Welfare which was pushing for a UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the UN General Assembly declared that a Universal Children's Day should be celebrated in every country. In many countries, UN Associations found that Unicef—with Danny Kaye playing celluloid host for the world's children—was their most popular draw. In Australia, where the annual UNA Appeal for Children for many years raised more money for Unicef than any other nongovernmental source, cinema managements frequently showed the film as an accompaniment to the main feature, and took up collections for Unicef afterwards. Many years later, customers for greeting cards from the Unicef Australian Committee (established separately from UNA in 1966), described how their wish to help Unicef had first been inspired by 'Assignment Children'. Its worldwide audience was reckoned to have topped 100 million.

With this and other films and personal appearances, Danny Kaye helped to boost the fund-raising activities of many of Unicef's national affiliates—the national committees for Unicef—in the English-speaking parts of the world. By the late 1950s, the US Committee for Unicef, under the vigorous chairmanship of Helenka Pantaleoni, had flowered into a forceful campaigning network on behalf of the world's children. Although the fund-raising in which the Committee had been so reluctant to engage in its earliest days was now a purposeful activity, it was still very much perceived as incidental to the more important task of informing people about the conditions of life endured by less fortunate children in other lands.

Well-educated public opinion was the means of underpinning a generous US government contribution to Unicef and, until the end of the 1950s and the dawning of the Kennedy era, there was an urgent need to foster a climate of North American public opinion in favour of international understanding. The children's cause was one of the most popular with which to break down old isolationist attitudes and Cold War fears.

By the early 1960s, the annual Trick or Treat Campaign at Halloween had become one of the US Committee's most highly-developed instruments for public awareness, and for dimes-and-nickels fund-raising on a grand scale.

For three years in succession, Danny Kaye undertook a virtuoso effort to boost Trick or Treat for Unicef. He piloted his own plane on a country-wide tour to encourage youngsters everywhere to sport a black and orange 'help children help children' button, and collect money for Unicef instead of playing pranks on friends and neighbours. These whirlwind tours enlisted thousands of schoolchildren for Unicef and helped to turn the annual event into a national institution. They were the brainchild of Paul Edwards, Unicef's Director of Information, who had a gift for stunts and razzamatazz as a way of gaining public support, and contacts in Hollywood and in the showbusiness world whom he regularly enlisted. On Danny Kaye's first Trick or Treat tour in 1965, he and Edwards managed to visit thirty cities in three days. They zigzagged through time zones and darted in and out of one unfamiliar airport after another. Crowds of children came to cheer and the media was always out in force to catch a quip or a funny face from the comedian before he was whipped aloft again. In 1968, they visited sixty-five cities in five days.

By the mid-1960s, over three million children in 13,000 communities in the US were collecting more than \$2.25 million in their orange Halloween boxes. The campaign was used as a peg on which educational materials about children in other lands were distributed to schools all over the country. In 1966, the Pope visited the UN in New York and met a group of children carrying their Trick or Treat boxes. This was the high-water mark of the Halloween programme in the US. Since those years, Trick or Treat has never quite recaptured the same momentum, although it is still a hardy perennial.

The Canadian Committee for Unicef followed the US lead in adopting the Trick or Treat idea as their major annual fund-raising and educational drive among children. This national committee was founded in 1955 under the auspices of the UN Association. A key mover was Adelaide Sinclair, at this stage still the delegate of Canada to the Unicef Executive Board, shortly to become Deputy Executive Director for Programmes on the retirement of Berislav Borcic in 1957. The first Halloween campaign in Canada, held to launch the Committee's fund-raising efforts, brought in \$15,000. Within ten years the amount had risen to nearly \$500,000. In 1967, Danny Kaye included Canadian cities on his pre-Halloween itinerary. By then the National Committee had put in place a country-wide network of provincial committees to service local volunteer support groups.

Whether in the US, in Canada or elsewhere, the men and mainly women who gave their time and energy freely to the cause of Unicef—some of them local pillars of the community, some of them salespeople for greeting

cards, some of them teachers interested in children in other lands as an educational opportunity, some of them people who ran benefits or galas, or lobbied their legislative representatives during the budget season—were Unicef's most precious recruits. Their energy and dedication, sometimes taken too much for granted, often humbled those who worked closely with them.

The phenomenon of twentieth century volunteerism has launched and kept afloat many nongovernmental organizations. Within the UN family, no fund or agency has been as fortunate as Unicef in finding itself at the centre of a network of nongovernmental groups which have conveyed the appeal of Unicef and children to so many extra helping hands. Stars such as Danny Kaye, the first in a long line that included Marlon Brando, Cat Stevens, John Denver, George Harrison, Celeste Holm, Cecily Tyson, Mohammed Ali, Pelé, and many others who have made concert or sporting appearances, not only helped improve Unicef's prestige and credibility, but also gave other volunteers a boost both to their morale and to their fund-raising success.

In the US, this success has also had its unfortunate side effects. During the 1950s, when McCarthy era paranoia still attached deep-seated suspicion to the UN and all its works, Unicef's growing popular visibility attracted the venom of anti-Communist agitation. Lawrence Timbers, a fiercely patriotic American from Seattle, collected statements from various sources and issued a document entitled 'Red Influences In Unicef'. This was widely circulated among right-wing political circles and wherever he could find an audience, and caused a flood of propaganda. The Daughters of the American Revolution passed a resolution condemning Unicef, which was subsequently endorsed by the American Legion. Their main complaint was the godless and anti-Christian character of the Unicef greeting cards.

In the early years of the Greeting Cards Operation, the designs were carefully steered away from any kind of religious implications as a gesture to the spirit of internationalism. This encouraged the Daughters of the American Revolution to describe the cards as 'a Communist-inspired plan to destroy all religious beliefs'. In response to this attack, Jacqueline Kennedy, then First Lady, let it be known that she was a Unicef greeting cards customer. Sales of cards soared. Ironically, the DAR's public antagonism helped to promote Unicef's name. Their hate campaign faded during the 1960s, but the John Birch Society later took up the same kind of cudgels, and has periodically continued its attacks ever since. However unpleasant these attacks, they have never seriously damaged Unicef's credibility, either with the public or with any US Administration.

The US Committee was the first of the national support groups for Unicef. During Unicef's earliest years, the European countries were its chief

beneficiaries. As their economies recovered, Maurice Pate began to consider how they might become a source of contributions. He attached at least as much intrinsic importance to support from citizens' groups as he did to government contributions. Pate's drive to create a reservoir of popular support for Unicef came from his lifelong adherence to the sentiment he imbibed from Herbert Hoover, which held that there was no more perfect ideal than that of voluntary service. He found it hard even to picture a Unicef which was not, at almost every level, an expression of people's *selfless devotion to children*.

In 1952, Pate asked Paul Henri Spaak, former Prime Minister of Belgium and the first President of the UN General Assembly, to tour Europe and make personal approaches on Unicef's behalf to government ministers, Heads of State, and leading personalities. Spaak agreed to do so, and was accompanied by Willie Meyer, a Swiss national who had first served Unicef as Head of Mission in Germany and then took over the management of external relations in the Paris office. The tour with Spaak was the beginning of Meyer's effort to create a network of Unicef national committees throughout Europe.

Meyer's particular gift was to identify individuals with sufficient enthusiasm and clout to set up an embryonic support group. Some were people who had originally helped with the 1948–49 UN Appeal for Children; many were already active in voluntary organizations with an interest in children, and occasionally on the fringes of government.

Meyer had a bulldog tenacity which did not endear him to everyone, but which regularly showed results. Within a year from the start of his efforts there were national committees for Unicef in Belgium and West Germany; in 1954 others followed, in Denmark, Sweden and Norway; in 1955, Italy and the Netherlands; in 1956, in the United Kingdom; and in 1958 in Luxembourg. The characters of the committees were very diverse. Some were totally independent of government; others were virtually a sub-department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Italy, the committee was under the patronage and leadership of Senator Ludovico Montini, a highly-placed government official in charge of liaison with international organizations, and brother of the Vatican Secretary of State who later became Pope Paul VI. Many other committees sought lofty patrons among presidents and royalty; few quite matched *this degree of eminence*.

Meyer's trump card with the new Unicef committees was that, in addition to whatever fund-raising or educational work they felt like undertaking, he had a ready-made activity on which they could instantly embark: the promotion and sale of greeting cards.

Meyer initially had great difficulty in establishing a Unicef committee in his native Switzerland, eliciting decidedly lukewarm responses to the idea from existing organizations concerned with child welfare. He finally called upon Dr Hans Conzett, an old school friend living on Lake Zurich. Conzett

was a lawyer by background, and a printer and publisher by profession. He was also a member of Parliament and of its Committee on External Affairs. Meyer's suggestion fell in line with the politically neutral, humanitarian traditions of Switzerland and appealed to Conzett's personal commitment to international co-operation. Although not a member of the UN, Switzerland had always had a special place in Unicef's Executive Board, and from the beginning the Swiss delegation had been one of the most active. Pate, with the support of the Swiss Ambassador at the UN, Felix Schnyder, made an approach to the Foreign Minister, Max Petitpierre, asking his help in creating a Unicef committee. Petitpierre gave his approval, and informed Conzett that he could count on government endorsement.

The Swiss Committee for Unicef was established in June 1959 under Conzett's chairmanship. A few meetings each year were envisaged, and a little paperwork before and after. Willie Meyer had omitted to tell the Committee exactly what he had in mind. A few months before Christmas 13,000 boxes of greeting cards arrived from Paris. The Honorary Executive Secretary, a Swiss development aid official, was appalled. He had certainly not envisaged turning himself into a greeting cards sales agent, and promptly advertised for someone to come and get rid of the boxes of cards stacked in his office building. The saleswoman he recruited was Andrée Lappé, who had the kind of energy needed to move a mountain of Christmas cards onto the seasonal hearths of the citizens of Zurich. Working from an office in her home, with no resources of any kind, she managed to sell 11,697 boxes in two months. She persuaded the girl scouts and various business organizations to circulate a brochure and organized sales through bookshops and the Palais des Nations in Geneva. From these small beginnings, the Swiss Committee for Unicef gradually became a national institution.

As the network of national committees grew, mechanisms were set up to build links between these diverse members of the budding Unicef family. The first annual reunion of Unicef committees in Europe took place in 1955, and it became the forum in which the committees grappled with questions concerning their relationship with their international parent organization. On the financial side, the initial agreement was that committees should retain ten per cent of their proceeds from ordinary fund-raising to cover expenses, and fifteen per cent of their income from greeting cards. These extremely narrow margins were based on the assumption that most income would come from voluntary, virtually unsolicited, donations. As the years went by, the expansion and increasing sophistication of some of the committees led to a change in the character of fund-raising.

The late 1950s and early 1960s were the period when the conscience of the world was beginning to be aroused by the spectacle of hunger and malnutrition in the developing world.

In 1959, the Economic and Social Council of the UN endorsed a proposal

from FAO that, in partnership with the UN and worldwide nongovernmental agencies, it should launch an international anti-hunger drive. 'Freedom from Hunger Campaign' was the fund-raising and public information vehicle which implanted the idea of the 'hungry millions' of Africa and Asia firmly into the mind of the public in the Western world. The aim of the campaign was ambitious and idealistic: 'To promote a climate of opinion throughout the world in which the problems of hunger and want would be faced realistically, their causes analyzed objectively, and appropriate remedies boldly and courageously applied'. A great volume of publicity offerings of all kinds, loaded with the images and statistics of hunger, were produced not only by FAO but by Unicef and others in an effort to create the new climate of opinion, which would in turn exert pressure on governments and organizations to do more about world hunger. They succeeded surprisingly well, a record rarely matched in similar UN 'years' or 'decades' for other great humanitarian causes.

The spirit of the times which infused the Freedom from Hunger Campaign also infected many of Unicef's national committees. Some began to play a part in promoting the new consciousness, helping implant the image of the hungry child in the national conscience. At this time, Unicef was still depending on the US and Canadian Governments to supply millions of pounds of dried skim milk to feed undernourished children and mothers through health centres and schools. In the latter half of 1959, the US Government unexpectedly found itself with a smaller dairy surplus than usual. The plight of the hungry pre-schooler, bereft of his nutritious Unicef cupful of milk, caught the imagination of several Unicef committees, among which the Swiss was particularly active. An approach was made to the Swiss Milk Producers' Association and, with its backing, Foreign Minister Friedrich Wahlen announced that 18 May would be 'Milk Day'. Wahlen, who by a happy coincidence was an ex-Director of FAO, appealed to the Swiss public to respond to the plight of the hungry child in Asia and Africa; they would not refuse a hungry child at their door, nor should they refuse one who could not come in person. Unicef 'milk tickets' went on sale for one Swiss franc at shops and other outlets throughout Switzerland. By the spring of 1961, nearly two million Swiss francs had been raised. This campaign launched the Swiss Committee, as well as the Dutch and other committees in dairy-conscious countries, beyond greeting cards and identified Unicef clearly in the national mind with the deprived child of the developing countries.

Most of the Unicef committees in Europe established themselves gradually, doing every year a little more successfully what Willie Meyer encouraged: promoting and selling cards. During the 1950s, most of the cards' customers were in North America, and to a lesser extent in Britain. A small sales office had been set up in London to handle the relatively insignificant European trade. In time, as a result of the committees' efforts,

the volume of sales began to grow. The cards were the mainstay of their incomes, and increased sales their major opportunity of expansion. In 1959, they took over formal responsibility for sales of the cards in their own countries.

There were two areas of contention. One was the unrealistically narrow financial margins within which they were expected to operate. Everyone agreed that the maximum amount of income generated must go to help children, but there was no point in imposing such financial stringency that the committees could not compete with commercial companies. In 1964, the proportion the committees were allowed to keep was modified to twenty-five per cent.

The other problem was that the committees had very little voice in the way the greeting cards operation was run and no voice at all in the selection of the designs. Many complained that some were unsuited to their markets. The Europeans, like the North Americans, had problems with the decision to keep away from cards with a Christian motif and from culturally locked-in snow scenes, holly berries, and Santa Claus. As an international organization embracing donors and recipients of many different cultures and religious faiths, this was regarded as a point of principle. Hans Conzett, with his own background as a publisher and printer, was one of the voices raised in support of higher quality cards and a more sales-oriented outlook. Some committees proposed that each country produce its own cards for its own market. But this was resisted by Unicef headquarters, partly because of the loss of quality control and partly because it would eat into the profit margin. From 1967 onwards, a compromise was agreed whereby a group of national committee representatives took part in product design selection alongside artists and professional designers. It was also agreed that a committee could choose from among the full range of card designs and select only those ones they felt they could sell.

Many committees concentrated on building up networks of voluntary support groups, usually to market cards at Christmas time, as the heart of their fund-raising and public information strategy. In the early years, these often consisted of people who had taken part in postwar voluntary work or the UN Appeal for Children, who were inspired by the idealism of the UN and the twinning of children with peace. Many were influential people in business or their own community, and there was usually a royal or socially-eminent patron. This was the pattern in Holland, West Germany, Belgium, Britain—and later in France and Spain.

The Dutch Committee, for example, set up in 1955 by Jan Eggink, head of the National Council on Social Welfare, concentrated on building up committees all over the country and pitching Unicef's appeal to the young. On one occasion he imported 200,000 clay piggybanks from Sri Lanka and Princess Beatrix, the Committee's honorary chairman, helped promote

them for sale as Unicef collecting-boxes. The Danish Committee organized sponsored walks. The Belgians ran hunger lunches, and the Austrians laid on gala benefits in Viennese concert halls.

By 1964, the number of Unicef national committees in Europe had reached a total of seventeen (including Turkey). The latest recruit was the French Committee. In 1963, Georges Sicault, now Director of the Unicef office in Paris, decided that the time had come to help set up a French National Committee to sell cards and undertake information work independently from the rest of the Unicef presence in Paris. Besides the French, the newer representatives at the annual reunion of 1964, meeting in Dublin, were the Irish, the Austrians, the Polish and the Spanish. Some of the committees had grown considerably. Few were any longer staffed by one person working at home with no proper facilities. Business executives and people with a strong professional background had come onto the scene. Certain committees were becoming much more self-confident and taking on their own special characters. These were formulated by the particular national and cultural climate in which they operated, as well as by the personalities of their leaders. The reunion was beginning to become less of a family get-together, and more of an occasion on which these national Unicef satellites flexed their muscles and sparred amicably—and sometimes less amicably—with representatives from headquarters in New York and Paris.

Apart from greeting cards and financial margins, the major problem area between the national committees and their international parent concerned public information. This could never be other than a battleground, for it is where one side of Unicef's dual personality competes with the other. The committees, with their networks of volunteer support groups, are the litmus paper of popular support for Unicef in the industrialized countries. They are the part of Unicef in touch with grass-roots support and, if they cannot succour it, not only do they wither, but so does the support. Without the popular support which underpins Unicef's worldwide reputation, many a donor government might fail to maintain the level, let alone raise, its own contribution. The idea that the cause of children can harness great reserves of compassion and goodwill in its service was good as far as it went. But simply to identify the cause of children with Unicef could not on its own sustain the existence and growth of volunteer networks and fund-raising events. The national committees needed a flow of information about projects, health campaigns, children whose lives had been transformed through their agency. Without this flow of information, no 'Milk Day', sponsored walk or hunger lunch could be profitable.

At one level, the need for information about projects in the developing world was a mechanistic requirement. Since the national committees themselves had no direct contact with programmes in the developing world, they depended on the international secretariat to supply them with publicity

material vindicating Unicef's claims on behalf of the world's children. But at another level, the problem was more deep-rooted. As the committees became more self-confident, some—either consciously or subconsciously—began to want to cast Unicef in the image that most suited their fund-raising needs.

In its character as a UN organization, Unicef does not function like the typical voluntary overseas aid agency. It is an intergovernmental organization, co-operating with governments at their request in expanding services for mothers and children. In no sense does it run or manage projects or programmes. Some committees and supporters, even indeed those members of Unicef's staff who had not travelled widely in developing countries, found it difficult to distinguish between the idea of a 'Unicef project'—which did not exist—and a 'project assisted by Unicef'. On the ground, the difference is far from semantic. There is a vital distinction between an operational agency working independently from government bureaucracy and a funding agency trying to improve the situation of children by filling in some of the cracks—however significant those cracks—in a government's efforts to do so. Some of the frustration felt by committees towards the apparent inability to provide them with the kind of information they required had more to do with the inherent character of an organization working in partnerships with governments than with the mechanics of the information flow they found so inadequate.

In the early 1960s, when this problem first began to arise, Unicef's senior policy makers were trying to steer the organization away from its charitable image as a purveyor of milk powder and other supplies to ease distress, towards a more complex engagement with poverty and the development process. Some committees, reflecting what they felt their public would respond to, were trying to push in the opposite direction. The drama of an emergency—an earthquake, a flood, a famine—and the image of an international organization rushing relief supplies to its most pathetic victims were the moments at which the committees found the public most responsive to Unicef. Their need was for immediate bulletins, photos of Unicef cargoes unloading, children being fed with emergency rations, the sick being treated with Unicef medical aid. Meanwhile, policy makers back in headquarters were trying to build up a sense of partnership with the peoples in developing countries, and disliked any slippage into projection as a saviour of the helpless and ignorant. Where longer-term programmes were concerned, the committees wanted to be able to adopt a project so that their campaigners and givers could identify directly with the children on the receiving end of penicillin shots or milk rations.

In Unicef at this time, there were no circumstances in which a donor—most of which were governments—was permitted to specify that its money would go to one country or one project, rather than another. This was unhelpful to the committees. The idea that their carefully garnered

donations simply disappeared into a pot called 'general resources' was unappealing from the fund-raising point of view.

Unicef had undergone, and continued to undergo, a constant educative process regarding the needs of children in the developing world and the best ways of responding to them. Not surprisingly, there was a time lag between the moment when those at the cutting edge of policy-making and programming first began to recognize the shortcomings of a particular shibboleth—the supremacy of milk as the answer to child nutrition problems, for example—and the moment at which others further away from the action became similarly attuned.

For the Swiss Committee, and for others which also organized 'Milk Funds' to help make up the unexpected shortfall in milk powder, the milk campaign of 1960 represented a tremendous advance in public understanding of children's needs and Unicef's attempts to respond to them. But at this stage, those leading the thinking on nutrition were rushing to Orissa State in India to look at poultry and fingerlings and fruit trees: applied nutrition was in fashion and milk was becoming passé. In Unicef, as in any evolving organization, certain outdated solutions, good in their time, tend to persist among staff, technical advisors, informed government opinion and public opinion at different distances from various centres of activity. The tendency for the committees and the public understanding they depended on to be out of step with the Unicef policy-making vanguard was inevitable, but it did—and still can—create tension.

Certain steps were taken to bridge the gap. In 1964, the Executive Board, meeting in Bangkok—the first occasion on which it had convened in a developing country—managed to agree upon a formula whereby projects or parts of programmes could be singled out for adoption. By this stage, the Freedom from Hunger Campaign had been underway for four years and the precedent of adopting projects had been established by FFHC committees in various countries: the success of the Freedom from Hunger Campaign—a partnership between voluntary effort and the UN system—would have been jeopardized if it had not proved possible to find a formula for raising and giving funds which did not detract from the multilateral character of an FAO or a Unicef. At the same Executive Board session, a set of guidelines were agreed which conceded to the national committees a co-operative relationship with the Board. From this point onwards, committee representatives could attend sessions as observers in their own right.

As the Development Decade progressed, the relationships between Unicef and the many satellite but virtually autonomous Unicef committees in the donor countries began to evolve and diversify. As the committees became more self-assertive and successful, the inherent tensions tended to become more difficult rather than less. The committees wanted to be not Unicef's agents, but its partners—at least where policy on fund-raising,

greeting cards and information campaigns was concerned. But some members of the secretariat could never quite manage to pay more than lip service to such an idea, and sometimes did not even pay that. What is surprising in retrospect is not that there has been many a rough passage, but that no national committee has ever broken away and set itself up under an independent, non-Unicef banner. Nor has any closed its doors.

The relationship between Unicef and certain committees may temporarily come unstuck from time to time, but in the end the cement has always held. The cement is children. Whatever the arguments about means—arguments to be found in any organization however noble its purpose—the ends have never left any room for dispute. Helenka Pantaleoni, President of the US Committee and a life-long personal powerhouse for the cause of children, summed the matter up in her annual report of 1969: 'Whatever success we have been able to achieve—and much of it under duress—is, of course, due in large part to the magic of the focus on the child in need. However, I am convinced that in equal measure it is due to simple faith in our objective. Committee, staff, volunteers are motivated by their sincere belief that in working for an improvement in the lives of the children, they are working for a better future. As long as we keep this faith, we are bound to succeed'.

Unicef's national committees clearly had a number of common problems. Outside these, and their common association with Unicef, they were and are profoundly different from one another. At one extreme was a committee such as the Swiss, which took a decision from the outset to be entirely free and independent of government influence, and which concentrated on imaginative fund-raising campaigns. At another extreme was the Swedish Committee. The Swedish Committee for Unicef began life under the umbrella of Radda Barnen, the Swedish Save the Children. It was envisaged from the start as a body with close governmental links, and there was never any attempt to compete with Radda Barnen or any other organization for private donations. The Committee's task was to inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about Unicef, and lobby Unicef's policy makers concerning Sweden's priorities in the field of international development aid.

Both the Swiss and the Swedish Committees, with their very different backgrounds, have had a profound influence on Unicef's thinking down the years. In the case of the Swiss Committee, the chairman, Hans Conzett, who served as President of the Swiss Parliament in 1967–68, always had close links with his country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in 1964 became the leader of the Swiss delegation to the Unicef Executive Board. In the case of the semigovernmental Swedish Committee, the chairman, Nils Thedin, had no formal position in government or the civil service, but as a senior official in the Swedish Co-operative Federation, he was held in

such respect by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs that he led the Swedish delegation to the Executive Board from 1961 until 1984. Thedin was elected Chairman of the Unicef Board from 1970 to 1972. Hans Konzett served as Chairman in 1975 and 1976. These two individuals, who straddled the divide between national committees and the senior decision-making body in Unicef, helped to pave the way for a closer connection between committees and official country delegations to Unicef and earn the voluntary sector a much enhanced credibility within Unicef's secretariat. In turn, they helped create a bridge to those in the committees who resented feeling like second-class Unicef citizens.

Nils Thedin was elected Chairman of the Swedish Committee at its first meeting in the Stockholm offices of Radda Barnen in August 1954. A journalist and magazine publisher by profession, Thedin had already served on the Swedish Commission to UNESCO and had a long record in the international labour movement. His first experience in relief work came during the Spanish Civil War, when he took a leave of absence from his job in the ILO in Geneva to work for the International Committee for the Assistance of Child Refugees in Barcelona. This organization was run by the British and American Quakers, and was devoted to feeding and caring for child victims on both sides of the conflict.

Thedin was deeply shaken by the plight of sick, undernourished and abandoned children. The experience ingrained in him a lifelong concern for the sufferings of children caught up in conflict. In 1954, when Radda Barnen was formally requested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to set up a mechanism for spreading information about Unicef in Sweden, and to advise the Swedish authorities on the policy, budget and activities of Unicef, Nils Thedin was Radda Barnen's Vice-President, and a natural choice for the Unicef Committee Chairman. The Swedish Red Cross was also represented, as were various government ministries. Over the years, many of the most prominent Swedish figures in international affairs and development assistance, a foreign policy area of growing importance to Sweden, served on the Unicef Committee.

Immediately, the Swedish Committee plunged into examinations of Unicef policy. Their interest focussed on maternal and child health care. When Sweden took a seat at the Executive Board from 1956 onwards, the official delegation began to draw heavily on its Committee as a resource for its statements. Unicef's policy of support to mother and child health expansion did not go far enough, in their opinion. They wanted health care to the preschool child to be the Unicef priority, building up the kind of welfare services which had given Sweden an international reputation for family care through day-care centres and paediatrics departments. The effect of their contribution to the debates was electric. No other national committee acted as an advisor on policy to an international delegation. Few national committees contained within their membership people

equipped for any informed discussion of development issues. Unicef welcomed the seriousness and the enthusiasm with which the representatives of Sweden, both in their role as national committee leaders and Board delegates, began to engage in Unicef's affairs.

The Swedes have often been ahead in their thinking, even of Unicef's own vanguard, and unfazed by the awkward ripples set in motion by raising controversial issues. Some of these—family planning, women's rights—were raised by the Swedish delegation long before they were fashionable, and many eventually found their way into mainstream Unicef philosophy partly because of Sweden's persistence. The Swedes have taken certain issues very seriously, and pushed in certain directions much harder than the Unicef secretariat found it comfortable to move. Because of the excellent personal rapport between Nils Thedin and successive Executive Directors and deputies, the relationship between Unicef and Sweden has been closer and smoother than it otherwise might have been. The Swedish leverage over Unicef was reinforced by the steady rise in the official contribution to Unicef's general resources during the 1960s and 1970s. By 1965, Sweden—followed closely by Norway—was giving the highest contribution per head of population. In recent years, the absolute amount has usually been second only to that of the US, a remarkable record for a country with a population one thirtieth the size.

Among the Western donor countries, the character of the Swedish Committee is unusual. In eastern Europe, all the committees and commissions for Unicef are under the wing of government, not as advisory and educational bodies but as sub-branches of foreign affairs. The Yugoslav Commission for Co-operation with Unicef, established in 1947 to help channel Unicef assistance to children's programmes in Yugoslavia itself, is the oldest of all the European committees. It was the only Unicef operation in eastern Europe to survive the Cold War. Its purpose did not change markedly for the many years during which Unicef continued to give supplies and equipment for penicillin production, maternity and paediatrics facilities, for campaigns against endemic disease, and for programmes which included emergency relief after the Skopje earthquake in 1963. The Commission played host to the Unicef Programme Committee in 1953, and to the European reunion of national committees in 1962. Members of other committees were able to profit from what, for them, was a rare opportunity: visits to projects in which Unicef was involved. The Commission undertook the sale of Unicef greeting cards, took part in cultural and youth events, and collected donations on a modest scale; but its principal purpose remained the screening and co-ordination of Unicef assistance.

Towards the middle of the 1950s, Ludwik Rajchman's friend and old associate from the Polish delegation to UNRRA, Dr Boguslaw Kozusznik, began to discuss with colleagues in the Ministry of Health the idea of establishing a national committee for Unicef in Poland.

Kozusznik, who was Vice-Minister of Health, was much inspired by the Unicef Commission's example in Yugoslavia. During the early 1950s, with the exception of Yugoslavia, all the eastern Socialist countries had selectively withdrawn, not from membership but from close involvement in certain UN member organizations. Poland's retreat from Unicef was a source of great regret to Kozusznik. At a conference of Ministers of Health of eastern Europe, the question of re-engagement with UN organizations was raised, and Poland decided to rejoin the international health community.

In 1956, Poland sought election to the Unicef Executive Board, and Kozusznik led the delegation. In 1962, a Unicef committee was set up in Warsaw. It was a small advisory body under the wing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs whose membership consisted of representatives from government and various social institutions. One of the most prominent was the National Research Institute of Mother and Child in Warsaw to which Unicef had given assistance in the immediate postwar years, and which later ran training courses attended by health workers from the developing countries under a programme of Unicef co-operation.

The committee sold greeting cards and undertook information activities, but its primary purpose was to foster discussion at the official level within Poland on children's issues, and to liaise between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Unicef. Kozusznik himself served as the committee's Chairman from 1962 to 1983. Its administrative head was a government official appointed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Some token assistance from Unicef was agreed, mainly for spare parts for the milk conservation plants earlier installed with Unicef help, for which foreign exchange was scarce. During the late 1960s, Georges Sicault and Dr Kozusznik together toured eastern European countries to encourage the establishment of other Unicef committees. Between 1968 and 1974, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania all followed Poland's example. In the USSR, no separate Unicef Committee was established but the Soviet Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies began to undertake some of the liaison functions normally carried out by national committees. In time, the level of interest and involvement in Unicef's work in the other eastern European countries increased; a committee in the German Democratic Republic was established in the mid-1970s. But the links with other countries have never been so strong as with Yugoslavia or Poland, where for historical reasons Unicef has always enjoyed a special reputation.

Many of the voluntary organizations on which national committees for Unicef originally drew for their membership were those concerned with the problems of children in their own countries. In most parts of the industrialized world, the networks of professional, labour and youth organizations which formed an integral part of the social fabric were keen

to function as active constituents of the new international society represented by the idea of the 'united nations'. The millions of individuals who gave their time and energy freely to such nongovernmental bodies had made possible the success of the UN Appeal for Children (UNAC) in 1948-49—and Unicef from its inception was a member of the UN family with whose interests many NGOs identified and sought a close relationship. A number had their own federated international structures, which already enjoyed consultative status with ECOSOC: the International Union of Child Welfare, the Friends World Committee for Consultation, the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession, the World Jewish Congress, the International Co-operative Women's Guild, and scores of others.

In some countries, as became clear during UNAC, the prospect that Unicef might become a competitor for philanthropic donations meant that existing voluntary organizations with programmes of overseas assistance looked upon Unicef national committees as rivals. In Sweden, by helping to create the Swedish Committee for Unicef, Radda Barnen made sure that this would not happen. Elsewhere, the relationship between Unicef committees and different kinds of NGOs was ambivalent and difficult to typify. In the US, friendly organizations willing to mobilize their members on behalf of the Unicef appropriation or to send out greeting cards brochures in their mailings had helped Unicef to survive its early struggles for existence. This pattern of mutual support was repeated elsewhere; members of women's organizations formed the backbone of the UK Committee, founded in 1956. But there were NGOs with whom there was no easy source of common identification. In certain European countries, the spread of development ideology in the 1960s helped nurture a new breed of voluntary activists, whose thinking about international social justice had more to do with anti-establishment radicalism than traditional humanitarian precepts; in the field, aims and programmes might converge, but at home the sense of common purpose might be rather more elusive.

Among the big league of international organizations with a social or humanitarian flavour and a loyal source of donations and subscriptions, there were many with aims broadly in line with Unicef's, and with money and goodwill. Some had affiliates in various countries which could be mobilized behind feeding and health care programmes with which Unicef was associated; while others were without an operational means of their own for helping children in other lands and so were pleased to be part of a network which did. Such organizations were natural allies; one of Pate's early recruits to the staff was a friend from his wartime days at the American Red Cross, Grace Holmes Barbey, whom he sent off on lecture tours and goodwill missions to cultivate the NGO constituency. Barbey was vibrant and outgoing and her efforts bore fruit.

In 1952, the Executive Board agreed that certain international NGOs with consultative status at ECOSOC, already grouped as an advisory body to Unicef, should be invited to form a higher committee whose members could attend and address Unicef Board sessions. The terms of reference of this NGO Committee were very general, referring mainly to 'forums for discussion' and 'exchanges of information'. Unicef hope was that the granting of consultative status to leading organizations within the non-governmental community would help swell the volume of public information and understanding about the needs of children in the developing countries and what was being done by Unicef and its partners on their behalf. This was all part of the strategy to popularize the children's cause; to encourage recipient governments to co-operate more energetically; and to exert a moral pressure on donors to boost their contributions.

Within the Unicef secretariat, attitudes towards the NGO community were mixed. Although the sense of common cause had been important during the years of postwar crisis, close liaison with many of the NGOs seemed less pertinent when the focus of attention shifted away from Europe and the victims of catastrophe towards the underdeveloped parts of the world and the victims of poverty.

In most such countries, there was scarcely an organized governmental network, let alone a nongovernmental one which in any way resembled the religious and secular infrastructure of the West. The NGOs in consultative status with Unicef believed that they had expertise to offer the design and execution of certain types of programmes; not everyone in Unicef was disposed to agree. In certain cases, their activities appeared to coincide only at the most superficial points with those of Unicef. Some were not interested in the specific problems of underdevelopment in Asia, Africa or Latin America, only with the plight of women and children in a more general context. Some did not have affiliates at the national or subnational level in the developing countries, and therefore were in a position to contribute little to the analysis either of problems or responses. Some NGOs—especially those with old-established and inflexible structures which had not adjusted to the pendulum swings of the times—did not appreciate the eclipse of their standing; nor did some of them make the adaptations required to recover it.

Quite apart from any sense of cultural and organizational divergence, the problem with trying to develop a unified method of relating to the NGOs was that their only common denominator was their interest in an association with Unicef—an association intended to serve their own interests as well as the other way around. If the national committees were full of dissimilarities, they were a close-knit kin compared with the array of NGOs looking for a common cause with Unicef. In 1958, Maurice Pate invited Norman Acton, previously the Executive Director of the US

Committee for Unicef, to examine in detail the current state of relationships between Unicef and NGOs and how they might be made more productive. Acton was held in high esteem both within Unicef and by many of the voluntary organizations in consultative status with Unicef, two of whom he already served in an advisory capacity. He had chaired the NGO Committee on Unicef from 1952 to 1954. Acton did his best to make sense of a state of affairs which was at the time fraught with conflicting expectations.

By the time of his 1958 survey, the membership of the NGO Committee had risen to fifty-seven international organizations ranging from Soroptimists to Veterans to Youth Hostels to Agricultural Producers. They represented thousands of member organizations in at least ninety countries and territories, all of whose public fora represented mechanisms whereby Unicef information could reach individuals and communities. They were, unquestionably, vehicles of potentially great significance to Unicef's cause.

Acton also reviewed the national committees for Unicef, many of which were themselves NGOs. He advocated that the national committees deserved special consideration from the secretariat, including staff services to help them organize themselves and their activities. He regarded the committees as the frontline of Unicef's support groups, and suggested that they be primarily responsible for contacts with NGOs other than at the international level. He recommended that criteria be laid down for the committees' formal recognition, in order to guide their work and prevent them getting too far out of line with Unicef's policy and purposes. The guidelines clarifying their relationship with their parent body, finally agreed in 1964, stemmed directly from this recommendation.

Acton, coming from an NGO background, did not fall into the trap of underrating the possibilities of NGOs, whether or not some of those in consultative status with Unicef were currently well-adapted to partnership in development co-operation. He registered the growth of organized citizen concern about poverty issues throughout the world—a concern that was to swell considerably during the Freedom from Hunger Campaign in the early 1960s. Acton believed that Unicef's focus on NGOs as fund-raisers for its own cause was not always conducive to fruitful partnership, and he also underlined the services Unicef could derive from certain NGOs on subjects within their specific competences.

For technical advice, Unicef normally relied on the specialized agencies within the UN system. But some of the NGOs, particularly at a time when Unicef was expanding its programme assistance to social welfare, had experience which could be drawn upon. The relative freedom enjoyed by NGOs working in developing countries—a freedom by definition denied to an intergovernmental organization—meant that they could experiment and pioneer, and do things on a personalized scale that large-scale programmes did not have a fine enough mesh to catch. Although the main emphasis of his report was on the traditional areas of Unicef/NGO co-

operation—education, public information, fund-raising, cultivating a common constituency—the idea of programme partnership in countries receiving Unicef assistance was articulated more forcefully than it had been for several years.

Out in the field, partnerships with local nongovernmental organizations—the women's clubs in Brazil, *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* in Kenya, its equivalent in Uganda, and their equivalents in India—were becoming a regular feature of programmes designed to reach into the nooks and crannies of rural society. The importance to Unicef of relationships with this kind of NGO was becoming more apparent to programme staff. The success of the partnership with the milk producers' co-operative at Anand in India was a classic illustration of what could be done by a nongovernmental organization whose initiative remained untrammelled by government bureaucracy. This kind of grass-roots identification with small farmers was rarely achieved by low-level government officials carrying out instructions devised by policy makers in the capital city.

Charles Egger, travelling through Africa in the 1950s, had been similarly surprised by the quality of programmes run by many missionary societies. Some were the unique source of health, education, and social services in the communities they served. They might fear the intrusion of officialdom and be resistant to ideas that they dovetail their programmes with those run by the national health authorities, but they were a major avenue for Unicef assistance to mothers and children—sometimes the only one.

Certain projects directly in line with Unicef's objectives were run by the national branches of NGOs affiliated to Unicef at the international level: the YWCA, for example, was very active in the countries which had once been part of British East Africa. In some cases, where the parent body tried to create a new branch in a new country in the image of originals elsewhere, the voluntary support they drew upon came from the urban elite and projects they ran did not reflect any real concern with the problems of poverty. But this was not always the case. In Uganda, a nutrition education project run through eleven women's clubs was able to benefit from Unicef support in the form of transport and training provided through the Ministry of Community Development. This was a typical example of the welding of a partnership between a local NGO doing useful, if small-scale, work and the relevant government ministry, in which Unicef served as the go-between. There were, too, local groups and associations—the women's groups in parts of Africa and Asia, for example; the Gandhian inspired networks in the Indian subcontinent—which were far more concerned with local or national recognition and had little idea of international connections.

Many would not even have known that they belonged generically to an organizational type called NGO. They had been formed at the grass roots to solve specific local problems and, either by choice or by ignorance, their

horizons did not extend to officialdom in their capital city, let alone to consultative status with an organization such as Unicef. But from Unicef's point of view, they were a valuable means of reaching the children of the rural poor. Among some field staff, the term NGO began to take on a different set of connotations from the ones they privately associated with good works and excellent intentions.

The 1964 Board session in Bangkok helped establish a renewed sense of NGOs as important Unicef partners. For three days prior to the Board meeting a seminar for NGOs was convened, jointly sponsored by Unicef and the International Council of Women, whose Vice-Chairman, Mrs Zena Harman, was also the senior delegate of Israel to the Unicef Executive Board and Chairman of its Programme Committee. The agenda of the seminar was to familiarize certain organizations with the kind of projects Unicef was favourably disposed towards, by visiting examples near Bangkok; and to try to convince those with a parochial focus that the task of upgrading the lives of children and youth required them to dovetail their efforts with government services and departments. This might also require them to upgrade their own competence, in order to command the respect of officialdom and play a role in national development planning. The notion of the 'whole' child as an object and subject of development, rather than that of charitable action on behalf of the specifically distressed—the handicapped or the refugee, for example—was introduced in some depth for the first time to many of those attending. The presence of many key national committee people in their governments' delegations—Hans Conzett, Nils Thedin, Boguslaw Kozusznik, Zena Harman, among others—helped to foster enthusiasm for modifying certain Unicef policies to make it easier for national committees and NGOs to harmonize their relationships with each other and with Unicef proper. In the era of development, Unicef's valuable, if occasionally vexed and vexing, partners in the non-governmental community had been accorded a new legitimacy and respect.

The year 1964 was a boom one for Unicef. It was the year in which the Executive Board for the first time met in a developing country; it was the year of the Bellagio Conference on Children and Youth in National Development; it was a year in which contributions rose, partnerships flourished, and a record number of greeting cards—thirty-five million—were sold. Unicef seemed to be on the threshold of a much larger future as a fully-fledged member of the international development community.

During 1964, at the instigation of Hans Conzett, a proposition was sent to Oslo from the Swiss parliament that Unicef should be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Four years earlier, the Norwegian Committee for Unicef had wanted to nominate Maurice Pate, but he had let it be known

that he would not accept the award on his own behalf, only on behalf of Unicef. The Swiss proposal bore fruit. But Pate did not live to know it.

On the evening of 19 January 1965, while taking a quiet walk on the streets of Manhattan, Pate collapsed. He was seventy years old. For some months the state of his heart had been uncertain and he had been taking things easy; when it came, the heart attack was massive. He was rushed to hospital, where he never recovered consciousness. The entire staff of Unicef, particularly his senior colleagues, were deeply stricken, for his passing represented so much more than an administrative hiatus. This was the end of an era, and it had descended with great suddenness. The whole organization was temporarily consumed with grief at the loss of a figure they had held in so much affection and respect.

Messages poured into Unicef headquarters from all over the world. The *New York Times* said in an editorial that relatively few people had heard of Maurice Pate but that 'scores of millions of children in well over 100 countries have been fed and clothed because he lived . . . No monument could be more imposing than Unicef'. The Executive Board met to pay him their last respects. The memorial service was thronged with ambassadors and UN dignitaries of many nationalities. Special tributes to his leadership of Unicef were paid by the President of the 19th UN General Assembly, Alex Quaison-Sackey; by UN Secretary-General U Thant; by Zena Harman, now Chairman of the Board; and by Dick Heyward. Among the many qualities they cited, one stood out: an innate, spiritual power, manifest in gentle humility, to bind people together in the common cause of humanity. He had made Unicef a family in a sense rarely found in large organizations. His very presence was a harmonizer. 'The passions that breed dissension, intolerance and distrust', said Zena Harman, 'were silenced in his presence, rendered impotent by the strength of his unquenchable faith in man's ultimate goodness, in the power of love and friendship. He believed that all people everywhere sought peace in a better world through the well-being of their children'.

On 25 October 1965, nine months after Pate's death and on almost the exact day that people all over the world were celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the UN, great news arrived from Oslo. Unicef had been awarded the 1965 Nobel Peace Prize. The ultimate honour had been conferred on the organization that Maurice Pate had built and cherished.

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