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CF-RAI-USAA-DPP-RAM-2010-00091

Expanded Number **CF-RAI-USAA-DPP-RAM-2010-00091**

External ID

Title

Interview with Lord Noel-Baker concerning Dr. Ludwig Rajchman, considered 'Founder of UNICEF'

Date Created / From Date

7/1/1982 at 5:29 PM

Date Registered

7/1/2010 at 5:35 PM

Date Closed / To Date

Primary Contact

Home Location **CF/RA/BX/USAA/DB01/2000-0173 (In Container)**

F12: Status Certain?

Item Fd01: In, Out, Internal Rec or Rec Copy

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Document Details **Record has no document attached.**

Contained Records
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Record Type **A01 DPP-RAM ITEM**

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UNICEF

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND
FONDS DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENFANCE

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

*Micro History file Rajchman
also copy in a Noel-Baker file*

1 July 1982

TO: Mr. Tarzie Vittachi
Deputy Executive Director, External Relations

DATE: _____

FROM: JS Judith Spiegelman, Information Division
THRU: Tony Hewett, Chief, Editorial and Publications Service

FILE NO.: _____

SUBJECT: Attached Interview with Lord Noel-Baker Concerning
Dr. Ludwig Rajchman, Considered "Founder of UNICEF"

I had the opportunity to meet and arrange an interview with Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Lord Phillip Noel-Baker this week, with the thought of doing a profile of Dr. Ludwig Rajchman, whom Lord N. B. knew personally.

Tony Hewett thought that such an interview might make good background for a history of UNICEF which I understand you are compiling. Since there wasn't time to check this out with you before the Geneva meeting, it seemed best to simply go ahead and get the interview and the material.

It's attached, with the hope that it will prove of some value to your history.

*1/12/82
Chairman of UNICEF's Ex. Board*

40-50

INTERVIEW WITH LORD PHILLIP NOEL-BAKER -- NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LAUREATE --

ABOUT DR. LUDWIG RAJCHMAN - "FOUNDER OF UNICEF"

- Q. You knew Ludwig Rajchman personally, Lord Noel-Baker how did you come to know him?
- A. He was one of my very best friends. I was Secretary of the League of Nations, personal assistant to its Secretary-General and he was Director of the Health Section of the League of Nations. He made the Health Section almost the equivalent of WHO today. He succeeded in devising schemes which physicians and surgeons and others could carry out on a big international scale, and he succeeded in persuading the big foundations to finance these schemes. And so he got a great deal of money for many international medical conferences and international exchanges. He got started the world exchange of information about epidemic diseases which was a major guarantee against the spread of epidemics and which covered the whole world and which worked like clockwork. This was between 1920 and 1940. The League secretariat came into legal existence in January 1920. Rajchman was one of the first directors and I had been a member of the Secretariat for 6 or 9 months already and assistant to the Secretary-General and we instantly became friends. He did not only run the Health Section with enormous skill, but he did a lot in high politics, in particular, he became the League of Nations advisor to the Chinese and he made China do a lot of very remarkable things and he had great influence with the Chinese. Before the Second World War, the League virtually broke up after the conquest of Abyssinia.
- Q. Do you know where Rajchman was during the war? Was he in Poland during the war?
- A. No, I think he was in England. After the war, the United Nations Secretariat was created, and thanks to Rajchman's work with the League's Health Committee, the World Health Organization (WHO) was created and they did not ask him to be Director-General, as they might well have done. They asked a very fine Canadian, who's name I don't remember. He had been a general in the Canadian Army, the Head of the Canadian Royal Army Corps. He was a very distinguished physician, a very distinguished medical researcher and administrator and the most excellent first director of the WHO, but he was not Rajchman. Rajchman was invited by the Polish government to be their delegate to the United Nations. Lots of people thought he ought not to accept because the government was Communist but he said, "They won't beat me or restrict me in my actions; They promised to give me a very free hand. If I'm their delegate, I have a place in the assembly of the UN, I have official status, I can do things." Without it, I am Rajchman, ex-Director of the Health Committee of the League, and no use to anybody." And so he accepted, and I think quite rightly. The British Foreign Office tried to prevent him from coming to Britain because they said he was a Communist, and I absolutely "blew up the ship" with the Foreign Office and made a blazing row.

Q. Was Rajchman a doctor?

A. Yes, he was a public health doctor. He was a very, very distinguished man. His daughter Irena married an American, so I don't know her surname. He had a younger daughter who was a very significant person and a great assistant to her father. She died in Greece in 1945 or '46. She was a lovely girl of 25 or 26 years old. It was a frightful loss.

Q. Did Dr. Rajchman make any trips around Europe? Was he involved in UNRRA relief before the founding of UNICEF?

A. Oh yes, he was very involved in UNRRA. He was the Polish delegate and I was the British delegate. He and I worked together a great deal in UNRRA to get through the things that we wanted. We had meetings together in Geneva, Paris, London and in Atlantic City which was the last.

Q. So then he was the Polish delegate to UNRRA and you were the British delegate?

A. Yes, that's right. I was the "number two" in the Foreign Office under Ernest Bevan.

Q. To go back to the founding of UNICEF: did you get around and see any of the children who were receiving the relief?

A. I didn't. I was entirely absorbed in the Economic and Social Council, in the U.N. Assembly, in the Foreign Office, a dozen aspects of foreign affairs. Ernest Bevan, the Secretary was very often far away from London, at meetings of the Council of Ministers. This was a singularly useless body; that meant that Molotov, Ernest Bevan, the U.S. Secretary of State, and the French Foreign Secretary, who had been the French Resistance Leader during the war, met together, for example, for 6 weeks in Moscow and quarreled every day and never said a single thing in six weeks! They might just as well have stayed at home. And when I managed to get Ernest to come to New York for the United Nations Assembly, it was the utmost I could do to drag him to the platform to make a speech. Otherwise, he sat in this cursed Council of Ministers quarreling all the time with Molotov and doing nothing. Molotov was a very negative man who had no positive ideas of policy. Bevan said that "Working with Russians was all that mattered in the world, and there must be some way of working with them. Perhaps I shall find it." So he went on and on and on, endlessly sitting with Molotov and to no avail, because Molotov was a very negative man as I said before.

Q. To go back to the condition of children; would you tell us what you remember of Dr. Rajchman personally; also after you had seconded the resolution for his proposal to create UNICEF out of UNRRA, what was the reaction of the other delegates?

A. They more or less had to take it. When I said, "His Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom welcomes this proposal to create a Fund for mothers and children and regards it as of the highest importance. They not only formally act as seconder of this resolution, but will give it their warmest support." After that, it made it very difficult for a Frenchman or an American to say he was against it. As far as I remember, it was passed unanimously. They had a name for the organization at that point: United Nations International Children's Fund. Rajchman was held in the very highest esteem. He had great influence because of his record with the League, because of his whole personality, because

of his virtual creation of WHO, in the sense that he made the Health Committee of the League of the Nations such a large international enterprise doing such wonderful international public health cooperation. He expended very large funds of foundations and trust money, and having big conferences and big enterprises and the creation of this marvellous information service of epidemic disease and it was all very big work that it became quite evident that if the U.N. was to have any specialised agencies then a World Health Organization must be one of them. And as a matter of fact I sat on the subcommittee of the Security Council which drafted the constitution of the WHO and with Rajchman's advice I put a great many of his ideas into the World Health Organization constitution as it exists today. It is Rajchman's work via me.

- Q. Was the programme for UNICEF -- the way to use the UNRRA funds-- going to be largely health measures on which Rajchman was an expert?
- A. Well, it could be proper health or diet or a programme for infant and child welfare, with a programme of clinics for mothers and babies run by competent women doctors. A good many were women doctors and they were very successful from the very start. The idea was so obviously right, and the condition Rajchman proposed, that the government of a country where a clinic was started should pay an equal amount to the money contributed by UNICEF doubled the possible expenditure, and therefore doubled the scale of the work that was to be done. That was built in from the start, and it was very successful.
- Q. Is there anything else that stands out to you on the early proposals for UNICEF?
- A. I think only that Rajchman said: "We don't know what kind of scale we are going to start on. We may have a couple of million dollars. If so, we can run a few clinics in different countries and show the governments what ought to be done, and then set up an information and pressure organization which will try to persuade them to do it." But when we got the plan on its feet, people began making contributions and there were pledging conferences with each government saying it would give so much and the sums became big, until UNICEF was spending hundreds of millions of dollars a year matched by the governments who were also putting up a corresponding amount to get the number of clinics multiplied. It spread from country to country and from continent to continent, until UNICEF, became what it is today.
- Q. At that time, could you and Dr. Rajchman foresee that UNICEF was going to be such an organization -- especially Dr. Rajchman? --
- A. Oh, yes, I think he foresaw it all right. We wanted it to be a permanent organization and a big organization. He just didn't know on what scale we could start. His idea was always to make a U.N. service for all countries, and for all continents, a world service, and he played a great part in building up that service as a member of the UNRRA directing committee. He was an inspiring leader of the UNICEF Committee.
- Q. Was he involved in the actual running of UNRRA?
- A. Yes and no. He certainly had a lot of influence in assuring that in countries where the need was greatest, like Greece and Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, UNRRA

did its job and was given proper resources and the money available to UNRRA which was two percent of the GNP of donor countries. First one percent and then a second percent which we had to put through Parliament in post-war conditions. They boggle now at .07 percent for economic aid, but in those post-war eighteen months, we put through two percent. And Rajchman played a very big part in deciding how those big resources were allocated to different countries according to their needs.

Q. Do you recall any discussion with Rajchman during the creation of UNICEF whether German children, Japanese and Italian children should come under the care of the new organization?

A. I don't recall any conversation about this, but I have a deep and absolute conviction that Rajchman would have said they must all come under. There must be no political discrimination against children -- none, none, none, I'm sure.

Q. What about Dr. Rajchman's personal qualities? You said he was inspiring, but more than that how would you describe his personality?

A. He had a marvelous brain, a marvelous character; very good administrator, very good on broad principle; very good on detail; great understanding and great application of his whole mind and personality to the job at hand, and no one could have contact with him without feeling they had met a great man, who knew what he wanted and how to get it.

Q. How do you personally feel about your role in the creation of UNICEF?

A. I am very glad to think that I did what Rajchman wanted, and that it succeeded. I took a bit of a chance, but nobody in London dared to question what I had done and I was immensely gratified by the result. My service was minimal. It merely consisted in seconding the proposal of the great Dr. Rajchman. I could not get my government's approval in time. As Rajchman said, I had been sent to the conference to deal with UNRRA and to settle what it should do with its money. And therefore I could argue very powerfully with its treasury in saying that UNRRA should allocate its money to creating a Children's Fund. I was a hundred percent within my general mandate. They could not complain and, in fact, there was no treasury opposition.

Q. Do you remember Dr. Rajchman's speech at that time?

A. I only remember that he made the proposal, that he said that in many countries, the treatment of infants was very unenlightened, and that medical knowledge and social practice had not extended. In Greece, for example, where I have a home, children at that time used to be wrapped tightly in swaddling clothes, and bound up tightly for a long time after they were born, instead of having their limbs free, and being bathed every day and having their limbs developed and their little muscles developed by moving their arms and legs for them.

Q. In other words, Dr. Rajchman felt that infant care was unenlightened in parts of Europe. This had nothing to do with the war itself.

A. Yes, it was just what had always been true. As director of the Health Section of the Secretariat of the League, he was in touch with all these things, all public questions in all countries -- absolutely world-wide. He was very

well-known in China, in India, Japan and Burma.

This is a very valuable contribution to our history. I thank you so much.

Judith Spiegelman
Information Division

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